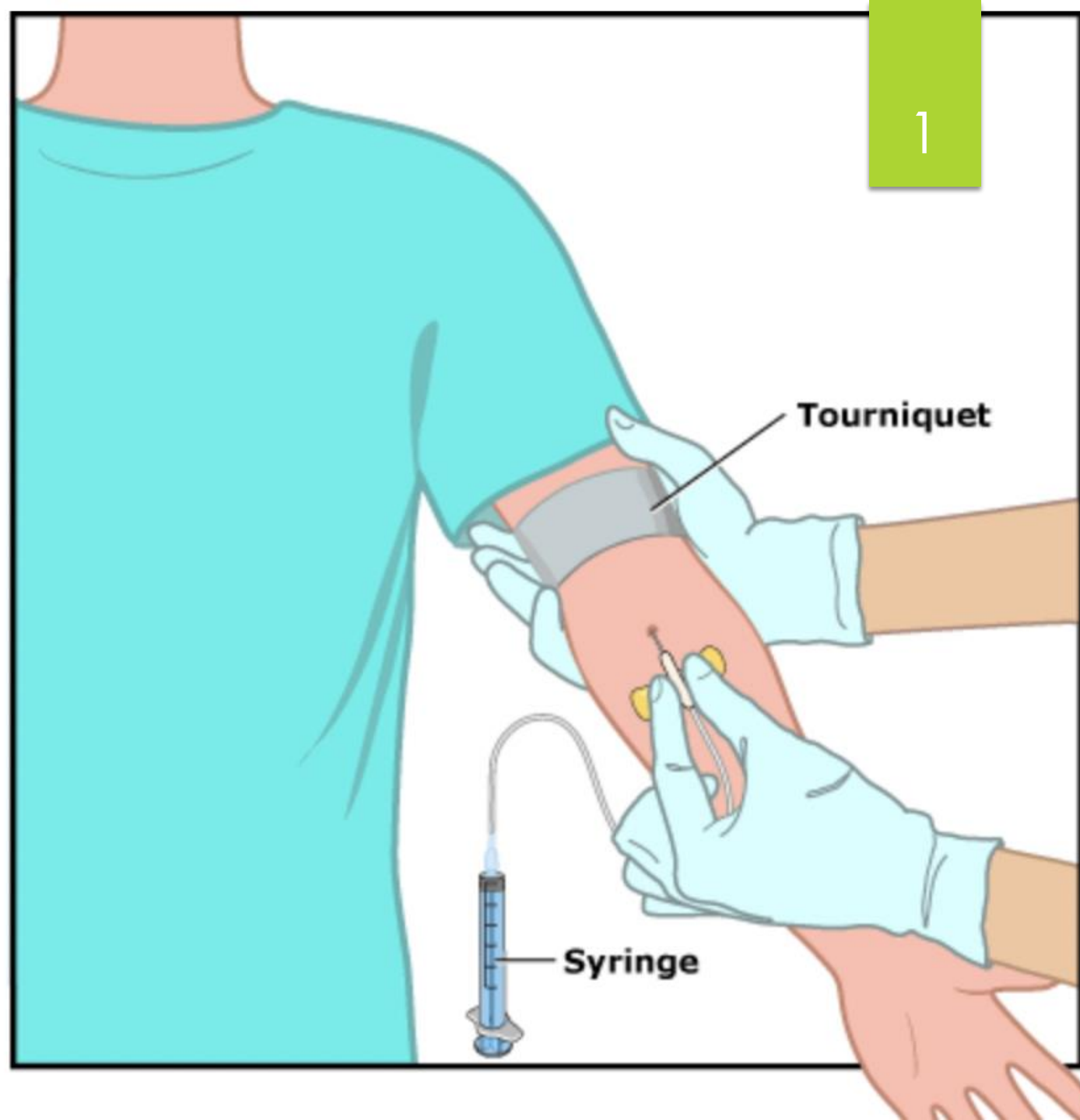


Blood Draw : What I need to know

HEALTHCARE ACCESS FOR AUTISM
MADE POSSIBLE BY THE C.J.L.
FOUNDATION

 LURIE CENTER FOR AUTISM
Mass General Brigham



Tips for Using this Social Story

2

► **Review in advance.**

- Plan to review the social story for yourself or with your loved one well in advance of the blood draw. This allows time to process expectations, identify possible challenges, and problem solve ways to help decrease anxiety. Additional practice may be needed, so reviewing in advance is important.

