

Here are some examples that you may use:

o **Activities or toys**

Let your child watch videos or play games on a tablet during the procedure. You can also let him or her choose and practise using an item before the procedure begins. Pinwheels, bubbles, activity books and stress balls are some of the most popular distraction items. Your child can bring along his or her favourite toys or books too.

o **Blowing bubbles or pinwheels**

It relaxes your child by slowing and deepening his or her breath.

o **Diversional talk**

You can talk to your child about your family, his or her favourite cartoon or your last vacation together in a comforting and rhythmic voice.

o **Magic blanket**

Assure your child that “magic powers” have been given to a blanket for his or her relaxation, comfort and protection.

o **Soothing touch**

Rhythmic touch alleviates loneliness and fear and promotes relaxation.

o **Music**

It helps to sooth or distract, especially when your child picks the music.

o **Singing**

A child who is not too scared or anxious may be soothed with singing or by being sung to.

We are here to help

Our child life therapist provides support for children to cope with painful procedures. If you would like your child to see our child life therapist, please discuss your request with your doctor who will assess his or her suitability.

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical condition.

About the Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children’s Medical Institute (KTP-NUCMI)

The KTP-NUCMI is the paediatric arm of the National University Hospital and comprises the Departments of Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery and Neonatology. We provide comprehensive and specialised medical and surgical services for newborns, children and adolescents. NUH is the only hospital in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes. Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, we have set up an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services.

For more information about us, visit www.nuh.com.sg/ktp-nucmi.

Contact Us

24-hour Children’s Emergency

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1
General Enquiry: +65 6772 5000

KTP-NUCMI

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2
(Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri), 8.30am – 12.30pm (Sat)
General Enquiry: +65 6772 5736 Appointment Line: +65 6908 2222
Email: ktpnucmi_appt@nuhs.edu.sg

9a Viva-University Children’s Cancer Centre

Location: NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9
Operating Hours: 8am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line: +65 6772 5030 Fax: +65 6872 4314
Email: cbccappt@nuhs.edu.sg

NUH Children’s Urgent Care Clinic @ Bukit Panjang

Location: Junction 10, 1 Woodlands Road, #01-22, Singapore 677899
Operating Hours: 9am – 11pm daily (including public holidays)
General Enquiry: +65 6219 1538 Email: childrenucc@nuhs.edu.sg
Website: www.nuh.com.sg/ucc

NUH Child Development Unit @ JMC

Location: Jurong Medical Centre,
60 Jurong West Central 3, Level 2, Singapore 648346
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line: +65 6665 2530/2531 Fax: +65 6665 0158
Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

NUH Child Development Unit @ Keat Hong

Location: Keat Hong Community Club,
2 Choa Chu Kang Loop, #03-01, Singapore 689687
Operating Hours: 8.30am – 5.30pm (Mon to Fri)
Appointment Line: +65 6769 4537/4637 Fax: +65 6665 0158
Email: cdu@nuhs.edu.sg Website: www.nuh.com.sg/cdu

National University Hospital

Location: 5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074
Tel: +65 6908 2222 Email: contactus@nuhs.edu.sg
Website: www.nuh.com.sg



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Information is correct at the time of printing (November 2022) and subject to revision without prior notice.

Preparation for Blood Taking



What do I need to know?

Your doctor has requested a blood test for your child. A visit to the procedure room can be unsettling for you and your child. Your child may become upset by being in unfamiliar surroundings or simply by seeing a stranger. It is important for you to know what to expect so as to better prepare your child for the blood taking procedure.

How is the blood taking procedure done?

• Skin puncture

The skin puncture technique involves collecting blood from small blood vessels under the skin. The skin of the finger, big toe or heel of your child is punctured with a sterile lancet. This is the preferred method for infants when only a small amount of blood is required. After the initial puncture, your child will feel a gentle pressure when our staff squeezes and releases the finger, toe or heel. The squeezing and releasing stimulates blood flow from capillaries. Capillaries are very tiny so this procedure may take a little longer; in some cases an additional puncture may be necessary to collect enough blood.

• Venipuncture

Venipuncture involves collecting blood from a vein using a sterile needle. The venipuncture method is used when several tests are requested. During the blood collection, pain is seldom felt when the blood is flowing into the tube.

Should I stay with my child?

Depending on the age of your child, our staff will advise on how you can help to comfort or handle your child. The procedure may be prolonged if your child becomes frightened.

How can I prepare my child before the procedure?

You can assist your child by preparing him or her for the experience. Explain the procedure to your child. Tell him or her the needle may hurt or sting for just a minute. Telling your child exactly what will happen may reduce his or her fear. For older children, it is best to explain the need for this procedure. Keep your child as calm as possible and explain that this procedure must be performed.

• For younger children: Play 'doctors and nurses'

Use his or her favourite teddy or doll as a "patient" to explain the whole process of taking a blood sample. You could put a dab of cream on teddy's hand or explain about blood sample bottles going to the laboratory. You could also use toy medical kits that include pretend syringes during the role play.

You know your child best so do tailor the information to his or her needs and level of understanding but make sure that it is truthful.

• Let your child know that it might be painful

Some signs of pain in infants and children include crying, irritability, fast heartbeat, fast breathing and holding the painful area. Most pain caused by medical procedures can be reduced with medication, distraction, holding and comforting. Pain that is not treated may get in the way of physical and emotional healing.

• Let your child know it is alright to cry

Crying is an effective coping mechanism for some children so let your child know that it is alright to cry. We understand that blood taking can be an uncomfortable experience for the children and anticipate that some children will cry. However, should your child's threshold for pain be low, do let us know in advance. While we will need your child to keep fairly still during the procedure, crying is fine.

• If your child is scared of needles...

Fear of needles can affect anyone at any age for various reasons. Some people develop this fear due to a bad experience where it had taken more than one attempt to find a vein. Others may have seen or read about injections or blood samples and formed misperceptions. It can also develop if negative feelings are picked up from someone such as a family member or friend. Although fear of needles can be worrying for parents, particularly if your child needs regular injections or blood samples, there are ways to improve the situation.

What are the ways to reduce the pain during the procedure?

• Comfort positioning

You can comfort and distract your child by staying near him or her while he or she faces you. Help your child to choose a position that will comfort him or her such as sitting on your lap while facing forward and hugging you. Being held feels different from being held down.

Hold your child's hand. Encourage him or her to hold, squeeze, look at or think about his or her favourite thing. Thinking about a favourite place that comforts him or her will help too.

There are many positions of comfort. You can ask our nurse for suggestions or refer to the poster in the procedure room.

• Distraction

Distraction techniques should ideally be practised 5 to 10 minutes before a procedure begins so the child is familiar with them. They are more helpful when it is mild to moderate pain. It will be difficult to concentrate when the pain is severe.

