



Newborn Care Series

Taking a heel blood sample

Lab tests can give us valuable information to help a sick baby. Some tests, such as hemoglobin or blood sugar, only need a small amount of blood. A heel sample is best for that. This video will show you how to take a small sample from the heel.

To begin, let the mother know how this will be done. Encourage her to comfort the baby to distract him from the pain.

Then gather your supplies: cotton swabs, capillary tubes, a sterile lancet or 24 gauge needle, and plasticine. Pour antiseptic on the cotton, and remember your gloves.

Wash your hands and put on the gloves.

Flex the foot upward and hold with one hand. Clean the skin on the sides of the heel. Allow it to dry.

Squeeze the heel to make it flush red, then puncture the SIDE of the heel firmly.

Safely dispose of the sharp.

Hold the tube to the blood to fill. If blood is slow to come, squeeze the heel gently and intermittently. But not too much; that can prevent accurate results.

When done, apply gentle pressure over the puncture site.

Remember:

- Use a heel sample when only a small amount of blood is needed;
- Use the side of the heel;
- Puncture firmly, if you jab too gently you may need to jab again.