

Allergy testing blood drawing instructions

This information leaflet describes how to safely use the allergy test blood sampling kit. Please make sure that you follow the instructions carefully so that we can give your child the best care. If you have any questions, please contact us (details at the end of the leaflet).

Your healthcare professional has recommended that your child has an allergy blood test. Taking the sample at home or at your GP practice means your child will not have to visit the hospital. It involves taking a small amount of your child's blood which you post straight to the laboratory.

How does this allergy test work?

Your child's blood sample will be tested for immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibody (a marker of possible allergy) to a range of triggers (allergens) that your child may need to avoid.

Your allergy healthcare professional will let you know the results that are important for your child, and will tell you how these allergens can be avoided and managed.

What do I need to do?

You will have received this kit by post if you and your child have agreed to take a sample of blood. Once you have posted the sample to the laboratory, the test will be performed and the results will be sent to your allergy team. A member of the team will contact you by phone or letter to explain the results, and discuss the next steps and recommendations for your child's care. Please make a note of the unique identifier number (starting with HA) from the blood collection tube. This is for your records and you can use it when discussing results with the Allergy Team

If you or your child have any concerns about taking the sample after reading this leaflet or watching the video, please contact the team. You may be able to ask your practice nurse or GP to take the sample for you.

Your kit will contain:

- this information leaflet
- two safety lancets. This is the tool you will need to prick the skin.
- one blood collection tube (labelled with the identification code assigned to your child)
- one transport tube
- two alcohol swabs
- two plasters
- a feedback form for you to complete after you have taken the sample
- a prepaid return envelope.

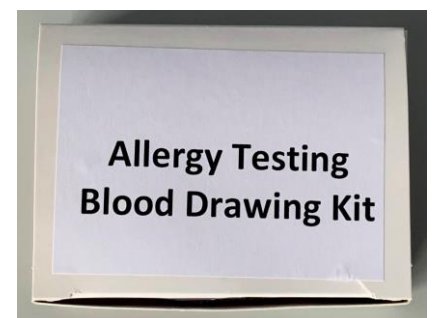
Taking the sample

Please read this box **BEFORE** taking the sample:

- Please make a note of the unique identifier number (starting with HA) from the blood collection tube.
- Please take the sample within 1 week of receiving this kit.
- The whole process should take 15-20 minutes.
- Your child is able to eat and drink normally.
- The child's regular medications (including antihistamines) can continue as normal.
- Each lancet can only be used once.
- Please post the sample on the same day the blood has been taken, but you can store the sample in the fridge overnight if this is not possible.
- Avoid doing the test at the end of the week or at the weekend/national holidays to avoid delays in the sample reaching the laboratory.
- Take time to explain the procedure to your child before you start.
- Remember that if you are anxious, your child will feel anxious. Try to make the environment as relaxed as possible.
- You may find it helpful for your child to have some distraction such as watching a video or having someone else reading them a story. Remember they will only have one hand available while the sample is being taken.
- Store the kit out of the reach of children. The testing of any child under 18 years old should be performed under the supervision of their parent or guardian or a healthcare professional.
- If the user has a communicable disease (for example, HIV) this test kit should not be used.
- In the unlikely event of your child feeling unwell, stop collecting the sample and allow them to lie down. Seek medical advice if you are concerned.

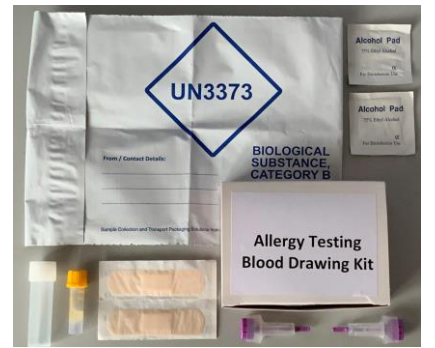
Before you start

- Make sure your child has had a drink (a small glass of water or juice) 30 minutes before taking the sample.
- Please make sure you are not disturbed, and that you have a clean environment, enough space, and the room you are using is at a comfortable temperature.
- Wash your, and your child's, hands thoroughly with soap and warm water for 2-3 minutes.
- Make sure your child's hands are warm, and that they are sitting comfortably.



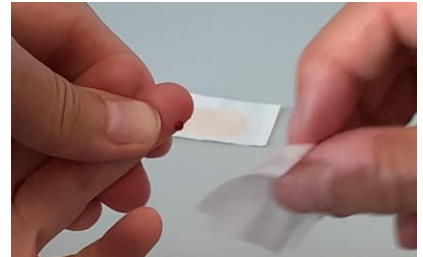
Prepare your equipment

- Place all the items from the box onto a clean table.
- Open both the alcohol wipes.
- Unscrew the lid of the labelled blood collection tube and put it on the table. The sample tube is pre-labelled with a sticker to link the results to your child.
- Clean your child's middle or ring fingertip with an alcohol wipe. Wipe the fingertip several times and allow it to dry.
- Twist the safety end of the lancet, remove it and place it on the table.



Take the sample

- Place the end of the lancet firmly on the side of the cleaned fingertip. Press the trigger until you hear a click. This will make a small puncture in the skin and you should see a small drop of blood appear.
- Wipe away the first drop of blood with the second alcohol wipe.
- Start to massage your child's finger from the middle of the finger towards the puncture site in stroking movements.
- Continue massaging the finger and collect the blood drops, using a scooping motion, into the sample tube.
- Remember to release the finger in between each stroke to allow the blood to flow back into the fingertip. You may find lowering your child's hand helps the blood flow more easily.
- The sample tube has two lines on it. The lower line is marked 400 and the upper line is marked 600. Try to fill the tube to the 600 mark (400 is the minimum amount that is needed to complete the test).



If the blood flow stops:

- wipe the fingertip again using an alcohol wipe
- lower the hand more if you have not already done so.
- You may need to use the spare lancet to puncture the finger again if you are still finding it difficult to fill the tube.



Sealing the sample

- Once there is enough blood in the collection tube, screw the lid back on securely.
- Leave the tube to stand upright on the table for 15 minutes. You can use an egg cup or small glass to put the tube in so that it doesn't fall over.



Apply the plaster, complete the form and prepare to send

- Wipe the finger clean with the alcohol wipe.
- Apply pressure until the bleeding stops if needed.
- Allow the finger to dry.
- Put a plaster on the finger.
- Complete the feedback form.
- After 15 minutes, place the blood tube into the larger transport tube.



Post your child's sample

- Put the transport tube containing the sample, and the completed feedback form, into the pre-paid envelope and make sure it is sealed.
- The envelope can be posted at a normal post box or handed in at a post office.
- If you cannot get the sample for any reason, please tell us using the email address below, leave a message on the nurses' helpline, or book a time for an allergy nurse to call you back using the link below.



Contact us

Please contact us via email, **email:** gst-tr.allergypaediatrics@nhs.net, quoting your unique identifier number, if you feel unable to take your child's blood sample or if you have tried to and were not able to draw enough blood to fill the bottle. You may also call the nurses helpline, **tel:** 020 7188 9783 and leave a message. We try to reply to voicemails within two working days.

Alternatively, you can book a time for a member of the allergy team to call you back by using this link, **web:** my.drdoctor.co.uk/clinic/childrensallergynursehelpline

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit **web:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm
e: letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

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