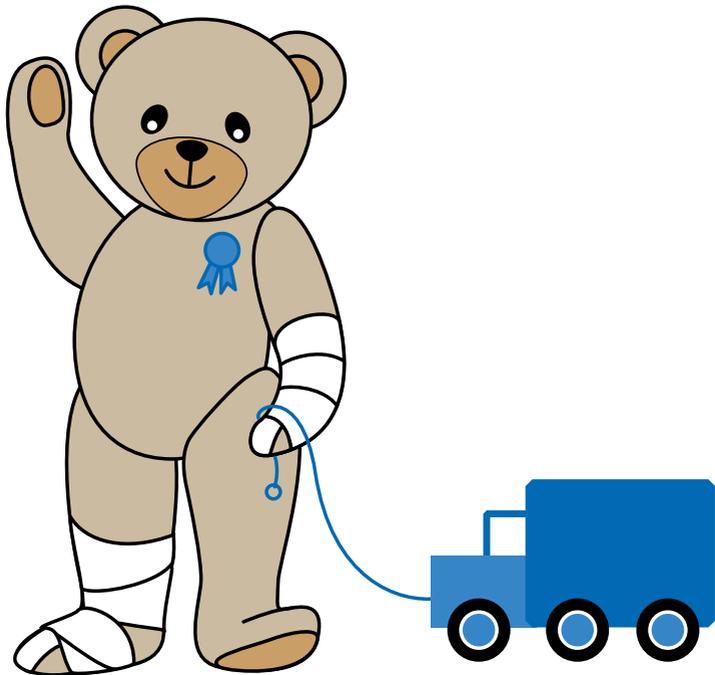


# Having a blood test – children

Paediatrics Department



Patient information leaflet

This leaflet explains what will happen if your child needs a blood test. The Doctor should explain why your child needs the blood test. Blood tests for children under the age of 10, are performed in the Children's outpatient department (level B outpatients 6). These appointments need to be booked in advance on 01483 571122 ext. 6944.

Children over the age of 10 can be seen in the main phlebotomy clinic in outpatients 4. No appointment is necessary 09:09-16:30 Monday to Friday.

Children who are attending Hascombe ward, will have their blood taken on Hascombe ward.

## **How do I prepare my child?**

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All children (apart from infants too young to understand), should be told that they are going to have a blood test. Explain what will happen to your child in a way that he/she can understand

## **Will the blood test hurt?**

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We use a local anaesthetic cream called Ametop(R) or Emla(R) cream. This numbs the skin before taking blood. These creams can be used in babies over the age of 1 month.

## **Where do I get the local anaesthetic cream from?**

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It can be brought at one of the local large pharmacies or from the hospital pharmacy. If your child is on Hascombe ward, the cream will be applied by the nurses.

## How do I apply the cream?

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Emla® and Ametop® are white creams in a small tube and look like travel toothpaste. Both these creams can be used on babies over the age of 1 month.

Please put a blob on the inside bends of each elbow and on the back of both hands. Cover the cream with the clear plastic dressing provided. Or cover with household cling film.

Place the cream in several places so the phlebotomist can decide where to take blood from.

Some children may try to pull the cream off. Try and distract your child and cover the area with long sleeves or socks. Then your child may forget that the cream has been applied.

We can also use a numbing spray if your child does not cooperate with the cream. Babies under 1 month old can be given a sugar solution (sucrose) before the blood test. This sucrose releases natural painkillers, which reduce distress during the blood test.

Some children have sensitive skin, the cream may cause redness. This redness will wear off when the cream has been removed.

## What shall I bring with me?

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Please bring your child's favourite toy or comforter. Your child may like a drink or snack when the blood test is completed.

## Who will do the blood test?

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A phlebotomist will be taking your child's blood. Phlebotomists are skilled in taking blood from babies and children. Occasionally the blood test may be done by a doctor or nurse.

Your child will be introduced to the phlebotomist before they start the blood test.

## How do I hold my child for the blood test?

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It is essential that your child remains still whilst the blood is being taken. If you are happy to be present during the blood test, the phlebotomist will show you how to hold your child. This will minimise their movements and sheiks the procedure from their vision.

In babies the holding still is more upsetting, rather than any pain felt during the blood test itself.

## Distraction

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Distraction is beneficial during the procedure. It helps to take away any discomfort, anxiety or fear they may have. Books and toys are provided by the clinic/Hascombe ward.

## How is the blood test done?

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The phlebotomist will begin by washing their hands. The dressing/cling film will be removed and wiped away by a staff member. The area where the cream has been applied may appear red. This is normal.

The area that the blood will be taken from, will be wiped away.

The staff member may use a tourniquet or will squeeze your child's arm or wrist. This makes the vein fill up with blood, making it easier for the blood to be taken.

A needle is inserted into a vein where the cream has been. This is connected to a syringe or holder and the blood taken out.

In babies, a needle maybe out into the vein. Then the blood is allowed to drip out into the collection bottles.

When the required amount of blood is taken, the needle is removed. A cotton pad is then pressed onto the small wound for a few minutes. This stops the bleeding and prevents bruising. A plaster is then put on, this completed the blood test.

## **Are there any complications?**

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Sometimes a bruise may develop where the needle was put in.

Occasionally it can be difficult to find a vein. It may take more than one attempt to obtain a sample.

An infection may develop where the needle was put in. See your GP if the site becomes red or sore.

Occasionally you feel faint during a blood test. You or your child will be encouraged to lie down, to prevent fainting.

## **Are there any alternatives?**

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There are currently no alternative methods to obtain a blood test from your child.

## **How soon will I get the blood test results?**

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Usually the results from your child's blood test will go directly to your GP. This may take up to one week. It maybe longer depending on the reason the blood test is being performed.

If your child has been seen as an outpatient, results will be sent to your child's consultant. Your Consultant will discuss the results with you at your next outpatient appointment.

If your child is on Hascombe ward, the blood results will be discussed when they are available.

## **Who do I contact if I have any concerns?**

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If you have any concerns regarding your child's blood test, please speak to a staff member.

**An appointment has been booked for:**

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Date:

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Time:

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Should you be unable to attend the appointment, please inform the clinic as soon as possible. Then a new appointment can be arranged. Telephone **01483 571122** ext. **6944** (clinic) or Hascombe ward **01483 464071**.



## Contact details

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### Hascombe ward

**Telephone:** 01483 464071(direct line)

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### PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Jane James

Review author: Clare Mitchell

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