► **Individualize.**

- Every individual may need or prefer different amounts of information, so decide what information is most helpful to you/your loved one.
- Add pictures or information that is specific to you/your loved one (e.g. picture of doctor, support person, preferred distractions). There are several areas throughout the story where information can be edited and personalized.
- For individuals with more cognitive or communication challenges, consider using slides 4-5, 13, 20 – 27.

Tips for Using this Social Story

3

► **Identify Coping Strategies.**

- Look for coping strategies that are **highlighted in yellow** throughout the story. Identify tools that may be helpful to decrease anxiety. Distraction is the number one strategy to decrease anxiety around medical procedures.

► **Advocate.**

- You know yourself/your loved one's needs the best. Advocate for what you need to make the blood draw successful. Sometimes this may include using visual supports to show each step, scheduling at a less busy time to reduce wait time, not using a band-aid, asking a physician to order medication and/or EMLA cream to numb the skin, and setting a limit for when to take a break or stop a blood draw if you/your loved are experiencing significant anxiety or behaviors that make the experience unsafe (e.g. grabbing at the needle).
- Consider making a list of questions for your doctor/medical team that you/your loved one have about the blood draw or related outcomes.

Tips for Using this Social Story

4

► Review expectations and practice

- Make an effort to review what will happen during the blood draw. Look at the steps of the blood draw and determine what aspects of the procedure may lead to increased anxiety (patient may rate if they feel very nervous, a little nervous, or not at all nervous when looking at each step). This can inform strategies that could be helpful (e.g. using distraction during steps that cause more anxiety, using adhesive wrap rather than a band-aid, wearing short sleeves).
- Practice the steps of the blood draw in advance. Become familiar with the materials (e.g. tourniquet, gloves, alcohol wipe, butterfly needle with needle removed and replaced with a paperclip) and practice the steps that will happen during the real blood draw.
 - Take small, gradual steps when practicing to allow the individual to remain comfortable while increasing familiarity with the materials that will be involved in the blood draw.
 - Practice each step several times until the individual experiences moderate or minimal distress, only introducing additional steps as they can tolerate. Think creatively about how you can adapt or move more gradually as needed (e.g. modeling use of a tourniquet, having the patient practice the steps on someone else, placing a tourniquet on the hand, forearm, upper arm, untied then tied)
 - Provide praise and positive reinforcement (e.g. small prize/incentive) following practice/tolerance of difficult steps.
 - Continue practice of all steps until the individual can tolerate all steps and hold still with the mock needle in place for approximately 3 minutes (the estimated time needed to successfully complete a blood draw).
 - Use a timer to serve as a reminder of the passage of time and the remaining time the individual is required to hold still. Incorporate use of the timer during practice and the real blood draw to promote consistency.

My doctor, _____, said I need to have a blood draw.
This is an important procedure to understand how my body is working and if I need to do
anything different to help me be healthy and strong.

On _____ (date) at _____ (time),
I will be going to _____ (location) to get a blood draw.

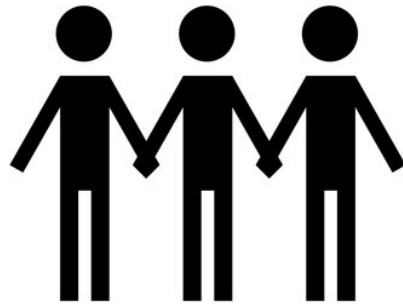
My doctor: _____



I may feel nervous, but it's okay because my family member/caregiver
will go with me. I will not be alone.

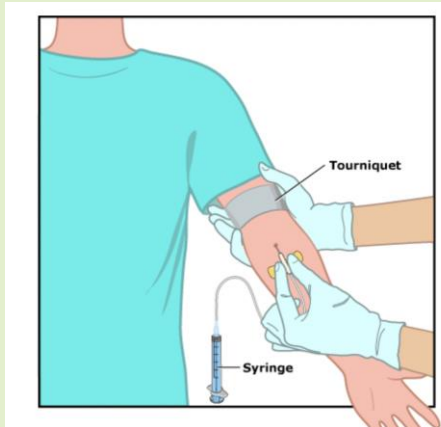
6

First, I will get my blood drawn, then I will go home.



