

C H I L D B L O O D W O R K

PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

What is bloodwork?

“Bloodwork” is the procedure that occurs when a skilled healthcare professional inserts a needle into a vein to remove a small amount of blood for laboratory testing. Bloodwork is ordered by your physician to help her/him make informed decisions about your treatment.

What can I expect when my child requires bloodwork?

The child/parent/guardian will be informed that a skilled healthcare professional will be inserting a needle into a vein in one of their arms or feet.

1. Both arms will be inspected for the best site. Occasionally a foot vein is used if necessary. The skin will be cleansed with an antibacterial agent and allowed to dry.
2. A tourniquet, which is a rubberband-like material, will be placed on the arm or leg above the site for drawing the sample. The tourniquet tightly squeezes the arm or leg and fills the vein with blood. This remains in place until the sample is obtained.
3. The needle will be inserted into the largest vein available which causes the least amount of discomfort. *The insertion of the needle may be uncomfortable but this feeling should not last.*
4. *The insertion of the needle requires the child to hold his/her extremity very still.* This may require the assistance of the parent or another healthcare professional to keep the extremity from moving.
5. Several tubes may be needed as requested by your physician. Different color tubes are required for different tests according to your physician’s order. The average tube only holds 2 teaspoons of blood.

What can I do to help my child?

Holding your child during the bloodwork procedure is soothing and reassuring. You may be asked to sit with your child in a chair or recliner. You should try to relax and be comfortable. It is a good idea to bring along a favorite toy, teddy bear, or doll. Sometimes this form of distraction can help the child during the procedure.

What can we expect after the bloodwork is drawn?

Once the bloodwork is obtained, the needle is removed and firm pressure is applied over the site with a bandage to prevent bleeding and minimize bruise formation. You will be allowed to leave the area when a healthcare professional has determined that there are no signs of bleeding at the site.

1. Quiet activity should be encouraged for two hours. Heavy activity or lifting may put stress on the site and cause it to bleed.
2. Check the site periodically. After 2 hours, remove the bandage and check the site. Replace with a clean bandaid if necessary or if requested by the child.
3. Bruising may occur with this procedure.

For more Patient Education Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education