

# FACTSHEET



This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: [www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form](http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form).

## Blood test (Venepuncture)

Venepuncture is a way of taking blood for a blood test.

### Why does my child need it?

Your doctor will explain why your child needs this test. Many different tests can only be done this way.

### What happens?

Your doctor or nurse may put a cream on your child's skin to reduce any pain your child will feel. This takes at least 30 minutes to work, so your child will need to wait a little while before the blood test. If it is important to do the test straight away then the cream will not be used as it will delay taking the test. Please note that Pathology does not possess this cream.

A tourniquet (elastic belt) will be put around your child's arm. It is pulled quite tight, and this can be upsetting for a young child. Cotton wool can be placed under the clasp, to make it feel more comfortable. Your child will need to be still while the skin is cleaned and a small needle is put into a vein to take a small amount of blood. This does not take very long, but can be upsetting for children. In small children, and those who are very young or very chubby, veins may be hard to find.

Staff may need to hold your child's arm to prevent the needle from moving or coming out. This is for your child's safety and a greater chance of success.

The needle will have to be put in twice:

- if a vein can't be found,
- if not enough blood can be obtained,
- if your child moves and the needle comes out of the vein.

There may be a little bruising and soreness where the needle goes in, this clears up quickly.

### Can I help my child?

You can comfort your child by staying with them while the blood is taken. If you cannot stay with your child then a staff member will stay instead.

If your child asks about the tests being done, comfort them. Explain in simple terms what is being done and why. Always tell the truth.

You can help distract your infant or child by cuddling, telling stories, singing or playing with a toy or game. Your child can sit on their own, sit on your lap, or lie down, whichever they prefer. Stay calm and comfort your child. If you get upset so will your child. Remember some children need to watch. Always praise your child afterwards. Staff are there to help you and your child. If your child is very anxious, you can ask for support from Child Life Therapy – who may have ideas and strategies that can help.

### Remember:

- The doctor will explain why this test is needed.
- There may be a little soreness and bruising where the needle entered, this will settle.
- Stay with your child to comfort them.
- Child Life Therapy is available at John Hunter Children's Hospital on 4985 5410, Randwick on 9382 6984 and Westmead on 9845 2669.