



What to Expect at  
**Your Blood Draw**  
at Seattle Children's Lab

## **A note for parents/caregivers:**

This book was written for patients of different ages and follows a common patient experience. Because patients have different reasons for visiting the lab, and may have other health conditions, some sections may not apply to your child.

Some children can cope with a lot of information and others become anxious when given too much information. Read this first and choose which sections to share – you know your child best. When talking with your child, be honest.

Because this procedure involves a needle, it is important to discuss pain management. This book will give you and your child the opportunity to talk about coping strategies. Before your lab visit, talk to your child's care provider about a numbing cream for the skin where the needle will be inserted. For more information, see our handout Numbing Cream for Painful Procedures at [www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1167.pdf](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE1167.pdf).

We encourage you to be a part of your child's lab experience. You can be present for all lab procedures and play an active role in supporting your child through them. Ask your child and the phlebotomist how you can help.

If you have more questions or would like to schedule a Child Life consult (includes medical play, coping strategies and/or a tour), please contact:

Seattle Children's Child Life Specialists  
206-987-2145

## **Free Interpreter Services**

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

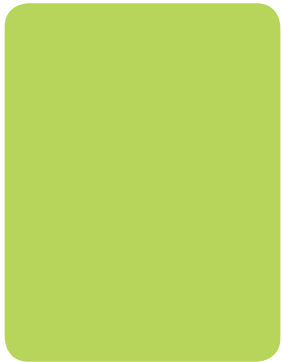
You are coming here to have a blood draw. A blood draw is when some of your blood is taken out of your body using a small needle. A doctor asks for a blood draw to look at your blood and get a better idea of how your body is working.

You might have a lot of questions. Read on to learn what your visit might be like.





To get ready for your visit, drink a lot of water during the day and night before your blood draw. Being hydrated makes it easier to see the veins that carry blood through your body.



Dress warmly on the day of your blood draw. When your body is warm, your veins are easier to find. That helps the blood draw go faster. Wear a shirt with sleeves that are easy to push or roll up out of the way.

After stopping at the entrance desk, you will go to patient registration. You will get an ID band that has your name and birthday on it. Next, you will go to the lab or first visit your doctor and then go to the lab.



At the lab you will be signed in. If you made a Blood Draw Plan (see page 15), give it to the lab registration person. You can sit and read, play a game or color while you wait.





When it is your turn, a phlebotomist [fluh-bot-uh-mist] will call your name. A phlebotomist is a person trained to do blood draws.

They will ask you to follow them to an exam room and sit in a chair. They will ask you your name and birthday, and check your ID band.



Since phlebotomists do blood draws, they have ideas about helping things go smoothly. Ask them questions any time.

Your most important job during the blood draw is to hold very still. That helps the phlebotomist keep you safe, and it helps the blood draw go faster.

You can sit by yourself in this chair, or you can sit in someone's lap.

Some kids, even adults, can be nervous about needles. Think about what you can do to stay relaxed, calm and still. To do this, find your coping style:

### Watch and Learn

You can:

- Ask to hear about each step before or as it happens.
- Take slow, deep breaths.
- Have someone hold your other hand.
- Ask your phlebotomist if there is a job you can help with — Hold the gauze? Put on the Band-Aid?





## Look Away

You can:

- Ask in your Blood Draw Plan that the blood draw supplies be covered.
- Bring a handheld player to watch.
- Look at something else in the room.
- Imagine you are somewhere else doing something that you like.
- Take slow, deep breaths.
- When you breathe out, 'blow' away feelings you don't like.
- Have someone hold your other hand.

You are ready!



## The Blood Draw

The phlebotomist will look and feel the veins in your arms or hands for a good spot that will make the blood draw faster and easier for you. The most common spot is on the inside of the elbow.



If you are using numbing cream, it gets wiped off.





A large colored rubber band is tied around your arm. It will feel like a tight squeeze. This step is important because it makes your veins easier to see and feel.



The spot on your skin gets cleaned.

A small, thin needle is quickly put in.



A tube will collect some of your blood.





