

Performance of Venepuncture

Version:	Owner:	Created:
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Published:	Approving Director:	Next Review
08/09/2026	Rhys Hancock (Director of Nursing, AHPs and Governance)	08/09/2027

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Introduction

Blood tests have a wide range of uses and are one of the most common types of medical test. They are often requested to:

- assess general state of health
- check for infection
- see how well certain organs, such as the liver and kidneys, are working
- screen for certain genetic conditions

This SOP applies to staff that have completed relevant training/education and have been assessed as competent to perform venepuncture (adults and/or children). It should be used in conjunction with standard precautions for infection prevention and control and relevant health and safety measures.

Adult Venepuncture

Equipment

The equipment required includes:

- Appropriate vacutainer and needle
- 2% chlorhexidine in 70% alcohol skin wipe (Clinell)
- Disposable/Wipeable tourniquet
- Cotton wool and tape
- Sharps bin
- Appropriate sample collection bottles
- Non-sterile gloves
- Additional protective equipment as necessary

Procedure

- Confirm patient identity, explain procedure and obtain informed verbal consent
- Assemble equipment (use wipeable tray)
- Position patient appropriately, clean hands and prepare equipment
- Apply tourniquet and palpate vein
- Clean hands and apply gloves
- Clean patient's skin using Clinell wipe (left and right/back and forth 30sec) and allow to air dry
- Insert needle into vein and attach sample tubes in correct order of draw – remove last bottle
- Release tourniquet and hold cotton wool over puncture site as needle is removed
- Engage sharp safety mechanism and discard in sharps bin
- Ask patient to keep arm straight and apply pressure for 1-2 mins until bleeding ceases and then secure cotton wool with tape
- Clean tray, clean wipeable re-useable tourniquet, dispose of tourniquet if one use, gloves and wash hands
- Ensure ICE request form is completed, and the sample bottles are correctly labelled

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- Document blood sample taken and sent to lab and consent given.
- Inform patient of procedure for obtaining results.

Advice

Advice and support should be sought if there have been **two unsuccessful attempts**.

A different clinician may, with the patient's consent, may try a third attempt. However, after three failed attempts the patient should be booked into another appointment on a different day. They should be advised to drink plenty of water leading up to the test and to keep arms warm to promote vein prominence.

Paediatric Venepuncture

Under 12 Years Old

Due to changes in the Supplementary basket payment criteria, we will no longer take blood from those children under the age of 12 years old

Bristol Children's Hospital

Children under 12 years old parents need to self-refer by email or telephone:

- Email: bchopphlebotomy@uhbw.nhs.uk or phone 0117 342 7049
- The blood test request needs to be placed on ICE
- **Send ACCURX text "BCH Children's blood test" this provides information how to book and apply numbing cream (See Appendix)**
- GP – is to send script for Emla numbing cream for parents to collect and apply (with cling film to cover) – 1 hour prior to blood test appointment

If a request is urgent then the GP should contact Puzzlewood Ward to discuss.

Tel: 0117 3427049

North Bristol Trust:

- GPs must complete the [Referral Form](#) (available on EMIS) and send by email to paediatricoutpatients@nbt.nhs.uk with a brief history explaining why the bloods are required.
- The GP must request the blood tests on ICE before the email referral is sent.

Please note there may be a wait for routine blood appointments. For queries Tel: 0117 414 5807

12 – 16 Years Old

For children aged 12-16 – book 10-minute appointment – Clinician to prescribe Emla if needed

Equipment

The equipment required includes:

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- Appropriate Butterfly needle & syringe
- If older child – practitioner can assess vein to see if Butterfly needle and barrel with non-paediatric bottles can be used
- 2% chlorhexidine in 70% alcohol skin wipe (Clinell)
- Cotton wool and tape
- Sharps bin
- Wipeable/disposable tourniquet
- Appropriate paediatric sample collection bottles - can use normal bottles subject to assessment
- Non-sterile gloves
- Additional protective equipment as necessary

Procedure

- Confirm patient identity with Child & parent
- Ensure if young child they have applied numbing cream 30 minutes prior to appointment
- If older child attends alone and is appropriate age – Assess Gillick competence/speak to parent on phone to consent
- Explain procedure and obtain informed verbal consent – from Child & parent
- Assemble equipment (use wipeable tray)
- Position patient appropriately, clean hands and prepare equipment.
- If nervous child position on parent lap - advise parent what you want them to do and if necessary, ask for 2nd colleague to assist with positioning and distraction
- Apply tourniquet and palpate vein
- Clean hands and apply gloves
- Clean patient's skin using Clinell wipe (left and right/back and forth 30sec) and allow to air dry
- Insert needle into vein and draw blood into syringe
- Release tourniquet and hold cotton wool over puncture site as needle is removed
- Engage sharp safety mechanism and discard in sharps bin – decant into paed bottles with syringe
- Ask patient to keep arm straight and apply pressure for 1-2 mins until bleeding ceases and then secure cotton wool with tape
- Clean tray, dispose of gloves and clean hands
- Ensure ICE request form is completed and the sample bottles are correctly labelled
- Document blood sample taken and sent to lab and consent given
- Inform patient of procedure for obtaining results.

Advice

If there has been an **unsuccessful attempt**. Consider asking a different clinician to assess - with the patient/parent consent.

Try a 2nd attempt. However, if 2 failed attempts the patient should be booked into another appointment on a different day. They should be advised to drink plenty of water leading up to the test and to keep arms warm to promote vein prominence.

Appendix 1

Pre-loaded ACCURX wording & Attachment below.

Attached is a leaflet with how to book for your child's bloods test at the Bristol Children's Hospital - please follow the instructions in the letter attached.

Saved to Y: Drive


University Hospitals Bristol
NHS Foundation Trust

CHILDRENS BLOOD TEST

A Parent/Carers guide to the procedure

- Email: bchopphebotomy@uhbw.nhs.uk or phone 0117 342 7049 to make your appointment
- Ensure you request a prescription for numbing cream from the GP and collect from pharmacy before the day of your appointment

On the day of your appointment

- Please report to Carousel Outpatients, Level 3, Bristol Royal Hospital for Children
- Make sure you have a blood request form from your GP (as without it we are unable to take the blood)
- Make sure your child drinks plenty before attending the hospital
- Apply cream an hour before your appointment time
- During the procedure you will be required to hold your child firmly to prevent them moving

How to apply the numbing cream or similar

- Use half a tube to the back of each hand and in the creases of the elbow. It helps the process if their hands are warm.



Cover with Cling film

We know this may be a worrying experience for you and your child, but please be assured we aim to make it as relaxed and pleasant as possible.

Word Document Saved to pre-formatted ACCURX sent to parents to advise how to apply numbing cream.

Version Control

Version	Date	Author	Change
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Performance of Venepuncture

1.0	12/2020	Jodie Godfrey	New Document
1.0	21/10/2025	Jodie Godfrey	Document uploaded to radar as V1.0
1.1	04/09/2026	Jodie Godfrey	Document review to ensure all practice alignment