

The vital role of phlebotomists in blood collection

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Phlebotomy technicians collect blood from patients and prepare the samples for testing. Most work in hospitals and clinics, but some collect blood for donation purposes. In this Mayo Clinic Minute, Dr. Fiona

Craig, who oversees the Laboratory Medicine and Pathology Department at Mayo Clinic in Arizona, discusses the vital role phlebotomists play in blood collection.

If you've ever had to get [blood](#) collected for testing, there's a good chance a phlebotomist was the person collecting the sample. Phlebotomists play a crucial role in ensuring the right specimens are collected for the lab.

"All of our testing relies on having the right specimen collected in the right way. So I think phlebotomists are really the foundation of our clinical practice," says Dr. Craig.

Dr. Craig says identifying a vein to collect a sample from is truly a skill.

"It's also important for them to be able to feel a vein—feel that it's big enough—and it's not going to roll away from the needle during the collection. And that's a skill that they get during their [initial training](#) and certification, but then hone it over many years with experience with [patients](#)," says Dr. Craig.

Phlebotomy training programs require hours of classroom instruction plus hundreds of inpatient and outpatient venipunctures to complete the certification examination. Many laboratory staff choose phlebotomy as an introduction to the health care field, which can lead to other education and career opportunities.

"The Mayo Clinic Career Investment Program has been a great resource for our staff to grow professionally within and outside of the laboratory," says Dr. Craig.

This expertise is not only crucial during routine blood draws, it's also invaluable during challenging collections.

"When we have a difficult collection, some of our phlebotomists who've been with us for many years are the ones who are sent to help with that procedure. So it's a very, very important skill that they acquire, and we really couldn't run our [hospital](#) without them," says Dr. Craig.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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