



Apheresis Unit

Apheresis is a medical procedure that involves removing some components from your blood. The term apheresis comes from a Greek word meaning to 'take away from'.

Why do I need it?

Your doctor has advised that apheresis treatment may benefit you. Depending on the condition being treated, components are either removed from your blood and replaced with similar components received from blood donors OR components are removed and stored for later use or discarded.

How will I know what I am having done?

Your doctor will explain the procedure to you and the expected benefits. Before the first procedure, nursing staff of the Apheresis Unit will explain what happens during the procedure and will be happy to answer any questions you may have about why apheresis is being performed and what you can expect afterwards. Part of this explanation involves obtaining consent from you to perform this procedure.

How do you access my blood?

There are two ways this can be done. We may use the veins in your arm. Usually the large veins in the inner surface of your elbow and the veins lower down your forearm and hands are used.

If these are appropriate, a needle is inserted into either one or two veins and taken out again at the end of the procedure. Alternatively, a device known as a central venous catheter may be placed into one of the large veins in your chest or neck and stay in until your treatment course is finished.

Is it uncomfortable?

There can be some discomfort while the needles are placed in your veins, but there is no pain associated with the apheresis procedure itself.

How long does it take?

The procedure usually takes between 1.5-3.5 hours depending on the blood flow and how you tolerate the procedure. The amount of days that you will be required to have the procedure depends on the procedure you are having and what is requested by your doctor.

Are there any side effects?

You will be closely monitored while you are on the machine. Listed below are some of the side effects you may experience:

- Tingling around the lips, fingers or toes, nausea or light-headedness – this is caused by the anticoagulant used to stop the blood from clotting while in the machine. If it occurs, it is easily treated. You can assist in preventing by eating dairy products before the procedure.
- Low blood pressure – although we only remove a small amount of blood from your body at any one time, the changes in blood volume can make you feel dizzy or light-headed.
- Pain or discomfort at cannula site – please inform nursing staff if you experience any pain or discomfort from the needle site.

Who performs the procedure?

A qualified apheresis nurse performs the procedure. The nurse remains nearby during the procedure and will answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Can I eat and drink?

Yes, you can. We encourage you to have a good intake of non-caffeine based fluids before each procedure as fluids help your body tolerate the procedure and assists with inserting needles. It is also important to eat meals normally.

What should I wear?

Loose, comfortable clothing and short-sleeved tops are best.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes, you can. Their support may make the procedure easier to undertake initially. We also have DVDs available for you to watch and magazines and music to help pass the time. You may bring your own if you prefer.



Cabrini Health

What if I can't make an appointment?

If you can't make an appointment, you must tell your doctor and the apheresis staff immediately so that other arrangements can be made. The nursing staff will make the next appointment with you each time you attend. For people having stem cell

Can I continue my normal medications?

Most medications can continue as normal. Tell your doctor and the apheresis nurse about all medications you are taking (including over the counter medicines), as some may cause adverse side effects during the procedure.

Location of Apheresis Unit

The Apheresis Unit is located within the Day Oncology Unit on the ground floor of Cabrini Hospital Malvern. On arrival please report to the Reception Desk in the Day Oncology Unit.

Mission Statement

Cabrini is a Catholic health care service. As such we are an integral part of the Church's healing mission. With the spirit and vision of our Founder, Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini, our service reflects God's compassionate love for all and the dignity of human life.

At Cabrini we are dedicated to serving the needs of the community to the best of our ability, always striving for excellence. We respect life in all stages, and in a spirit of partnership, we are committed to compassionate, competent care for all those we serve.

Ground Floor

