Practical guidance on capillary sampling (finger and heel-prick)

For paediatric and neonatal patients

- You may need to ask the parent or assistant phlebotomist to help immobilize the child.
- 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.

Take laboratory samples in the correct order

(Note: this is the reverse of that used for venepuncture collection)

1. haematology specimens;
2. chemistry specimens;
3. blood bank specimens.

10. Dispose of waste materials appropriately.

11. Remove gloves and place in general waste.

12. Perform hand hygiene (if using soap and water, dry hands with single-use towels).
### Choosing heel or finger-prick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Heel-prick</th>
<th>Finger-prick</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong></td>
<td>Birth to about 6 months</td>
<td>Over 6 months</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Weight:</strong></td>
<td>From 3 to 10 kg, approximately</td>
<td>Greater than 10 kg</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Placement of lancet:</strong></td>
<td>On the medial or lateral plantar surface</td>
<td>On the side of the ball of the finger perpendicular to the lines of the fingerprint</td>
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<td><strong>Depth:</strong></td>
<td>&lt;2.4 mm (for premature neonates, a 0.85 mm lancet is available)</td>
<td>Child &gt; 6 months and &lt; 8 years – 1.5 mm</td>
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<td>Child &gt; 8 years – 2.2 mm</td>
<td>Adult – 2.2 mm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recommended finger</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Second and third finger (i.e. middle and ring finger). Avoid the thumb and index finger because of calluses, and avoid the little finger because the tissue is thin</td>
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1. **Lancet and collection tube.**
2. **Collect supplies and equipment.**
3. **Perform hand hygiene.** (if using soap and water, dry hands with single-use towels)
4. **Put on well-fitting, non-sterile gloves.**
5. **Select the site.**
   - Apply 70% isopropyl alcohol and allow to air dry.
6. **Puncture the skin.**
7. **Wipe away the first drop of blood.**
8. **Avoid squeezing the finger too tightly.**
9. **Dispose of all sharps appropriately (into a sharps container).**