



Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children NHS Foundation Trust: Information for Families

Vein protection in children and young people with kidney disease

This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) explains how we are changing how we take blood samples from children and young people with kidney disease. The aim is to preserve the veins in your child's arms in case they are needed for dialysis at any point in the future. We know that not every child will need dialysis but we think it is worth protecting everyone's veins.

We have also produced a version of this information sheet for children and young people, so please ask for a copy.

The blood vessel system delivers blood to and from the heart to the rest of the body. We do not grow any more veins as we get older – the ones we are born with have to last a lifetime.

It is a good idea to keep our veins as healthy as possible anyway but it is particularly important when someone has chronic kidney disease. Taking routine and regular blood samples or inserting a cannula can damage veins in the long term.

We would like vein protection to become as routine and everyday as tooth brushing – it is just as important.

What does vein protection involve?

Our aim is to protect the veins in your child's arms – these are the best for creating fistulas and grafts which are needed to have dialysis. We are doing this for all children with kidney disease, whether or not they are having dialysis or have had a kidney transplant.

When we need to take a blood sample from your child, we will aim to use the veins on the back of their hand or foot if possible. We will also use these veins if a cannula is needed too.

In many people, these veins are quite noticeable all the time, sometimes more so than the ones inside the elbow crease. As now, if we cannot easily take a blood sample or insert a cannula in the hand or foot veins, we will only try twice before using an arm vein. If your child needs urgent treatment, we may still use their arm vein. Our aim is to reduce the number of times we use the arm veins – we realise that there are occasions when they are the best option.



What you and your child can do

We would like to ask you and your child to be like a lion and roar!

ROAR = Respectfully Object and Ask to Re-evaluate

So, if someone wants to take a blood sample or insert a cannula into your child's arm vein, we encourage them to ROAR and remind the member of staff to use their hand or foot veins first.