

My child needs a blood test

This leaflet explains what happens if your child needs a blood test on Kempton Day Bed Unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and how best to prepare for it.

About Kempton Unit

Kempton Day Bed Unit aims to provide a friendly, welcoming, safe and relaxed environment, offering quality evidence-based care to ensure the best possible experience for the child and their family. The blood test service is mainly for infants under 1 year, children who have been previously difficult to bleed, children who require specialist tests, children with additional needs and older children with needle phobia/anxiety.

Kempton Day Bed Unit is located in Centre Block, Level 3 at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. We have a very friendly team of nurses, support workers, play leaders and ward clerks, managed by our ward sister.



Your child's blood test

We understand that having a blood test can be a worrying time for you as a parent/carer, and your child may feel nervous. Our department aims to provide a safe and enjoyable environment suitable for children of all ages, with kind and caring staff to ensure you all have a positive experience.

When you arrive

- On arrival to our department, you will be greeted by our ward clerk who will check you in. Please be sure to have the blood request form with you if you have one.
- One of our nurses will introduce themselves to you and your child, confirming what tests have been requested by your doctor. Sometimes a doctor requests a urine sample, so please ask before your child uses the bathroom.
- Some blood tests require your child to not eat anything prior to the test. **Please check with your doctor prior to the day of the test.**
- The nurse will talk with you and your child about the different options for pain relief for the blood test.
- **For babies/children over 3 months:**
 - 'Magic cream'- this is a local anaesthetic cream that is applied to the skin over a vein, usually on the back of the hands or the inside of the elbow. This cream takes 30-60 minutes to become effective.

- Cold spray – this is a very cold spray that works instantaneously and numbs the area for the blood test.
- **For babies under 3 months:**
 - Sucrose – this is a sugary water that is dripped onto the tongue during the procedure to reduce pain.
 - A dummy or feeding is also successful for this age.
- If your child is anxious, then the play leader will spend some time with them. This allows your child to familiarise themselves with the play leader and feel more relaxed.

When blood is collected...

Blood tests are always taken in our treatment room. There will be two nurses and a play leader in the room. We encourage parents to stay with the child; however, if this is not what you wish then we advise that you bring along somebody else who is familiar to your child.

The play leader will have a variety of distractions for your child. These can include:

- The play box full of interesting little toys and gadgets.
- The television.
- Books such as 'Where's Wally' or 'Where's the Meerkat'.
- Bubbles.
- The Ipad.



If your child has any additional needs, please discuss this with the play leader or nurse on arrival.

When positioning your child, we often encourage you to 'cuddle' your child with their chosen arm tucked behind you. This benefits the child by:

- Keeping the test out of your child's view so they do not become scared by the equipment.
- Ensures your child comfort.
- Ensuring that your child is firmly, but kindly held to avoid the possibility of a repeat test.

Your child will then be given a bravery sticker!



Results...

Depending on the type of tests taken, the results can take 1-8 weeks to become available. Your GP or consultant will be sent your results. **We do not give out blood results from Kempton Day Bed Unit.** If you have a follow up appointment, the results will be discussed with you then.

Preparing your child

Preparing your child is a helpful way to reduce any fears or anxieties. It also empowers you as a parent to feel involved in your child's care. Ways you can do this include:

- Reading stories about the hospital.
- Talking to your child in a positive way about hospitals.
- Playing doctors and nurses with teddies and dolls.
- Reassuring your child where possible.

- Telling the truth. Explain that they *may* feel a little bit uncomfortable for a few seconds but then it will stop.
- If your child has a favourite blanket or toy, allow them to bring it along for their 'adventure'.

Feedback...

We are constantly trying to improve our service to ensure that our families and their children are getting the best possible care and treatment. We would love to hear your feedback. Please put your comments into our comments box in our reception area.



Contacting us

Kempton Day Bed Unit: 0118 322 7512 / 8754

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Written by Leanne Brooker, Paediatric Unit, September 2013

Reviewed: September 2021

Next review due: September 2023