Overview

This standard covers the collection of capillary blood samples using either manual or automated lancets, testing of the sample where this is required or sending it elsewhere for laboratory testing. Samples may include those for blood sugar determination, haemoglobin levels and neonatal blood spot testing of the newborn.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.
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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

P1 apply standard precautions for infection prevention and control and any other relevant health and safety measures
P2 give the individual relevant information, support and reassurance in a manner which is sensitive to their needs and concerns
P3 gain valid consent to carry out the planned activity
P4 select and prepare the site for obtaining the capillary blood sample immediately before the blood is obtained, in line with organisational procedures
P5 obtain the required amount of blood of the required quality, using the selected materials and equipment into the container(s) and/or onto the appropriate strips or slides, in the correct order and in a manner which will cause minimum discomfort to the individual
P6 take appropriate action to stimulate the flow of blood if there is a problem obtaining blood from the selected site, or choose an alternative site
P7 apply pressure to the puncture site following completion to encourage closure and blood clotting
P8 promptly identify any indication that the individual may be suffering any adverse reaction/event to the procedure and act accordingly
P9 where the sample is to be sent for laboratory testing:
   P9.1 label the sample, if it is not to be tested immediately clearly, accurately and legibly, using computer prepared labels where appropriate
   P9.2 place sample in the appropriate packaging, ensure the correct request forms are attached and put in the appropriate place for transport or storage if
   P9.3 ensure immediate transport of the sample to the relevant department when blood sampling and investigations are urgent
P10 document all relevant information clearly, accurately and correctly in the appropriate records
P11 when appropriate, test the blood sample correctly using the appropriate method in line with organisational procedure
P12 recognise and interpret results accurately or pass them onto an appropriate staff member for interpretation
P13 record results fully and accurately in the appropriate manner and place and report to the appropriate staff member
P14 give clear and accurate information to the individual about the results of tests, if available and within the limits of your responsibility
P15 respond to questions from the individual clearly and accurately in an appropriate manner, level and pace or refer them to an appropriate staff member
P16 ensure that the individual is informed if any further action is required/the next stage in the process
Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

K1 the current European and National legislation, national guidelines, organisational policies and protocols in accordance with Clinical/Corporate Governance which affect your work practice in relation to obtaining and testing capillary blood samples

K2 your responsibilities and accountability in relation to the current European and National legislation, national guidelines and local policies and protocols and Clinical/Corporate Governance

K3 the duty to report any acts or omissions in care that could be detrimental to yourself, other individuals or your employer

K4 the importance of obtaining positive confirmation of individuals’ identity and consent before starting the procedure, and effective ways of getting positive identification

K5 the importance of confidentiality and the measures taken to ensure it is appropriately maintained

K6 the importance of working within your own sphere of competence and seeking advice when faced with situations outside your sphere of competence

K7 the importance of applying standard precautions to obtaining and testing capillary blood samples and the potential consequences of poor practice

K8 how infection is spread and how its spread may be limited, including how to use or apply the particular infection control measures needed when working with blood

K9 the structure and purpose of capillary blood vessels

K10 blood clotting processes and factors influencing blood clotting

K11 the normal or expected results for particular tests and therefore what constitutes an abnormal result

K12 the different reasons for obtaining capillary blood samples taken

K13 the concerns that individuals may have in relation to capillary blood sampling

K14 the sites which can be used for capillary sampling and what the factors that need to be considered in selecting the best site to use including the individual's own preference

K15 why it is important to clean the sites from which you will obtain samples, and the appropriate ways of doing this

K16 the limits of your role and the circumstances in which you would need to refer to another person

K17 the contra-indications which indicate that capillary sampling should be stopped and advice sought

K18 what is likely to cause discomfort to individuals during and after the collection of capillary blood samples, and how such discomfort can be minimised

K19 what can cause problems in obtaining capillary blood samples, what can
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- Be done to stimulate blood flow and when another site should be used
- The common adverse reactions/events which individuals may have to blood sampling, how to recognise them and action(s) to take if they occur
- The equipment and materials are needed for capillary blood sampling and testing
- The sorts of equipment and materials which are sensitive to environmental changes and how this affects their storage and use
- Which equipment and instruments are re-usable and which must be discarded after one use
- How and when to label samples if required
- The importance of ensuring sites for capillary blood sampling are cleaned effectively, and how and when this should be done
- The process and procedure for obtaining capillary blood samples, including the correct sequence of actions
- The factors involved in the procedures which could affect the quality of the blood
- The importance of collecting capillary blood samples of the right quality, and how to achieve this
- The complications and problems may occur during the collection of capillary blood samples, how to recognise them and what action(s) to take
- How to perform relevant tests of capillary blood samples
- How to record test results, and the importance of clear and accurate documentation
- The information that needs to be recorded on labels and other documentation when sending capillary blood samples to the laboratory
- The importance of completing labels and documentation clearly, legibly and accurately, and the possible consequences of confusing samples or incorrect labelling
- The importance of immediately reporting any issues which are outside your own sphere of competence without delay to the relevant member of staff
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Additional Information

External links
This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB6 Assessment and treatment planning
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date approved</td>
<td>June 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicative review date</td>
<td>June 2012</td>
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