WHO guidelines on drawing blood:  
Best practices in phlebotomy

Improving the ease of venepuncture for paediatric and neonatal patients

- Ask the parent to rhythmically tighten and release the child’s wrist, to ensure that there is sufficient flow of blood
- Keep the child warm by:
  - removing as few clothes as possible,
  - swaddling an infant in a blanket,
  - having a mother or caregiver hold the infant, leaving only the extremity of the site of venepuncture exposed.
- Warm the area of puncture with warm cloth.
- Comfort and reassurance are important.
- Limit the number of times a paediatric patient is stuck. If no satisfactory sample has been collected after two attempts, seek a second opinion to decide whether to make a further attempt or cancel the tests.

**Practical guidance on paediatric and neonatal blood sampling**

15. Place dry gauze over the venepuncture site and slowly withdraw the needle.
16. Ask the parent to continue applying mild pressure.
17. Remove the butterfly from the vacuum tube holder.
18. Dispose of the butterfly in a sharps container.
19. Properly dispose of all contaminated supplies.
20. Label the tube with the patient identification number and date.

Perform hand hygiene (if using soap and water, dry hands with single-use towels).
1. Use a winged steel needle, usually 23 or 25 gauge, with an extension tube (butterfly). Keep the tube and needle separate until the needle is in the vein.

2. Collect supplies and equipment.

3. Perform hand hygiene. (if using soap and water, dry hands with single-use towels)

4. Immobilize the baby or child.

5. Apply a tourniquet about two finger widths above the venepuncture site.

6. Put on well-fitting, non-sterile gloves.

7. Attach the end of a winged infusion set to the end of the vacuum tube, and insert the collection tube into the holder until the tube reaches the needle.

8. Remove the plastic sleeve from the end of the butterfly.

9. Disinfect the collection site. Use 70% isopropyl alcohol and allow to dry.

10. Use a thumb to draw the skin tight, about two finger widths below the venepuncture site.

11. Push the vacuum tube completely onto the needle.

12. Blood should begin to flow into the tube.

13. Fill the tube until it is full or until the vacuum is exhausted. If filling multiple tubes, carefully remove the full tube and replace with another tube, taking care not to move the needle in the vein.

14. Release the tourniquet when the required amount of blood has been collected.