_____ will come with me

**FIRST
BLOOD DRAW**



**THEN
HOME**

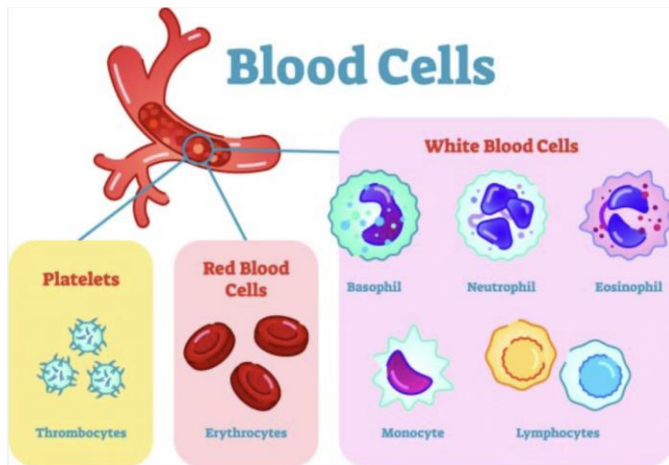
OR _____
(insert preferred activity)



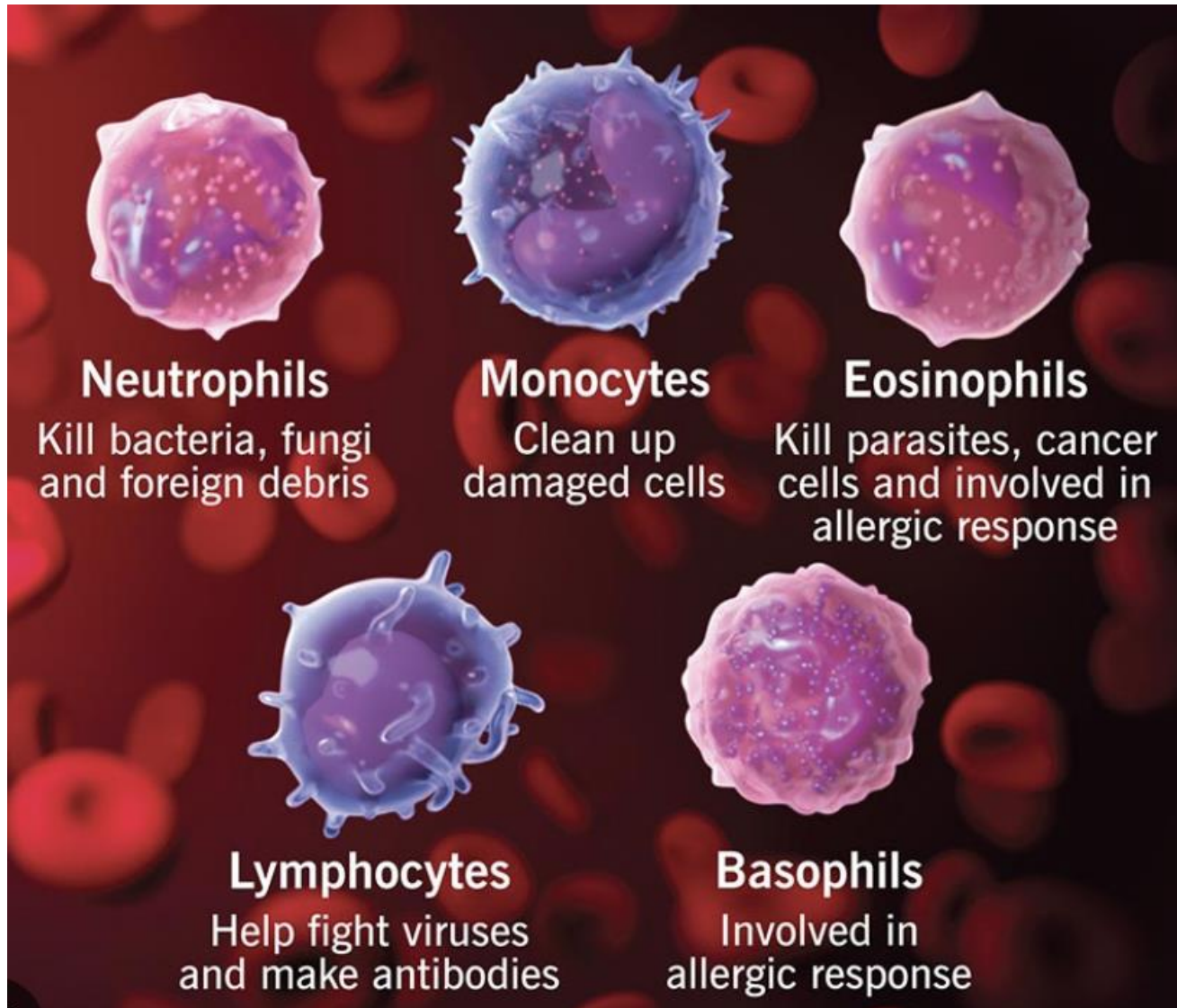
Why do I need a blood draw?



