

If you experience any of the following after donating, you should contact the donor helpline **650637** Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm or contact your GP:

- Severe pain in your arm, hand or fingers.
- Numbness, pins and needles or change in sensation in your arm, hand or fingers.
- Swelling that is large or increasing in size.
- Swelling of the hand or fingers.
- Painful redness or inflammation.
- Change in colour of the hand or fingers i.e. pale or blue colour.

Bleeding from the needle site

This may happen immediately after giving blood. If it should happen – sit down and ask for assistance from a member of staff and apply direct pressure on the needle site.

You can avoid bleeding by applying direct 3 finger pressure to the needle site after the needle has been removed and by limiting the use of your donation arm for at least 15 minutes after giving blood.

Be careful when eating and drinking and putting on your jacket or coat after donating.

Please leave the plaster in place for 6 hours to prevent the needle site from becoming infected.



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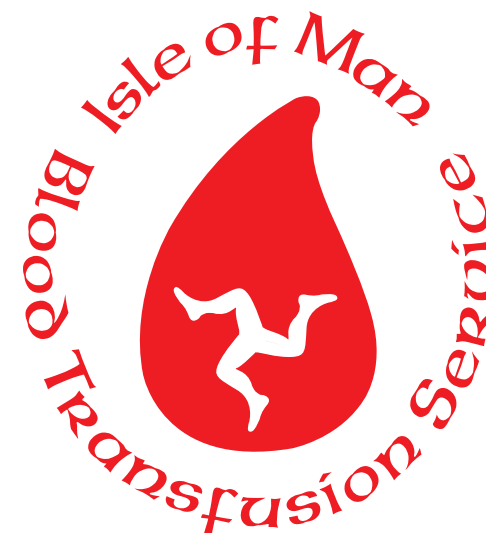
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Bruising

Information for Donors



Although we hope that no donor will have any ill effects from giving blood, occasionally bruising may develop due to seepage of blood from the vein into the tissues of the arm. It can look very dramatic but it is usually harmless and will disperse with time. Bruising may appear some way from the donation site due to gravity, and may not start until a day or two after the donation. With time the familiar blue/black discolouration changes to green, then yellow and eventually fades and disappears. This may take up to three weeks or more if the bruise is large and swollen. On occasion bruising may worsen and become painful. Very occasionally a bruise may become infected and you may need treatment with antibiotics.

Why can it happen with blood donation?

When the needle has been removed from the arm bleeding will continue until the small hole in the vein closes up. Pressing firmly on the needle site for at least 3 minutes until all signs of bleeding have stopped will minimise the risk of bruising.

When the needle is put into the arm, damage to the opposite wall of the vein may occur causing a small hole through which blood can escape. This is not always seen during donation and may become apparent afterwards.

There are tiny fragile blood vessels running just under the skin, as well as the larger veins from which the donation is taken. When the needle is inserted into the arm, one of these small vessels may be damaged and bleeding occurs. It is impossible to predict this as such vessels are not usually visible.

You may be more likely to develop a bruise if your donation is more difficult than usual or if your veins are difficult to locate.

What can be done?

To minimise the risk of bruising, we ask you to tell us if you have pain or discomfort when the needle is inserted, during the donation or after it has been removed.

You **must** apply direct 3 finger pressure to the needle site after the needle has been removed keeping your arm straight.

A dressing will be applied and you will be asked to observe for any signs of bleeding and limit the use of your donation arm for the first 15 minutes. All donors are advised to avoid using the arm for heavy work or exercise for the rest of the day.

If you are wearing a tight sleeve, we may ask you to remove that article of clothing as it can act as a tourniquet and cause congestion of the vein increasing the risk of bruising.

If you develop a bruise during or after a donation we will recommend that you avoid any heavy lifting or strenuous exercise for at least a few days until the bruise starts to improve e.g. do not lift heavy shopping bags or go to the gym as this could aggravate the bruising. However, normal, gentle movements are beneficial and should be continued. Applying a cold compress to the area within the first 24 hours can help relieve pain, swelling and discomfort. If you require more pain relief we recommend taking Paracetamol (according to the manufacturer's instructions).

Do not apply heat within the first 24 hours as this could make the bruising worse.