



X-Plain Lab Draws

Reference Summary

Introduction

Most people need to have blood drawn at one time or another in their lives. Your doctor may have requested that you have some blood drawn to be tested. This reference summary will help you understand what to expect when you have blood drawn.

Blood

Blood is an essential fluid in the body.

We have 3 main types of blood cells:

- red blood cells
- white blood cells
- platelets

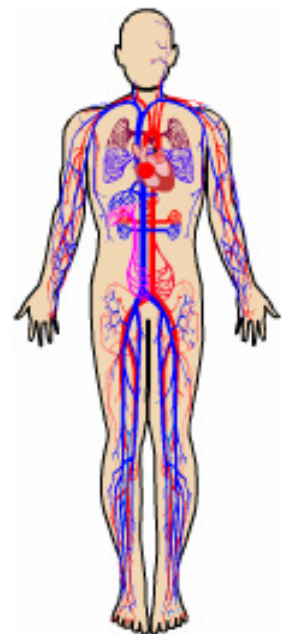
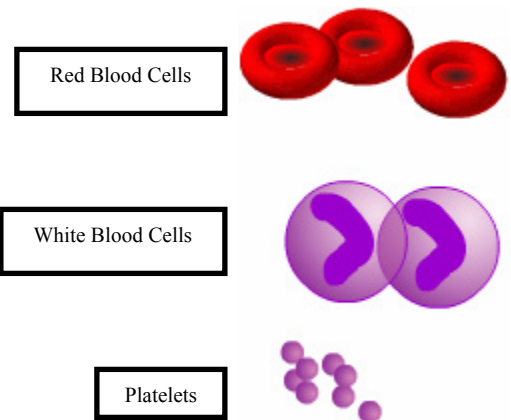
Red blood cells move oxygen through the body. White blood cells defend the body from infections. Platelets make sure blood clots correctly and they prevent our bodies from losing large amounts of blood.

Blood is like the army and the postal service of the body.

As blood moves through the body, it distributes important chemicals and nutrients to the organs and tissues. Anything we put into our bodies, like medicine or food, ends up in the blood for distribution.

If there are abnormal levels of any type of blood cells or important chemicals in the blood, a serious disease may be present.

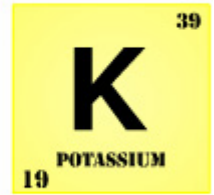
A low number of red blood cells is called anemia. A low number of white blood cells is called leukopenia. A low platelet count is called thrombocytopenia.



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Some important chemicals that circulate in the blood include:

- sugar
- salt
- potassium
- vitamins



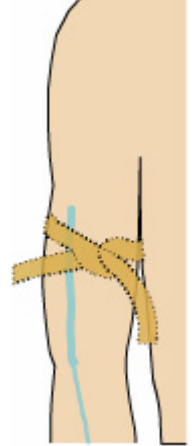
Drawing Blood

Blood is usually drawn from a vein in the upper arm.

First, a rubber strip is tied around the upper arm to prevent blood from leaving the arm. This is called a tourniquet; it might pinch a little, but is usually not painful.

The tourniquet causes the veins in the arm to swell and stand out. The area is then cleaned with an alcohol or betadine swab.

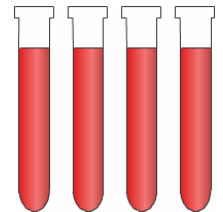
Next, a needle is poked into the vein. This just feels like a pinprick; the sensation does not last very long. The needle remains in the vein until the blood is drawn.



After it is drawn, the blood is put into several tubes. When enough blood has been drawn, the tourniquet is taken off and the needle is pulled out.

A cotton ball or a small bandage is placed over the area where the needle was inserted. Some pressure may need to be applied to the site until the bleeding stops.

You may want to ask how long it will take to get the results. Most blood work is processed the same day, but some specialized tests can take a few days or more.



Summary

Drawing blood is very important for detecting abnormalities. It also helps to monitor diseases and blood levels of various medications. It is usually not a painful experience.

With your blood, your doctor can find needed results and keep you in good health!

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