

## BLOOD DRAWS

AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH OF UPMC, we believe parents and guardians can contribute to the success of this test and we invite you to participate. Please read the following information to learn about the test and how you can help.

### Fast Facts About Blood Draws

- A blood draw (sometimes called a blood test) is a way to collect blood so that lab testing can be done to check your child's health.
- Each blood draw takes about 5 to 10 minutes.
- Your child may resume a normal diet and activities afterwards, although he or she may experience some soreness for a day or so at the site where blood was drawn.

### What Is A Blood Draw?

- There are two types of blood draws—finger stick and venipuncture (*VEEN-a-punk-cher*).
- A finger stick uses a small needle to prick the fingertip in order to collect a few drops of blood. The blood is placed on a small glass plate or slide so that it can be viewed under a microscope.
- Venipuncture uses a needle to draw blood out of the vein in your child's inner arm.

### Home Preparation

No home preparation is needed unless ordered by your doctor. Your child's doctor may ask you not to have your child eat for a certain amount of time before a blood draw. Please follow the specific instructions given to you by your child's doctor.

### Before the Test

Blood draws are done at several locations and labs at Children's Hospital. They may be done during a doctor's visit (outpatient) or while your child is a patient in the hospital. Most outpatient blood draws follow a similar process. After you have checked in at the Registration Desk, you will be asked to sit in the waiting area.

- We invite one parent or guardian to stay with your child during the test. Other adults and siblings must stay in the waiting room during the test.
- You and your child will be called to the examining room. The blood draw will be done by a specially trained nurse or lab technician.
- You may ask any questions or discuss concerns about your child's test at this time.
- Your child may wear normal clothes to the test.



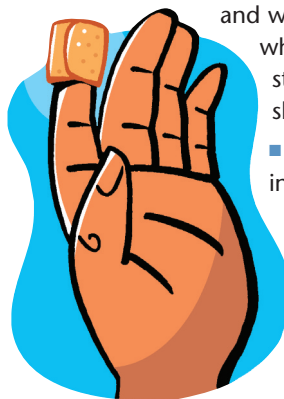
- Your wait time will vary depending on how many children are being seen that day and the type of test that has been ordered for your child. Since every child is different, the length of time needed to do each test also will vary. Please be patient with the medical staff.

### The Test

You and your child will be joined in the examining room by the nurse or lab technician. Your child will sit in a comfortable chair that provides an armrest to lean on while the blood draw is being done. Your child also may sit in your lap.

#### Finger Sticks

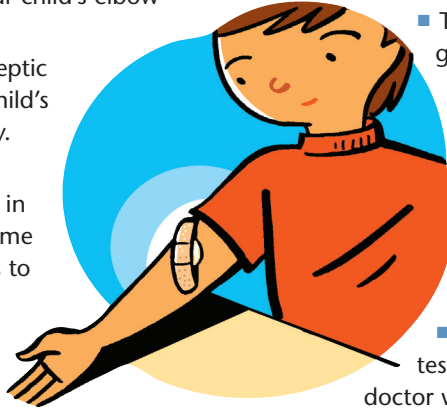
- For finger sticks, the nurse will use a swab to wash your child's fingertip. The nurse will then hold your child's finger and poke the fingertip once with a plastic lancet to produce a drop of blood.
- The nurse may squeeze the finger to produce more blood, and will drop the blood onto a microscope slide, which is a piece of glass about the size of a stick of gum. Sometimes more than one slide will be used.
- Sometimes the nurse may collect the blood in a thin glass tube.
- After the slides or tubes have been filled, the nurse will place a band-aid on your child's finger and the test is over. The band-aid may be removed later that day or the next morning.



## BLOOD DRAWS cont'd

### Venipuncture

- For venipuncture blood draws, the nurse will ask your child to roll up his or her sleeve. The blood will be drawn from the forearm—usually in the area inside your child's elbow—where the veins are closest to the skin.
- The nurse will wash the area with an antiseptic swab and tie a rubber cord around your child's upper arm to make the veins bulge slightly. This cord may feel tight.
- The nurse will place a needle into the vein in your child's arm. The needle may cause some pressure or discomfort. Sometimes it helps to look the other way or divert your child's attention by talking about something else. The needle will hurt less if your child remains very still.
- The nurse will then attach test tubes to the needle. These tubes will fill up with blood. The nurse may collect as many as 10 tubes.
- Blood collecting in the tube is magnified so it may appear that a large amount of blood has been taken out. The nurse will never draw more blood than your child's body can easily replace in a short period of time.



### After the Test

When the nurse or technician has taken all the blood samples needed, the blood draw is over.

- The nurse or technician will place a piece of gauze on the spot of the venipuncture and remove the needle. The gauze will stop any bleeding that might occur.
- A band-aid will be placed over the gauze. It can be removed before your child goes to bed that night.
- After the procedure, your child may resume normal activities.
- The doctor may not know the results of the tests for several days. Once the results are in, the doctor will contact you to talk about them.
- Your child may be tender or sore in the area where the blood samples were taken. (If so, he or she may take a mild pain reliever, such as Tylenol® or acetaminophen.)

### Special Needs

If your child has any special needs or health issues you feel the nurse or technician performing the test needs to know about, please call Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh **before the test** and ask to speak with a nurse. It is important to notify us in advance about any special needs.

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### A Parent's/Guardian's Role During the Test

The most important role of a parent or guardian during the test is to help your child stay calm and relaxed. The best way to help your child stay calm is for you to stay calm.

- You may stay near your child, hold his or her hand, or allow him or her to sit on your lap for comfort during the blood draw.
- You may bring along a comfort item—such as a favorite stuffed animal or “blankie”—for your child to hold during the blood draw.
- Please follow the instructions of the nurse or technician during the test. You are welcome to ask questions at any time.



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To see the list of all available patient procedures descriptions, please visit [www.chp.edu/procedures](http://www.chp.edu/procedures).