

COPING WITH BLOOD WORK

Child Life Specialists: Help patients with anxiety, developmental delays or autism to complete their blood work

WHAT IS A CHILD LIFE SPECIALIST?

Child Life specialists are trained in child development and promote effective coping through play, preparation, education and self-expressive activities. They provide emotional support for families, and encourage optimum development of children.



NEEDLE FEARS AND PHOBIAS

Being at the hospital can be stressful for anyone. Needle fears and phobias affect 10-22% of the general population. A 2018 study revealed that the greatest source of pain and anxiety for pediatric patients is needle procedures.

Scan this QR code on your phone to watch a quick video about how to make blood work easier for your child.



SETTING YOUR CHILD UP FOR SUCCESS

Before bringing your child in for blood work, take a minute to assess how you feel about blood work. If you are nervous, consider asking a trusted person to bring your child. Your reaction to a stressful situation can influence your child's reaction.

Try different relaxation apps or YouTube videos prior to coming. Practice belly breathing with your child.

Make a plan with your child for what they can do if or when they start to feel nervous. This could look like:

- * Bringing a comfort item or distraction toy
- * Deciding if they want to be told what is happening, if they want to watch the procedure, or if they want to be distracted

POKE PRACTICE PROGRAM

The Child Life Specialists at BC Children's Hospital offer the Poke Practice Program to children and youth who could benefit from a slower approach to blood work. This program is for anyone who experiences needle phobia, anxiety, or anyone who has autism or developmental delays.

Through these sessions, the child or youth will practice all of the steps of the procedure without getting the actual needle poke. Sometimes this takes one practice session, sometimes it takes multiple. The goal is to allow your child to feel comfortable with the procedure and health care staff.

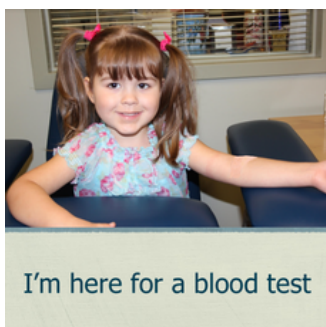
GOALS FOR THIS PROGRAM

- Become familiar with the procedure, the environment, the equipment and the health care staff.
- Use practice and desensitization to build a routine and predictability.
- Learn about the procedure in a non-threatening way.
- Learn coping strategies that can help them do their blood test successfully.



GETTING SUPPORT

If your child copes best with knowing what to expect, you can use this preparation book to help them understand what will happen:



TALK TO A PHARMACIST ABOUT TOPICAL ANESTHETICS OR NUMBING CREAMS. THESE CAN BE APPLIED TO THE SKIN BEFORE THE PROCEDURE TO MAKE A NEEDLE POKE MORE COMFORTABLE.

Contact a Child Life Specialist to make an appointment for **blood work support**, a **Poke Practice appointment** or to get **guidance** on how to best support your child.

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Website: <http://www.bcchildrens.ca/our-services/support-services/child-life#Resources>