Venepuncture and Cannulation

Information for parents

This leaflet can be made available in other formats including large print, CD and Braille and in languages other than English, upon request.
When a child is unwell or in hospital for tests, the Doctors or Nurses may need to take blood samples or give medication into a vein.

Taking a blood sample involves venepuncture and giving medication into a vein involves cannulation.

**What is venepuncture?**

This means taking blood from a vein. Your child’s Doctor or Nurse will explain why this is needed.

**How is it done?**

A tourniquet (elastic band) is sometimes put around your child's arm or leg. The arm or leg is held still while a small needle is put into a vein. Taking blood does not usually take very long.

Sometimes veins may be hard to find in small children.

**What is cannulation?**

The cannula is a small plastic tube which is put into the vein with a small needle. The needle is then removed leaving the tube in the vein which is held in place with a dressing and bandage.

The cannula will be flushed (a saline – salt and water - solution is injected into the cannula) before and after medication is given.

When the cannula is in position it allows Doctors and Nurses to use the vein to give any medications needed.

This process will need to be carried out again if:

- a vein cannot be found
- not enough blood can be obtained
- the cannula can not be flushed or secured.
Does it hurt?

There may be a little bruising and soreness where the needle goes in which usually clears up quickly.

If it is possible to delay the test for an hour, the Doctor or Nurse may use a ‘magic’ cream that will numb the skin which helps to reduce any pain.

If it is important to do the test straight away then the cream cannot be used. Instead a spray could be used to numb the skin as the cream can take up to 45 minutes to work.

How can I keep my child comfortable?

If your child asks about the tests being carried out, you should try to reassure them and explain in simple terms what is being done and why.

If a cannula is in the child’s hand this can be scary for them but it is important to keep it secure.

At times it is helpful to tell stories, talk about the family or anything else that may help to take their mind off the procedure. You should try to stay calm and comfort your child, if you get upset so will your child.

The staff are there to help you and your child. If you would like more information please ask the Doctor or Nurse caring for your child.

How and when will the cannula be removed?

When your child’s treatment has finished, a Nurse will carefully remove the cannula and cover the area with a dressing. This usually does not hurt.
Contact numbers

If you need further advice or have any questions please contact:

**Children’s Ward**  
Telephone: 01642 382715  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

**Paediatric Day Unit**  
Telephone: 01642 624530  
7 days a week, 9.30am – 10.00pm
Notes:
This leaflet has been produced in partnership with patients and carers. All patient leaflets are regularly reviewed, and any suggestions you have as to how it may be improved are extremely valuable. Please write to the Quality Assurance Team, University Hospital of North Tees or email: patientinformation@nth.nhs.uk

Comments, Concerns, Compliments or Complaints

We are continually trying to improve the services we provide.

We want to know what we’re doing well or if there’s anything which we can improve, that’s why the Patient Experience Team is here to help.

Our Patient Experience Team is here to try to resolve your concerns as quickly as possible. If you would like to contact or request a copy of our PET leaflet, please contact:

    telephone: 01642 624719
    Monday – Friday, 9.00am – 4.00pm
    Messages can be left on the answering machine and will be picked up throughout the day.

    freephone: 0800 092 0084

    Email: patientexperience@nth.nhs.uk

Out of hours if you wish to speak to a senior member of Trust staff, please contact the hospital switchboard who will bleep the appropriate person.

    telephone: 01642 617617
    24 hours a day, 7 days a week

The Patient Experience Team is available to discuss your concerns in person Monday – Friday, 1.30pm – 4.30pm. The office is based on the ground floor at the University Hospital of North Tees.

Data Protection and use of patient information

The Trust has developed a Data Protection, Caldicott and Disclosure Policy (IG5) in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation (General Data Protection Regulations and Data Protection Act 2018) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000. All of our staff respect this policy and confidentiality is adhered to at all times. If you require further information please contact the Information Governance Team.

    telephone: 01642 383551 or email: information.governance@nth.nhs.uk

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