

Platelet Function Tests

Information for patients



Why do I need a platelet function test?

Platelet function testing is a specialised test to show how well platelets are performing in the blood clotting system. Platelets are the cells in the blood responsible for initiating blood clotting. When a blood vessel is injured, platelets clump together to block the injury site. Doctors may have requested this test if they think your platelets are not performing properly; this is usually because you have a history of abnormal bruising or bleeding. The test can be used to diagnose inherited and acquired platelet dysfunctions. You may also be offered these tests if it is suspected that you may have inherited a low platelet count.

Platelet function tests may be performed alongside other specialist blood tests to look at other parts of the clotting system in detail.

You may have been referred for this test from another hospital. It is important that we assess you in the Leeds Haemophilia Centre and do the tests here. This is because most other hospitals are unable to offer these tests, and the samples must be delivered promptly to our specialist laboratories.

How is the test performed?

In order to perform the test we need to take a blood sample from you. This is similar to a standard blood test except we need to take a few more sample tubes. Occasionally it may take more than one attempt to obtain the correct amount of blood for the test. You can help us with this by making sure you are well hydrated when you attend your appointment.

These tests require specially booking with the laboratories and so cannot be done at your usual clinic appointment.

Please do let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend for your appointment. There is usually a waiting list for these tests, and this will allow us to offer the appointment to someone else.

You will be told where to come when your appointment is made. This will usually be at the **Haemophilia Centre, Level 3, Bexley Wing, St James's University Hospital** (in between wards J88 and J89).

How to prepare for the test

Platelet function testing is extremely sensitive to any factors that interfere with how platelets work. In order to get the most accurate results it is important to eliminate these factors before the test is performed.

Certain medications can affect your platelets; this includes prescription medicines and over the counter medicines, and some alternative and herbal medicines.

Many common medicines that can affect platelet function include:

- Drugs used to treat or prevent heart disease or stroke (eg. Aspirin, Clopidogrel)
- Anti-inflammatory painkillers (e.g. Ibuprofen, Diclofenac, Naproxen, Voltaren, Nurofen)
- Some blood pressure medications
- Some antibiotics
- Some antihistamines
- Some antidepressants
- Some alternative and herbal medications

A more comprehensive list of medicines that can affect your results is available at the back of this leaflet as an appendix. Please check this list when you get your appointment, and discuss with our team if you are taking any medications on the list.

At your previous clinic appointment the doctor will have checked your medications at that time and discussed with you whether any of these should be stopped before your test, and when to stop them.

Please do not stop any of your regular prescribed medication unless you have been advised to do so.

Please also keep a record of all medications you take (including over the counter and supplements) for two weeks before your platelet function test and bring this with you to your appointment.

Are they any side effects?

Just like any blood test, taking blood for platelet function testing can sometimes leave a small bruise at the site where the sample was taken.

When will I get my results?

These are specialist tests and it takes several weeks to get a complete set of results. The results will be discussed with you at your next doctor's appointment at the Haemophilia Centre.

To inform us of any medications you are taking, or if you have any further questions, you can contact the Haemophilia Nurses on 0113 206 8321.

Appendix - medicines that can affect platelet function

- Cyclo-oxygenase (COX)-1 inhibitors (irreversible)
 - Aspirin and all proprietary or over-the-counter preparations containing acetylsalicylic acid
- COX-1 and COX-2 inhibitors (reversible) Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
 - Ibuprofen
 - Naproxen
 - Indomethacin
 - Mefenamic acid

- Inhibitors of Platelet Receptors
 - Abciximab
 - Tirofiban
 - Eptifibatide (αIIbb3)
 - Ticlopidine
 - Clopidogrel
 - Prasugrel (irreversible)
 - Cangrelor (reversible)
 - Ticagrelor (reversible) (P2Y12)
- Phosphodiesterase Inhibitors
 - Dipyridamole
 - Cilostazole
- Anticoagulants
 - Heparinoids
 - Vitamin K antagonists and direct thrombin inhibitors may indirectly influence platelet function due to inhibition of thrombin
- Cardiovascular Agents
 - B-adrenergic blockers (propranolol)
 - Vasodilators (nitroprusside, nitroglycerin)
 - Diuretics (furosemide)
 - Calcium channel blockers
- Antimicrobials
 - B-lactams (penicillins, cephalosporins)
 - Amphotericin (antifungal)
 - Hydroxychloroquine (antimalarial)
 - Nitrofurantoin
- Chemotherapeutic agents
 - Asparaginase
 - Plicamycin
 - Vincristine

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- Psychotropics and Anaesthetics
 - Tricyclic antidepressants (imipramine)
 - Phenothiazines (chloropromazine)
 - Local and general anaesthesia (halothane)

- Thrombolytic Agents
 - Streptokinase
 - Urokinase
 - Tissue Plasminogen Activator (TPA)

- Miscellaneous
 - Clofibrate
 - Guaifenesin (expectorant)
 - Dextrans
 - Radiographic contrast media

- Food/Herbs (at high concentrations)
 - Alcohol
 - Fish Oil
 - Caffeine (methylxanthine)
 - Tamarind
 - Cumin
 - Turmeric
 - Dong quai
 - Willow
 - Fenugreek
 - Vitamins C and E
 - Garlic, onion, ginger
 - Black Tree Fungus ("Chinese mushroom")
 - Ginseng

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