A blood draw is recommended by doctors about 1 time per year. It is an important procedure that tells the doctor more about my body to make sure I am healthy.



Doctors and scientists collect blood in a tube. They will use special technology to look at small parts of my blood, or cells, that I cannot see but are important for my health.



Different cells in our bodies have different functions that impact how our body works.

If my body needs something that can help me feel stronger or healthier, my doctor can recommend things that can help, like medicine, diet, or exercise.

A blood draw can provide more information to help me, like helping my doctor make a diagnosis or find out if I need to change what I eat or the medicine I take.

10

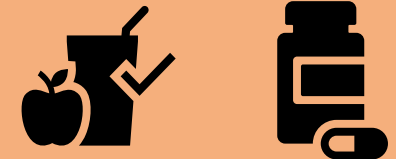
Make a diagnosis



**Explain symptoms, like
feeling tired or sick**



**Find out if I need to
change my diet or
take medicine**

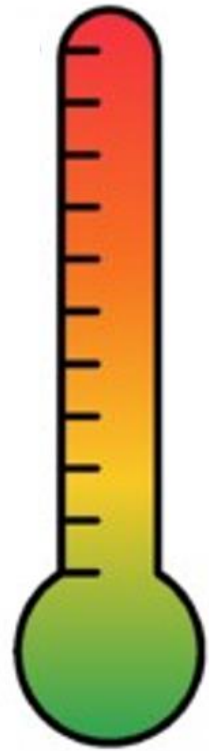


**Monitor my health or
health condition**



**Find out if medicine or
treatment is helping**





I Feel
Very Scared

I Feel
a Little Scared

I am not
Scared/ Feel
Okay



I may feel nervous or scared.
This is normal.

11

If I am feeling scared, I can:

