

How to carry out a capillary blood test

This information sheet explains how to carry out a capillary blood test. The test involves collecting a blood sample by pricking the skin of a finger. The sample is collected from tiny blood vessels near the surface of the skin called capillaries. It is important to follow these instructions to complete the test correctly. You can also view a video on our Home Testing web page.

Contents of the kit

In the capillary blood test kit, you will find the following:

- Paper form with information details about you
- How to carry out a capillary blood test leaflet
- Patient letter asking you to take the test
- Cardboard box marked UN3373 with a return address label attached and a pre-paid postage sticker
- Three finger pricking devices called lancets (see Picture 3)
- Tube for blood collection – either lavender or yellow-topped (see Pictures 1 and 2)
- Alcohol wipe
- Cotton pads
- Blue and clear plastic bag marked 'Safety bag'
- Absorbent sheet
- Security seal sticker to securely close the cardboard return box

Before you start

- Please make sure you carry out the test and post your blood sample to us between Monday and Thursday. Blood samples taken on Friday and at weekends may take too long to reach our testing laboratories.
- Allow about 30 minutes to prepare and collect a blood sample.
- It is important that you post the blood sample back to us on the day you take it, so make sure you have enough time to go to your local post office or post box before you start the test.

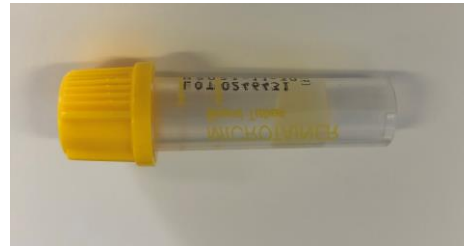
Prepare and set up

1. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
2. Lay the test kit out on a table together with a clean tissue and a bowl of warm water.

3. Take the small clear tube which will either have a purple or yellow cap and remove the cap (see Pictures 1 and 2). You will use this tube to collect the blood.



Picture 1.



Picture 2.

4. Now take these steps to get your blood flowing which will make it easier to collect a blood sample:
 - stand up so that your hands are in a lower position than your elbows.
 - Put the hand you will be taking the blood sample from into the bowl of warm water for two minutes.

Note: you will find it is easier to take the blood sample from a finger on your non-dominant hand, e.g if you are right-handed, take the blood sample from a finger on your left hand.

Collect your test sample

5. Clean the finger you want to take the blood sample from with an alcohol wipe
6. Pick up the finger-pricking device you need to use to take the blood sample. This is called a lancet (see picture 3 below). Twist and pull away the protective tip of the lancet.



Picture 3. Lancet

7. Place your hand against a hard surface (e.g. tabletop). Press the lancet down on the outer centre of your fingertip and push the button on the back of the lancet to release the needle inside.

Fill the tube

8. Wipe away the first drop of blood that you see appear on your finger with a clean tissue.
9. Now keep your blood flowing by using the fingers on your opposite hand to massage the hand from which you are taking the blood sample. Every three or four seconds, massage from the palm of the hand down to the finger. Be careful not to touch or squeeze the area of skin you have pricked with the lancet.
10. Pick up the tube and tap the drops of blood into the tube. Do this using the opposite hand from the one from which you are taking the blood sample.
11. Fill the clear tube with blood until it reaches the top line. If you are using the purple topped tube fill the tube to the line marked 500, or on the yellow topped tube, to the line

marked 600. Place the purple or yellow cap back onto the tube pushing it until you hear it click.

Mix the tube

12. Gently turn the tube upside down at least 10 times. Make sure the blood touches the sides of the tube.
13. Do not worry if the blood looks different once it is inside the tube. This is normal.

Label and pack your sample

14. You will find a paper form in your test kit with information details about you and the test. Write details giving the date and time of sample collection clearly on the form.
15. Fold the form and put it in the return box, which is marked UN3373.
16. Wrap the white absorbent material sheet around the blood sample tube.
17. Then place the wrapped tube into the plastic bag marked safety bag and seal the bag.
18. Put the safety bag into the box together with the paper form.
19. Seal the box with the security seal sticker provided.

Record your sample

20. Type the following link into a web browser <http://bit.do/RBHT-HomeTest>

Or scan this QR code on your phone which will open the web link:



21. Complete the online form that appears on the screen to confirm that you have posted your blood sample.

Post your sample

22. Remember to post the blood sample back to us on the day you carry out the test. The return box should have a postage paid sticker and a label with the address of our laboratories stuck to it. Please check the return box has both stickers before you post it. The box can be posted into your nearest post box.
23. Dispose of all the other test kit equipment safely in your household bin.

Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about carrying out this test please speak to your healthcare team, or contact our home testing team:

Home Testing

Royal Brompton Hospital

Tel: 020 7352 8121 ext 88401 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

Harefield Hospital

Tel: 0330 128 5086 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)

More information

See videos and more information on the Home Testing page on Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals' website (www.rbht.nhs.uk).

If you need help or advice about any service or department at our hospitals, and feel unable to talk to those people responsible for your care, call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 7349 7715 or email pals@rbht.nhs.uk. This is a confidential service.

Royal Brompton and Harefield hospitals are part of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

April 2021