

# Learning About Blood Tests for Children

A child may have a blood test for lots of different reasons, such as finding the cause of symptoms like fatigue or weakness or checking for certain health problems.

A blood test is a quick, simple procedure.

But it can be a little scary for kids, especially the first time.

So it might help if you know what to expect, so you can help prepare your child.

Here's how the test is done.

Most of the time, blood tests are done using a sample from a vein in the arm.

A nurse or other health professional wraps a stretchy band around your child's upper arm, then cleans a small area--usually the inner part of the elbow--with alcohol.

Then, as gently as possible, the nurse pokes a needle into a vein in the arm.

Your child will feel a small, quick pinch.

For a lot of kids, this is the scary part.

So you might want to distract your child.

Try having them look away during the needle poke.

Younger children may want to hold a favorite toy or stuffed animal.

After the poke, blood will fill a small tube that's attached to the needle.

Sometimes more than one tube is filled, so the blood can be used for more than one test.

The stretchy band will be taken off your child's arm.

The nurse will put gauze on the site--with some gentle pressure-- and then tape it or wrap a bandage over it. And that's it.

A blood test doesn't take long.

If your child is feeling nervous, let them know that it'll be over quickly.

After the test, children can usually go home and get back to normal activities.

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