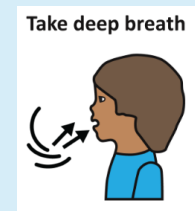
Tell someone
how I am
feeling



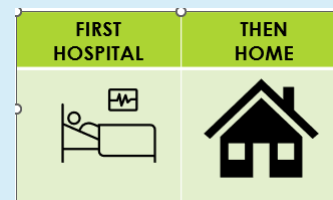
Ask my nurse
or doctor a
question



Take a deep
breath



Think of
something fun
I will do when I
am done



Watch a video
or look at
pictures



Other



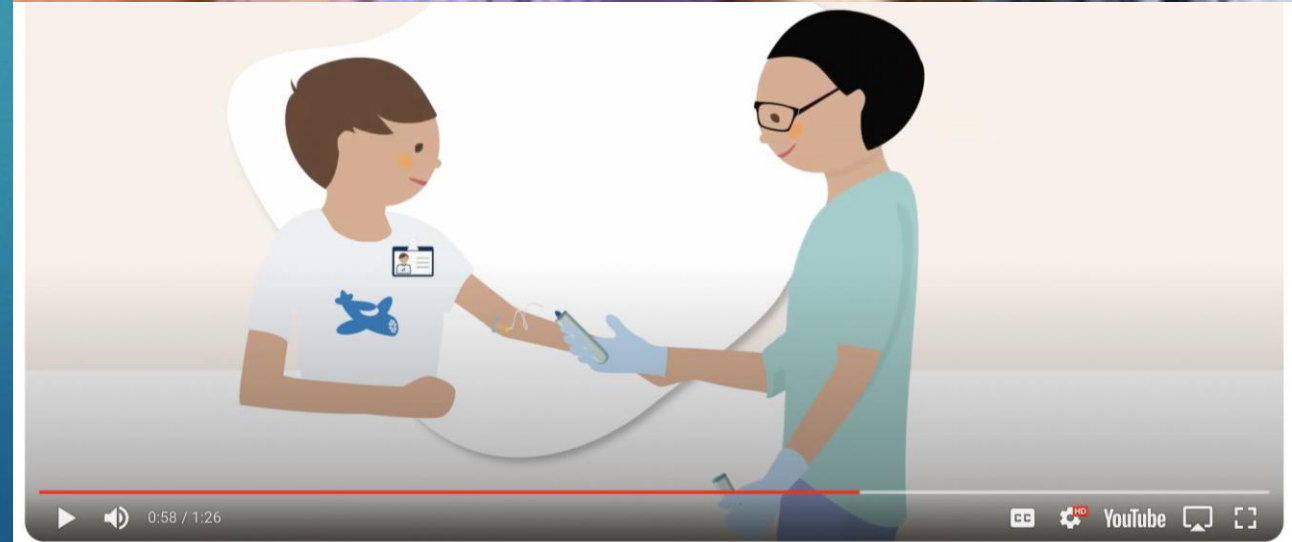
How do I
prepare for a
blood draw?

Before my blood draw, it is important for me to review what will happen.

I can look at pictures of a blood draw and watch a video of someone getting a blood draw.

LINK:

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=7MNYXY7MOO4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7MNYXY7MOO4)





