

## Capillary Blood Sampling (by heel prick)

### Standard

Every infant who experiences a heel prick will have the procedure carried out in a manner which minimises actual or potential trauma.

### Equipment

Blue tray, alcohol swab, lancet, cotton wool ball, non-sterile gloves, paper towel and container for blood sample (this depends on the reason for obtaining the sample (see note 1)).

### Procedure

- Equipment is assembled and placed in an accessible position for carrying out the procedure. Cleanse hands according to NNU policy.
- Involve the parents when present.
- To manage procedural pain through use of non nutritive sucrose-ensure this has been prescribe and given 2 minutes before the procedure. See note 4.
- Position the infant to promote his comfort during the procedure.
- Place paper towel under the foot to protect bedding/clothing. Apply gloves. Cleanse heel with an alcohol swab and allow drying for 30 secs.
- Secure heel within hand.
- Prick heel according to diagram (see figure 1). Wait a few seconds before using a milking action to achieve blood flow. Collect blood according to sample requirement (see note 2).
- Apply pressure to puncture site with cotton wool ball.
- Observe puncture site to ensure bleeding has stopped.
- Reposition infant comfortably.
- Dispose of sharps and waste material according to Trust Clinical Waste Policy.
- Record procedure and findings in the relevant documentation. Report abnormal findings to nurse/midwife in charge (see note 3).

Figure 1



### Potential complications

Physiological instability, osteomyelitis, tissue atrophy or dermoid cyst formation, excessive bruising.

## Notes

1. This procedure is applicable in obtaining blood for glucose, blood gas and drug level estimation, screening tests e.g. Dried blood spot test and other tests e.g. serum bilirubin estimation.
  - Guidelines in the use of the blood gas analyser
  - Guidelines for Dried blood spot screening
  - Guidelines for routine blood testing
  - Guidelines serum drug monitoring
2. The 'sample requirement' refers to the minimum amount needed to perform the test and obtain an accurate result. This will vary according to the test undertaken.
3. See appropriate guidelines for the management of hypoglycaemia and blood gas interpretation.
4. Use of non pharmacological pain management nursing techniques.

## References

- Meehan R. M. (1998) Heelsticks in Neonates for Capillary Blood Sampling. Neonatal Network 17(1) : 17-24.
- Webb J. (1998) Nursing Care of the Small Infant. In: Yeo H (ed). Nursing the Neonate. Blackwell Science, London.