

- The safety of donors is our priority. We always record and may investigate any complications associated with blood donation so that we can identify learning outcomes and improve our procedures. We follow the Duty of Candour regulations and share our findings with those affected.

What can I do to help my arm heal?

- Avoid movements which make the pain worse, but do continue to move your arm gently and regularly so it doesn't become stiff.
- Avoid heavy lifting or strenuous exercise.
- If your arm is swelling or bruising, elevate it and use a cool pack. These should only be used for a few minutes at a time and should not be applied directly to the skin.
- Take painkillers for discomfort if needed, for example paracetamol.
- Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, or other painkillers which can affect blood clotting for the first 24hrs after donation.

- Seek urgent clinical advice (emergency GP, NHS24 or, if necessary A&E) if your symptoms become worse or new symptoms develop, eg., worsening pain or swelling, symptoms affecting hand, loss of arm function, painful redness or inflammation, general symptoms such as fever or feeling unwell or if our medical team advise this during follow up.
- Speak with us if your symptoms persist. We will probably suggest you see your GP who can consider referring you for physiotherapy and/or assessment by a neurologist (nerve specialist).

Please let us know if your symptoms get worse or if you attend a clinical service for investigation and treatment. You can call us on **0345 90 90 999** or email nss.snbtsequiry@nhs.scot

If I need to see my GP/hospital clinician, what should I say?

Please show them this leaflet. They are welcome to call us on **0131 314 5520** during office hours or **0345 90 90 999** out of hours for advice.

They can find further information, including advice for health care professionals, by searching 'Post-donation management of blood donors with nerve injury related to donation' at www.transfusionguidelines.org

Can I give blood again?

We understand this experience might put you off donating blood in the future. We are sorry about your experience and are very grateful for your past donations.

If you would like to keep donating, please wait until all your symptoms have fully resolved. You must not donate blood using this arm in the future.

Contact us

t: **0345 90 90 999**

e: nss.snbtsequiry@nhs.scot

w: scotblood.co.uk

 [givebloodforscotland](https://www.facebook.com/givebloodforscotland)

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This publication can be made available in large print, braille (English only), audio tape and different languages. Please contact nss.equalitydiversity@nhs.scot for further information.

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To be completed by donor:

Name:

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Date of birth:

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Donor ID:

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Date/time of appointment:

.....

Affected arm:

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To be completed by nurse:

When did the issue occur?

- At needle insertion
- During donation
- At needle withdrawal
- After donation
- Other

Thank you for coming to give blood.

We're very sorry that you have experienced pain or discomfort after giving blood. Your arm may feel sore all the time or just on certain movements. Sometimes people describe an 'electric shock' feeling shooting down the arm. Your arm may feel weak and different to usual, perhaps tingly or a bit numb. These symptoms suggest one of the small nerves in your arm has been irritated either by the needle itself or by a swelling or bruise.

You'll know from the 'Giving blood: process, risks and information leaflet' you read before donating that nerve injury or irritation are rare complications of blood donation. The good news is that these symptoms will fully resolve for most donors, although it can take some time (usually a few weeks but it can take several months). This leaflet gives more information and advice for you and your doctor.

If you feel unwell after donation (eg diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, rash etc) or you have any concerns about your arm after you give blood, then it's important to let us know. Please call us on **0345 90 90 999** – our medical team is available 24hrs a day.

First, let's check you don't have anything more serious.

The following symptoms can be a sign of very rare complications which need urgent, same day medical review, either by your GP or in an emergency via A&E.

Make sure you take this leaflet with you and please update us by email or phone as we may need to discard your donation.

- Fever, shortness of breath, chest pain.
- Severe or increasing arm swelling, pain or numbness.
- Hand symptoms e.g., pain, weakness, swelling, change in colour or unable to use the hand.
- Lower arm or hand feels cooler and/or looks paler than the other side.
- Unable or struggling to move or use your arm.
- Painful redness or inflammation of the arm.
- A swelling/lump where the needle went in (sometimes with a pulsing or buzzing sensation when you touch it).



If you think your situation is life threatening, call 999 immediately.

What should I expect?

- If your symptoms began when you were at session, then session staff will request medical follow up and you will be contacted on the next working day.
- If you have not been referred from the donation session (or you haven't heard from us on the next working day), then please call us on **0345 90 90 999**.
- Your symptoms should improve and resolve over the coming days and weeks.
- Occasionally it can take several months before everything fully resolves.
- Very rarely symptoms can persist. Your arm can continue to heal, and your symptoms continue to improve for around two years after a nerve injury.
- If it does take longer for your arm to improve, your care will pass to your GP from around four weeks after donation. Our donor medical team will continue to offer support and ensure that you are managing to access care for twelve months after donation. At that point your care would pass fully to our primary care and/or hospital colleagues. **Remember, this is incredibly rare.**