

**CONWAY REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM
CLINICAL LABORATORY**

Skin Punctures

POLICY

When circumstances such as poor veins, multiple IVs, broken limbs, etc. do not allow a venipuncture to be performed, a skin puncture can be used if only a small amount of blood is needed. Skin punctures may also be appropriate for patients receiving multiple whole blood glucose testing. Skin punctures are especially applicable with the following patients: 1) severely burned patients, 2) extremely obese patients, 3) some patients with thrombotic tendencies, 4) patients with malignancies from whom venipunctures are reserved for therapeutic purposes, and 5) geriatric patients.

MATERIALS

1. Regular or micropoint blood lancet
2. Isopropyl alcohol pads
3. Gauze pads
4. Marking pen
5. Microtainer capillary or whole blood container

PROCEDURE

1. Identify the patient by comparing the patient's full name and medical record number on the request form with the information on the patient's identification bracelet.
2. Assemble the required equipment.
3. Choose the appropriate puncture site. This is usually the palmar surface of the last segment of a finger.
4. Warm the puncture site by rubbing the area to create friction. This can increase blood flow through the site seven-fold.
5. Use an alcohol pad to clean the site.
6. Puncture the skin with a disposable lancet.
7. Wipe off the first drop with a gauze pad
8. Collect the specimen in the appropriate container.
9. Label the specimen container(s).

NOTES:

1. Excessive pressure (milking) at the puncture site should be avoided. This may cause hemolysis or contamination of the specimen with tissue fluid.
2. In adults the center of the last segment and not the side or top of the finger should be used for skin puncture.
3. The skin puncture site must be warm and may not be swollen, as accumulated fluid (edema) in the tissues will contaminate the blood specimen.

References: NCCLS, Approved Standard Procedures for the Collection of Diagnostic Blood Specimens by Skin Puncture. NCCLS, 771 East Lancaster Ave., Villanova, PA, 19085, 1982.

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