



Info Pack - Blood-taking "hints" for blood lead monitoring and management

By Elizabeth O'Brien, The Lead Education and Abatement Design (LEAD) Group Inc. (environmental health charity), Australia www.lead.org.au – 23 March 2019

At any age after a baby starts to crawl, a blood lead test (with or without dry-sanding of lead paint having ever occurred) is a fantastic investment in your child reaching his/her future IQ and learning behaviour potentials, and even in his/her longevity potential as well as your best effort to reduce his/her risk of getting dementia so, as a parent, I'd like to convey to you that the fantastic potential benefit of a blood lead test on your child is far greater than any "cost".

The best paediatric phlebotomists can be found at children's hospitals or general hospitals and at some private pathology blood collection centres so all you need do is ask the GP for a blood lead referral (asking for one for you and your partner is fantastic too) and to phone your local collection centre to ask when their best paediatric phlebotomist is on duty, then turn up with your referral and your child and the following pain-free blood-taking strategies:

- "know" that it will go well
- dress your child for warmth (for good blood flow) ie, an extra layer of clothing than normal for the day's weather
- ensure your child has had plenty to eat and drink beforehand
- take a "guaranteed" distraction – something your child loves - for the moment when the needle is going in eg a favourite book or toy or food (breastfeeding is perfect if you're still breastfeeding)
- take a "treat" as a reward after the blood is taken
- for extra precautionary preparation, you can purchase an EMLA Patch over-the-counter (without a prescription) from the pharmacy, and ensure this anaesthetic-impregnated-bandaid is applied (over the vein in the crook of the elbow) at least one hour (maximum 4 hours) prior to the blood-taking. A generic-brand anaesthetic cream called Numit 5% is now available over-the-counter too, and could be applied, and then band-aided over securely, to create-your-own EMLA Patch. See:

<https://www.nps.org.au/medicine-finder/emla-patches> and/or

<https://www.nps.org.au/medicine-finder/numit-5-cream>



There are more handy hints for infants and older children, at http://www.massgeneral.org/children/assets/pdf/needle_insertion_pain_parent_handout.pdf ; for children from 12 months to 12 years at <http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/TestsAndTreatments/Procedures/Pages/Blood-Work-Helping-Your-Child-Get-Ready.aspx> and for older children having blood taken, children with whom you can have “the conversation” beforehand or who might benefit by colouring-in drawings of children having blood tests, at <http://www.questdiagnostics.com/home/patients/prepare-for-test/prepare-child.html>

Ask the doctor to give you a print-out of the result/s and scan and email the result to The LEAD Group so that I can answer your questions about management to bring the blood lead level down (if it is above the limit of detection) and possible long-term impacts.
