

Facts to Remember – Cutaneous Nerves, Superficial Veins & Lymphatic Drainage

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Cutaneous Nerves

- All skin of upper limb supplied by **branches of brachial plexus**, except upper shoulder region (C3–C4 supraclavicular nerves).
 - **C5** dermatome ? lateral arm.
 - **C6** dermatome ? thumb.
 - **C7** dermatome ? middle finger.
 - **C8** dermatome ? little finger.
 - **T1** dermatome ? medial forearm & arm.
 - **Axillary nerve** ? skin over regimental badge area.
 - **Radial nerve** ? posterior arm, forearm, dorsum of hand (lateral 3½ proximal phalanges).
 - **Median nerve** ? palmar surface of lateral 3½ digits.
 - **Ulnar nerve** ? palmar & dorsal surfaces of medial 1½ digits.
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Superficial Veins

- Originate from **dorsal venous arch** of hand.
 - **Cephalic vein** ? lateral side ? drains into axillary vein.
 - **Basilic vein** ? medial side ? joins brachial veins to form axillary vein.
 - **Median cubital vein** ? connects cephalic and basilic at cubital fossa ? preferred site for venipuncture.
 - **Cephalic vein** used for **cardiac catheterization** (into right atrium).
 - **Basilic vein** preferred for **long-term IV cannulation**.
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Lymphatic Drainage

- **Superficial lymphatics** ? follow superficial veins.
 - Along cephalic vein ? directly to **apical axillary nodes**.
 - Along basilic vein ? to **supratrochlear nodes** ? **humeral axillary nodes**.
 - **Deep lymphatics** ? follow deep veins ? drain into humeral axillary nodes.
 - **Axillary lymph nodes** ? five groups (pectoral, subscapular, humeral, central, apical).
 - Final drainage ? **subclavian lymph trunk** ? **thoracic duct (left)** / **right lymphatic duct (right)**.
 - **Supratrochlear nodes** enlarge in infections of hand/forearm.
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- **Axillary nodes** are first involved in carcinoma breast (especially pectoral group).
- **Lymphedema** occurs after axillary clearance (e.g., mastectomy).