Sit in Chair



**Place Arm on
Arm Rest**



**Nurse feels
arm/veins**



**Tourniquet gives
a tight squeeze**



**Clean with
Alcohol Wipe**



**Needle goes in;
brief pinch**



**Hold still for a
few minutes**



**Tube collects
blood**



**Needle comes
out**



Gauze on arm



**Adhesive wrap
on arm**






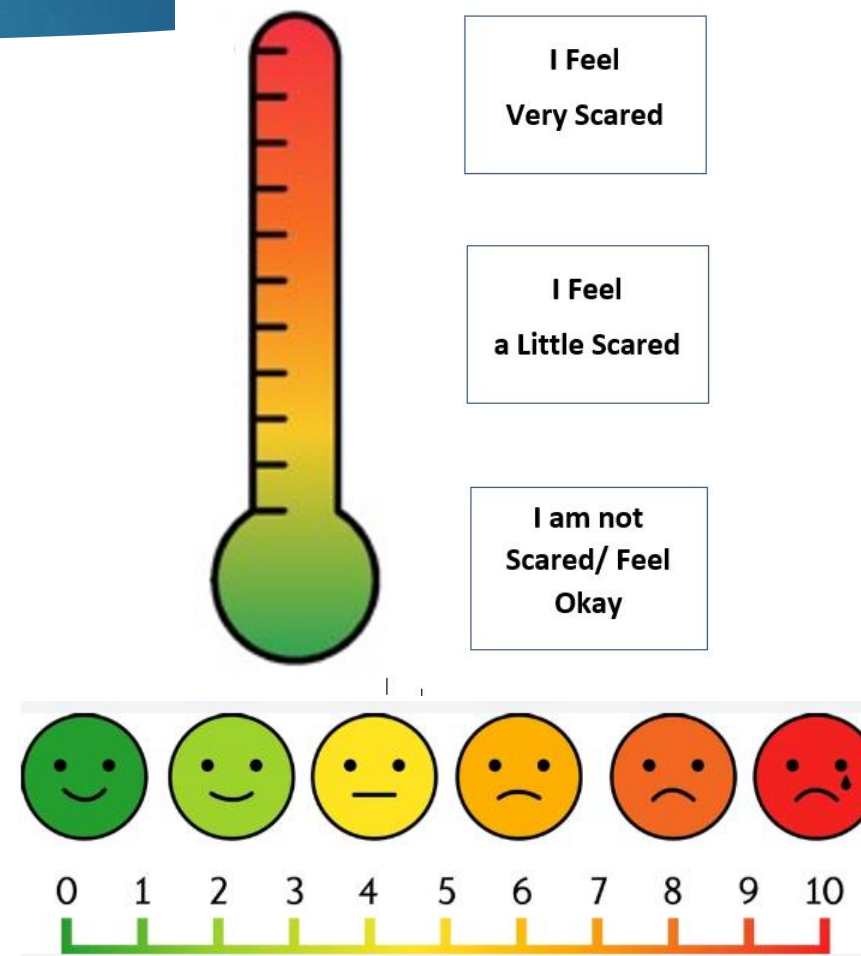
**All done –
Time to Go!**

I can look at the pictures and talk about how I might feel during each step of the blood draw – not at all nervous, a little nervous, or very nervous.

15

Talking about how I feel can help me and my family/caregiver make a plan.

If I am nervous about:	
Rolling up my sleeve	I can wear short sleeves 
The tourniquet	I can practice and remind myself "It gives my arm a hug."
Seeing the needle	I can look away 
Band Aid	I can ask for an adhesive wrap that doesn't stick to my skin 



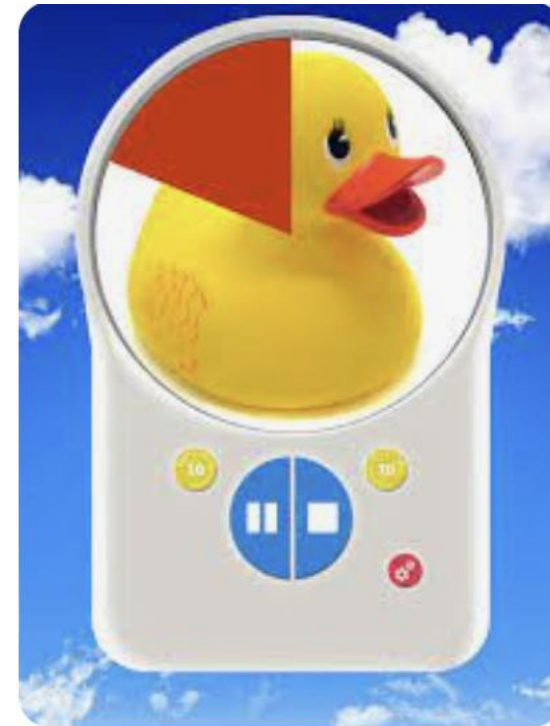
Next, I could look at pictures of the place I will go to get my blood drawn. Sometimes, I might be able to visit the place before my blood draw to help me feel ready.

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If I practice a blood draw at home, I may feel less scared or nervous.
I can practice on a family member or friend and have them practice on me.
I will need to practice holding still for approximately 3 minutes. A timer can help me remember how long I need to hold still.

17



Visual Countdown Timer

There are several things I can do to get ready for the day of the blood draw.
I can drink a lot of water, wear short sleeves, ask a support person to come with me,
and bring distractions that can help me feel relaxed.

18

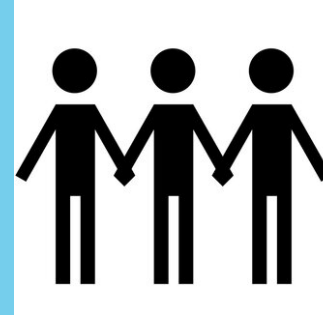
I could also ask my doctor if I need medication or numbing cream for the day of the blood draw.



Drink plenty of water



Wear short sleeves



Bring a support person



Bring Distractions



Ask my doctor if I need medicine and/or numbing cream

If I have questions or want to advocate for what I need, I can write them down and ask my doctor, nurse, or phlebotomist before my blood draw.

