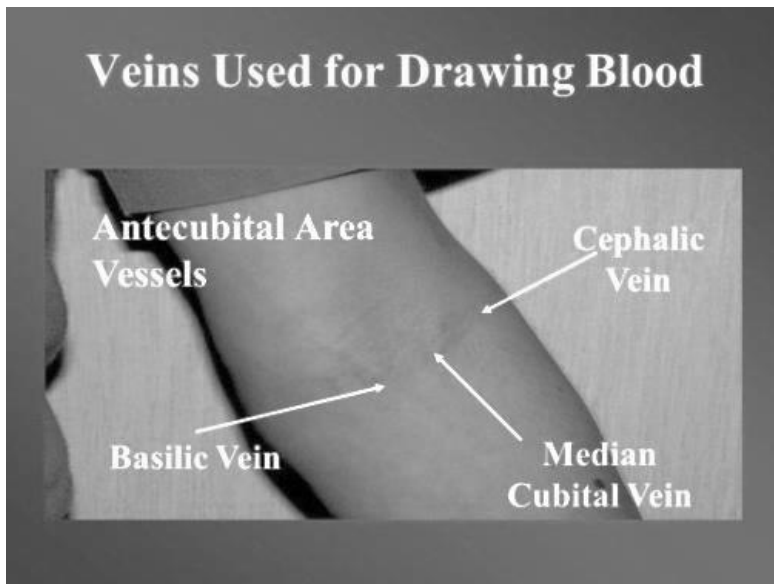


Choosing a Vein for Giving IV Medication

Putting Patient Safety First

It is more common for people to have their blood drawn from a vein than it is to have medications given (infused) into a vein. We've prepared this brochure to help explain why your nurse is not using the same vein as the phlebotomist who drew your blood.

Drawing Blood



When a phlebotomist gets an order from your health care provider to draw blood for testing, he or she uses their skills and knowledge to choose a vein that will

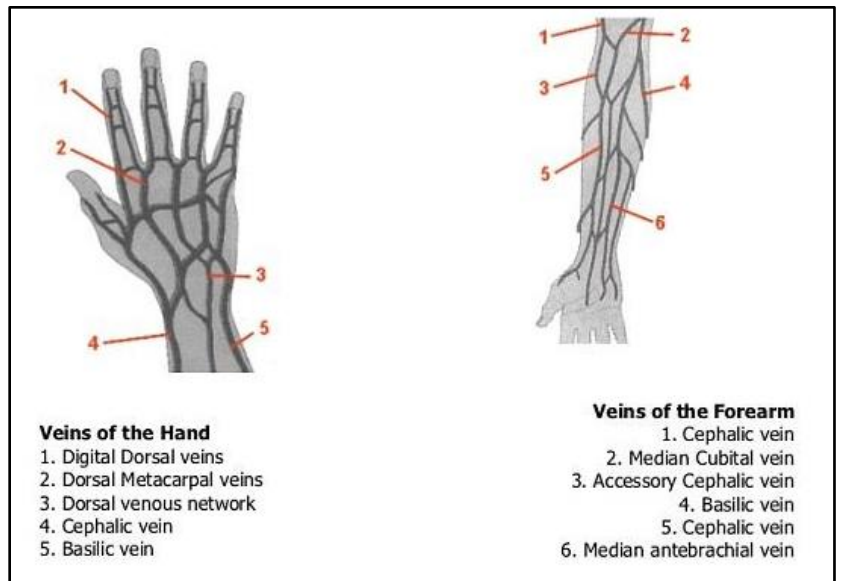
- allow them quick, easy easiest access
- provide good blood flow
- cause you the least discomfort

Drawing a blood sample is a relatively quick process if a good vein is available. A common site for a blood draw is a vein in the antecubital area - near the crease of your elbow.

Giving medications

When choosing a vein to give medication, however, your nurse must consider other factors (see Best Practices section).

Chemotherapy can be very hard on veins – making them less elastic and smaller in size.



Best practices: Giving IV medication

- Choose veins that are large, smooth, and pliable.
- Start looking in the hand and then move up the arm (helps preserve future access sites)
- Do not use the patient's dominant arm, whenever possible
- Consider the condition of the veins, the type of medication being given (how much it irritates the vein), and how long the infusion will last.

Avoid

- Veins in the antecubital area or inner wrist
- Areas that bend (such as the inside of elbow or wrist)
- Veins that are hardened, blocked, or fragile
- The dominant arm (when possible)
- The upper surface of the wrist (avoids pain and potential damage to the nerves in the wrist)
- The legs
- Areas with risks for complications (areas of pain, infection, inflammation, bruising, poor circulation, or areas affected by previous medical procedures or surgeries)

Sources: *Chemotherapy and Biotherapy Guidelines, 4th ed, 2014*; *Mosby Clinical Procedures/Oncology Nursing Society 2015*; *Infusion Nurses Society, 2011*