

Superficial Veins of Upper Limb

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General Features

- Lie in **superficial fascia**.
 - Originate from **dorsal venous network of hand**.
 - Drain mainly into **axillary vein**.
 - Widely used for **venipuncture, IV access, and cannulation**.
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Individual Veins

1. Cephalic Vein

- **Origin** ? lateral end of dorsal venous arch.
 - **Course** ? runs along lateral forearm & arm, ascends in deltopectoral groove.
 - **Termination** ? pierces clavipectoral fascia to drain into axillary vein.
 - **Clinical importance** ? often used for **cardiac catheterization** (into right atrium).
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2. Basilic Vein

- **Origin** ? medial end of dorsal venous arch.
 - **Course** ? ascends along medial forearm & arm, pierces brachial fascia at middle arm.
 - **Termination** ? joins brachial veins to form axillary vein.
 - **Clinical importance** ? preferred site for **long-term IV cannulation**.
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3. Median Cubital Vein

- **Origin** ? connection between cephalic and basilic veins in cubital fossa.
 - **Course** ? runs obliquely across cubital fossa.
 - **Termination** ? drains into basilic vein.
 - **Clinical importance** ? most common site for **venipuncture, IV injections, blood donation**.
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4. Other Superficial Veins

- **Median antebrachial vein** ? runs along front of forearm, drains into basilic/median cubital vein.
 - **Dorsal venous arch** ? gives rise to cephalic (lateral) and basilic (medial) veins.
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Clinical Anatomy

- **Venipuncture** ? median cubital vein is preferred (large, fixed by perforators, superficial).
 - **IV injections** ? basilic and cephalic veins also used.
 - **Phlebitis** ? inflammation of superficial veins, often due to infection/IV drug use.
 - **Thrombophlebitis** ? clot formation within inflamed vein ? causes painful cord-like swelling.
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- **Cut-down procedures** ? cephalic or basilic veins exposed surgically for emergency IV access.
- **Arteriovenous fistula** ? created surgically (usually using cephalic vein) for dialysis access.
- **Varicosities** ? uncommon in upper limb compared to lower limb due to efficient venous retur