Medical Oncology

Therapeutic Phlebotomy Information Sheet

Therapeutic Phlebotomy

Therapeutic phlebotomy is similar to a blood donation. Your doctor may prescribe this to treat certain diseases like:

- Hemochromatosis - too much iron in the blood.
- Polycythemia vera - too many red blood cells in the blood.

Prior to having phlebotomy, you will have your blood levels checked. Based on the results, the doctor will decide if you need phlebotomy.

Before coming for the procedure, you should eat and drink. Increase your fluid intake a few days before the procedure. Avoid caffeine and alcohol on the day of the procedure.

During the procedure, a pint of blood will be taken from a vein in your arm. We will give you fluids to drink.

The possible side effects of this procedure:

- Dizziness, feeling light headed, feeling faint.
- Temporary decrease in blood pressure.
- Feeling tired.
- Soreness at the needle insertion site.
- Upset stomach.

After the procedure, you will need to:

- Drink something before leaving. Drink more fluids than usual in the next 4 hours.
- Avoid alcohol or caffeine the day of the procedure.
- Do not smoke for 30 minutes.
- If there is bleeding from the phlebotomy site, raise your arm and apply pressure.
- If you feel faint or dizzy, either:
    - Sit down with your head between your knees.
    - Lie down and put your feet up until you feel better.
- You may resume all normal activities after an hour if you feel well. Do not do any heavy exercise or lifting for 24 hours.

If you have questions or concerns, please call your care team at:
Bronson Cancer Center – Battle Creek 269-245-8660
Bronson Cancer Center – Kalamazoo 269-286-7170