

I. Purpose

To list special considerations to be taken when collecting Laboratory specimens from Pediatric patients

A. Psychological preparation of the pediatric patient

Besides the technical difficulties, collecting an adequate blood specimen from an infant or child can be more difficult due to the fear response of the child. While the child's fear cannot be completely eliminated, it can be minimized by dealing honestly with the child on a level he/she is capable of understanding. All phlebotomy involves some minor pain. Retaining the confidence of the child involves preparing them for the pain and helping them through it. The following hints will aid the phlebotomist in collecting blood specimens from various age groups of pediatric patients:

1. Birth to 1 year (infant)

Verbal communication is not as important as physical communication to a child this age. A gentle touch and a soft tone of voice help convey security.

2. 1 -3 years (toddler)

This age group protests strongly against restraint and is unable to understand the reasoning for painful procedures. They should be informed in a simple manner of the order of events and descriptions of the procedures. This will help prepare them and lessen their fear. They should also be encouraged by statements of praise which bolsters self-esteem and reinforces trust at a time when a child is denied control.

3. 3 - 6 years (pre-school)

This age group has improved reasoning abilities and language skills. They are aware of the power of adults over their lives and reassured that what is being done is not punishment, but to make them better. Explanations should include an accurate account of events and the time when any pain will be experienced should be noted. Often preschoolers will attempt to cooperate with procedures in order to attain adult approval. The way to enhance this cooperation is to encourage verbal protest in place of physical resistance.

4. **6 - 12 years (school age)**

School age children tend to develop their own routines for dealing with pain and fear. The phlebotomist should cooperate with their method of coping and should provide an atmosphere in which the child feels free to cry, get angry, or be upset when procedures do not go easily.

5. **12 -18-years (adolescent)**

This age group tends to fluctuate between childish and mature behavior. They should be allowed to have as much control as possible in the decision making.

B. Other Considerations

- Do not use small round band aids on small children as they may attempt to put them in their mouths.
- Ensure the fingertip incision site is not swollen or edematous.
- Do not collect blood from recent incision sites or open cuts.
- Do not use providone iodine to disinfect skin incision sites because of the potential for elevated chemistry values.
- Cold fingers must be pre-warmed to ensure good results.