

Tips on preparing your child for a blood test

At Cabrini Pathology, we understand that blood tests can be a very frightening experience for some children. Many parents feel anxious and are unsure of what to tell their child. This information sheet is designed to give you some tips on how to best prepare your child for a blood test.

Discuss the blood test with your child

Being honest and talking to your child will help to prepare them for the test. Tell your child about the blood test in advance so he/she has time to ask questions. Use a calm, relaxed tone with simple explanations to explain why the blood test is necessary. You could say something like, "The doctor wants to make sure you are healthy" or "We need to do the blood test to find out what is making you sick."

"Will the blood test hurt?"

If your child asks whether the blood test will hurt or not, we suggest you answer honestly. Perhaps you could say "Some children say they feel a little pinch like a mosquito bite and some children say they don't feel it all." Reassure your child that you will be with them the entire time and that the blood test will not take very long.

How Cabrini will help you and your child

To ensure the blood collection is as quick and as painless as possible, our experienced staff use a range of techniques based on your child's age. In most cases with children, there will be two phlebotomists (blood collectors) in attendance, one to draw the blood and one to help support your child's arm. Your phlebotomist will work with you and your child to determine what will be the best approach. We use a range of distraction techniques, such as musical toys, singing, counting, talking and deep breathing to relax and distract your child while the blood draw is taking place.

Cabrini also uses and promotes the use of the **CoolSense**[®] numbing device. The device is kept in the freezer and is used to instantly provide skin numbness at the site where the blood is to be taken.

Another option available are the **emla**[®] patches. These band aid like patches have a cream in them which numbs the skin slightly. The patches work best if they are left on the skin for 45-60 mins and can be bought from your local pharmacy and applied before you come to the hospital. We can also apply one, but please be mindful this will need to be left on for the required time before we draw the blood.