19



Questions I would like to ask my doctor/nurse:

1.

2.

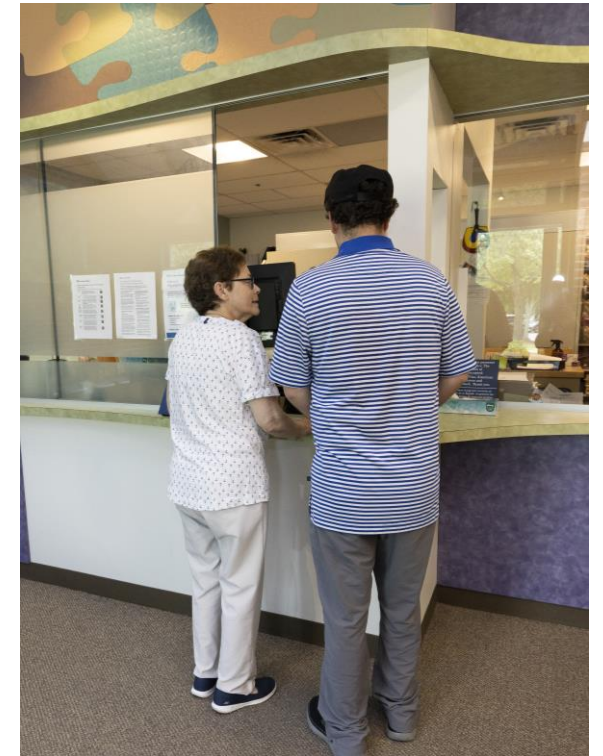
3.

What happens the day of my
blood draw?

I will arrive at clinic to complete my blood draw.

21

I will walk in and check in at the front desk. I can bring a support person to help me feel comfortable.



I will wait in the waiting room until my name is called. I can bring an activity that I enjoy to use as a distraction while I wait.

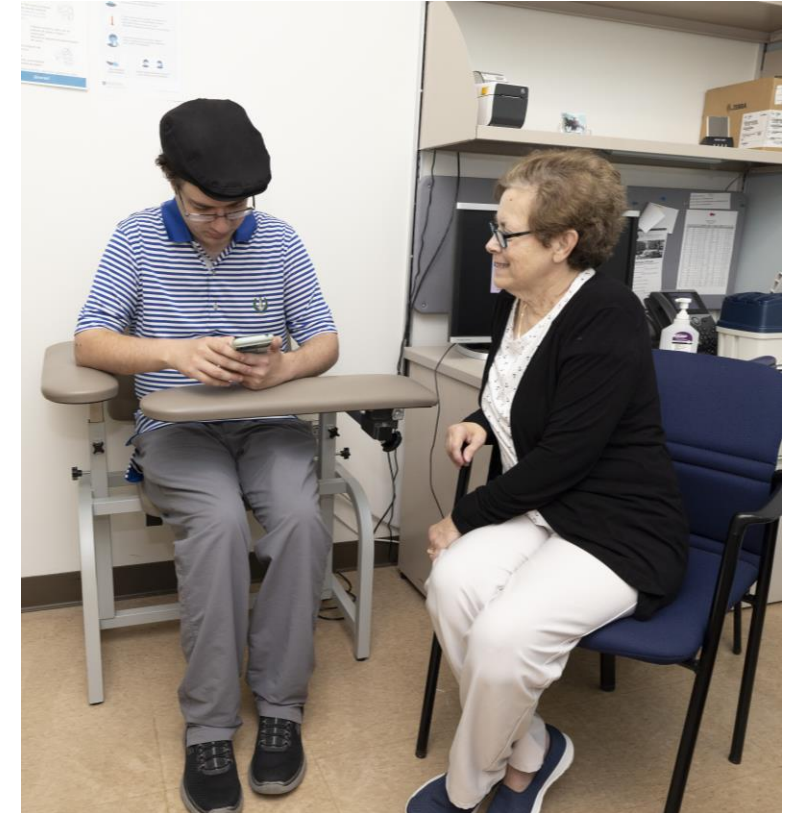
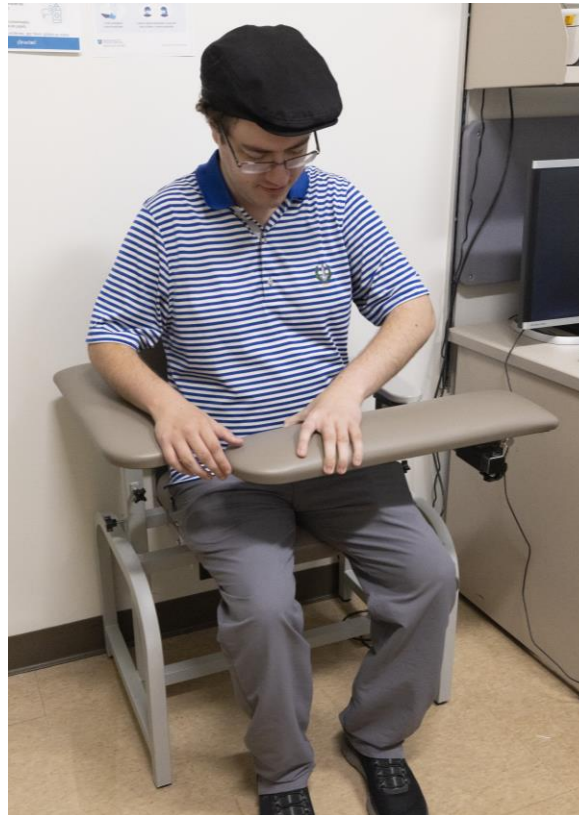
22



