

PHLEB 4 Emergency Situations

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Periodic review	Designated Reviewer	2/4/2026	1.0	<i>Brian Webber</i> Brian Webber	
Periodic review	Designated Reviewer	9/19/2025	1.0	<i>Ruth J. Simmons MS, MLS (ASCP)</i> Ruth Simmons	
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1.0	Approved and Current	First version in Document Control	12/29/2021	4/15/2020	Indefinite



HANDLING OF ADVERSE REACTIONS & EMERGENCY SITUATIONS IN PHLEBOTOMY

1.0 PURPOSE

Some patients may experience adverse reactions from phlebotomy. The following information is provided as an immediate guide to first aid

2.0 SYNCOPE (fainting) or unexpected unresponsiveness

- 2.1 If the patient is sitting, lower his/her head and arms
- 2.2 If in the middle of venipuncture, remove the tourniquet and withdraw the needle as possible and engage the safety device
- 2.3 Check for signs of circulation including breathing, coughing, or movement. If the person appears unconscious, tap his or her shoulder and ask loudly "Are you ok?" If still no response call for a code
- 2.4 If the person has only fainted and is breathing, help restore the blood flow by loosening any constrictive clothing
- 2.5 The person should revive quickly, usually within one minute
- 2.6 Once the patient has recovered, he/she must remain in the area for at least 15 minutes. The patient should be instructed not to operate a vehicle for 30 minutes

3.0 NAUSEA AND VOMITING

3.1 Nausea

- 3.1.1 Make the patient as comfortable as possible
- 3.1.2 Instruct the patient to breathe deeply and slowly
- 3.1.3 Apply a cold compress to the patient's forehead
- 3.1.4 Call for help if needed

3.2 Vomiting

- 3.2.1 Give the patient a bag, basin, or other disposable container
- 3.2.2 Have tissues ready
- 3.2.3 After the patient has vomited, offer them water to rinse out his/her mouth
- 3.2.4 Call for help if needed
- 3.2.5 Call housekeeping to clean up the area if necessary

4.0 SEIZURES

- 4.1 Call for help
- 4.2 Lay the person down and gently roll them onto their left side, slightly facing toward the floor, placing something soft under his/her head
- 4.3 Loosen tight neckwear
- 4.4 Do not try to put your fingers or anything else into the person's mouth. The tongue cannot be swallowed, and you can cause harm to the person having the seizure or to yourself
- 4.5 Do not try to restrain the person or shake/shout at him/her. If the person is moving, remove dangerous objects from his/her path
- 4.6 Look for a medical alert bracelet. The bracelet should state who to contact in an emergency and what medications the person uses. Allergies to medications may be noted.



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- 4.7 Stay with the person until first aid trained personnel arrive. If possible, observe the patient closely so that you can provide details on his/her signs and symptoms and how long the seizure has lasted.

5.0 REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- 5.1 NCCLS H3-A5 Procedures for the Collection of Diagnostic Specimens by Venipuncture. Vol., 23. No. 32, 2003

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