The arm band comes off.

The needle gently comes out.




That's a wrap! You know it is over when they cover the spot with a piece of gauze and top it with a Band-Aid or by wrapping soft, stretchy tape around your arm.

Do you want a Band-Aid or the stretchy wrap? If you want the wrap, ask what colors they have.

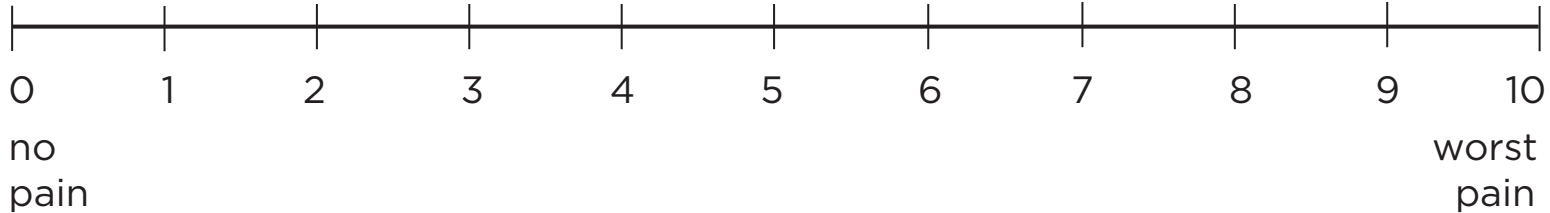
After your blood draw, you may be asked if you felt any pain.  
Here are two possible ways to answer:

Point to the face that best matches how it felt.



The image shows six faces in a row, each with a different expression of pain. From left to right: 1. A neutral face with a slight smile. 2. A face with a slight frown and furrowed brows. 3. A face with a more pronounced frown and deeper furrows. 4. A face with a very deep frown and heavily furrowed brows. 5. A face with a wide-open mouth and a look of intense discomfort. 6. A face with a wide-open mouth, a look of extreme pain, and a grimace.

Or use numbers to say how it felt —  
0 means it did not hurt and 10 means it hurt a lot.



The image shows a horizontal scale with tick marks from 0 to 10. Below the 0 is the text 'no pain' and below the 10 is the text 'worst pain'.





We hope this has helped you know what to expect during your blood draw at our lab. We are happy to answer any questions — feel free to ask!



It really helps to think about what you can do to stay relaxed before your blood draw. Make your own Blood Draw Plan on the next page.

# My Blood Draw Plan

Message for the phlebotomist:

- Please cover the blood draw supplies so that I do not see them.

When writing your plan, think about what you like to do if you start to feel worried, and if you want help.

For waiting time, I will bring:

- A favorite book
- My stuffed animal
- \_\_\_\_\_

Getting ready for the blood draw, I want to:

- Sit in the chair by myself.
- Sit in \_\_\_\_\_'s lap.
- Watch and learn.
  - Hear all of the steps right before they happen.
  - Just watch and not hear what is going to happen.
  - Ask my phlebotomist if there is a job I can help with.
- Not watch. Instead, I will:
  - Look away.
  - Bring a handheld player to watch.
  - Imagine I am somewhere else doing something I like.
  - Take slow, deep breaths.
  - When I breathe out, I will “blow” away feelings I don’t like.
  - Have \_\_\_\_\_ hold my hand.
  - \_\_\_\_\_

When it is over:

- I will ask if I can hold the piece of gauze in place.
- I would like a Band-Aid.
- I would like a stretchy arm wrap.

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like a sticker.

My jobs:

- ★ Keeping still to help the blood draw go more smoothly — and faster! If it is hard for me to hold still, an adult will help me by gently holding my arm during the blood draw.
- ★ Afterwards, I will talk about how it went. Maybe I will have a new idea for another time.

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206-987-2000 (Voice)  
1-866-987-2000  
(Toll-free for business use only)  
1-866-583-1527 (Family Interpreting Line)

[www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org)

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Page 13: Faces Pain Scale – Revised (FPS-R) (2001) Hicks CL, et al. References available upon request.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handbook has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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