

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Managers, Directors of Nursing,  
Clinical Instructors/Educators, Laboratory Managers, Hematology Laboratories

FROM: Dr. Jennifer Fesser  
Division Head, Hematology Laboratory  
Health PEI Provincial Laboratory Services

DATE: February 12, 2013

RE: **BLEEDING TIME (BT)  
TEST TO BE DISCONTINUED**

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Background: The bleeding time (BT) was developed over a century ago as an in vivo test of primary hemostasis (i.e. formation of the platelet plug). The test consists of incising the patient's skin and recording how long it takes for the resultant wound to stop bleeding. It may result in scarring.

Despite attempts to standardize the BT, this test shows wide intra- and inter-user variability. It is affected by many factors, including skin thickness and temperature, age and sex of the patient, patient anxiety, and variations in performance of the test.

Studies have demonstrated that the BT does not predict bleeding risk in surgical patients with a negative bleeding history, and cannot be used to reliably identify patients with recent aspirin / NSAID ingestion. The BT is no longer recommended for evaluation of a bleeding disorder. Owing to its low sensitivity and specificity, the BT is also of limited diagnostic utility in the evaluation of congenital defects of platelet function.

**Please note that the BT will be discontinued effective March 1, 2013.**

pc. Dr. Khanam  
Jamie MacDonald  
Holly Brasky  
Sharlene Fennell  
Barb MacEachern  
Bill Bylhouwer  
Brian Timmons

g:/Fesser 2012/Memos/bleeding time

