Therapeutic Phlebotomy

Therapeutic phlebotomy is a procedure to remove blood from the body. It is done in the same way as a blood donation. During the procedure about a pint of blood will be taken from a vein in your arm. Therapeutic phlebotomy is used to treat certain diseases such as:

- Polycythemia Vera - too many red blood cells in the blood.
- Hemochromatosis - too much iron in the blood.
- Sickle Cell Disease - abnormal shaped red blood cells.

What are the possible side effects of this procedure?

Most people feel fine during and after giving blood. Some people may have the following:

- An upset stomach
- Dizzy, feeling light headed or tired
- Low blood pressure
- Soreness, redness, bruising (black and blue marks) or pain where the needle was placed
- Very rarely, a person may faint, have muscle spasms, or suffer nerve damage

What should I do after the procedure?

- Drink an extra four glasses (8 ounces each) of liquids for the rest of the day. Do not drink alcohol or caffeine drinks.
- You may get dizzy or lightheaded after giving blood, do not plan to do anything that could put you or others at risk.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

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- Keep your bandage on for 5 hours after the procedure. Keep the bandage dry and clean.
- Do not do heavy exercise or lifting for 24 hours after the procedure.
- If you get dizzy, lie down and put your feet up until you feel better.
- If the area where the needle was placed starts to bleed, raise your arm straight up. Press on the area with a cotton gauze pad or clean paper towel until the bleeding stops.

If you develop any redness or pain where the needle was placed, call the clinic where you had your procedure.

During daytime hours, Monday through Friday call:
- James Apheresis 614-293-8672
- James 5th Floor Infusion 614-293-8816
- The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center East Hospital 614-257-2900, option #2

After hours or weekends, call the hospital operator at 614-293-8000. Ask the operator to page the Pathology resident on call.