When the nurse calls my name, I will walk back to the exam room and can bring my support person if I want.

23

I will sit down in the blood draw chair. I can let my nurse know if I have questions. I can start to enjoy the things I brought for distractions.



I should lay my arm on the chair so the nurse can look at and feel my veins.

The nurse will put on gloves and then tie the tourniquet on my arm. The tourniquet gives my arm a hug and feels like a tight squeeze.

24



Next, the nurse will clean my arm with an alcohol wipe.
It may feel wet and cold and will have a strong smell.

25

The nurse will put the needle in my arm. It will feel like a brief pinch or pain.



If I feel nervous, I can take a deep breath, look away, and use distractions to help me feel calm. I can hold my support person's hand if I want.



Tell someone
how I am
feeling

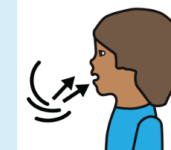


Ask my nurse
or doctor a
question

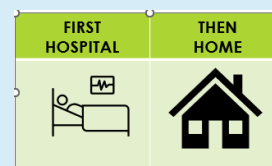


Take a deep
breath

Take deep breath



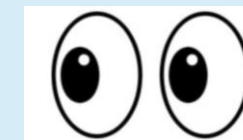
Think of
something fun
I will do when I
am done



Watch a video
or look at
pictures



Look away
from the
needle



I will hold still for about 3 minutes. It will be done quickly. I can use a timer to remind me how long I need to hold still.

27

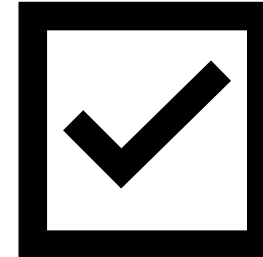
My nurse will take off my tourniquet. After a short time, my nurse will take out the needle. I am almost done!



My nurse or phlebotomist will put gauze and an adhesive wrap or a band aid on my arm.

I am all done and ready to go!

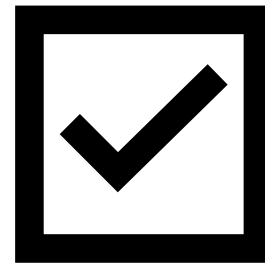
28



Soon, my doctor will talk to me and my family about the results of my blood draw and discuss anything I need to know. Completing the blood draw helps keep me healthy and strong.

29

My doctor, _____,
will talk to me and my family about
the results and tell me what I need to
know.



**My blood draw is
ALL DONE!**

**It was good I did
something that
helps me to stay
healthy!**

Made possible by the C.J.L. Foundation

Additional Social Stories focused on adult preventative care procedures can be found at
<https://www.massgeneral.org/children/autism/lurie-center>

