

Therapeutic Apheresis Program Johns Hopkins Hospital

For questions about your apheresis procedure, side effects or treatment plans call **410-955-3603**.

For questions about scheduling appointments or billing, call **410-955-6347**.

Hours of Operation: 7:00 AM- 3:30 PM

Email: HATS-General-Inquiry@jhmi.edu

Website: apps.pathology.jhu.edu/hats/

Location: 601 North Caroline St.

The Johns Hopkins Outpatient Center

Room 1144

Baltimore, MD. 21287

This information was created and approved by the HATS Therapeutic Apheresis Program for patients receiving lipid apheresis at Johns Hopkins Hospital.



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A GUIDE TO LIPID APHERESIS



Patient's Guide to Lipid Apheresis

WHAT IS LIPID APHERESIS?

Lipid Apheresis (also known as LDL apheresis) is a therapy to remove the harmful low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol that can cause serious health problems, such as cardiovascular disease.

Many people who require this treatment have a condition called Familial Hypercholesterolaemia, a genetic disorder which leads to high LDL cholesterol levels. This treatment is also given to some patients who do not benefit from the cholesterol-lowering drugs and lifestyle changes.

During LDL apheresis, the plasma portion of the blood, which contains cholesterol, is separated and run through a special filtering machine that removes the LDL. Once the LDL is removed, the rest of your blood is returned to you in a continually process.

HOW WILL LDL APHERESIS HELP ME?

Each treatment can lower your LDL cholesterol level by 70-80%. However this reduction in cholesterol does not remain over time. In order to get the best reduction in the LDL cholesterol level, the treatments need to be performed regularly.

There is evidence that continued LDL apheresis treatments can reduce the risk of future cardiovascular problems and the progression of arterial disease can be substantially slowed.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

Step 1: For this procedure, your venous access will be assessed by an Apheresis RN. Patients with good veins, will have a needle placed in each arm. Patients with poor access, will have a port or central line placed before the procedure.

Step 2: Once access is established, the Apheresis RN will proceed to connect you to the machine. The machine is a plasma separator that draws your blood and separates the plasma from your red blood cells.

Step 3: The separated plasma is then passed through a special absorber column where the LDL cholesterol is safely removed from the plasma. After the LDL is removed, the plasma is then recombined with the red blood cells and given back to you.

Step 4: The removal and replacing of your blood is done in an automated and continuous manner, so there isn't any blood loss and proper fluid balance is maintained.

Step 5: The procedure typically lasts 4 to 6 hours. During your procedure, you can take a nap, read, eat, listen to music, watch a movie, or use your mobile phone/tablet.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

Lipid Apheresis is a safe procedure, but side effects can occur. You may have discomfort at the needle site, fatigue, dizziness, lightheadedness, low blood pressure, and nausea. The most common side effect is feeling cold and flushed. It is important to notify your Apheresis RN immediately when you experience any of these symptoms.

Side effects are more common in patients taking ACE inhibitors, please let the apheresis team know if you are taking this type of medication.

HOW CAN YOU PREPARE FOR YOUR PROCEDURE?

1. Bring a complete list of your medications including drug names, dosages, and times you take them. You will also need your insurance information and photo identification.
2. It is helpful to drink plenty and eat a light meal.
3. On the day of your procedure, wear loose fitting & comfortable clothing.

CAN I HAVE VISITORS?

Our visitor policy is in place to ensure the highest quality of care for our patients.

1. We ask that visitors avoid interference with the duties of the Apheresis RN.
2. The number of visitors in a patient room is limited to ONE.
3. No children are allowed.
4. Check with your Apheresis RN for further information.