



**I am getting ready
for a blood draw.**



A note to caregivers:

- This book was written for patients of different ages and language levels. Please use language your child is familiar with at home or when visiting a doctor.

Not all sections will apply to your child.

- Read this first and choose what information you think will be helpful. Advance warning and practice is helpful for many children. However, you may decide that a social story is not the best way to prep your child. You know your child best. If you decide the social story provides too much information and your child would do better with a visual schedule right before the blood draw, please feel free to use the picture schedule at the end of this book.

This book will go over the steps of a blood draw. In this story we refer to the blood draw as a “poke” or “pinch.” However, you can determine what language is best to use for your child.

- Some children benefit from distraction (during the blood draw) and others cope better when there is a reward (provided after the blood draw). We recommend bringing items to the lab that could be used as a reward for tolerating the blood draw. (e.g., “First poke, then [insert prize here]”). See final page for example.

- If you have more questions about strategies, please email autismfriendly@rchsd.org.

If your child has difficulty waiting/checking in, please let our team know when you check-in. We can arrange for you to wait outside if this would be easier.

- We also recommend filling out the Autism Friendly Questionnaire in MyChart in preparation of your visit. If you experience difficulty filling out the form in MyChart, then you may download a paper copy from our website and bring it with you to the appointment.

Sincerely,

The RCHSD Autism Friendly Health System Initiative



I am going to have my blood drawn today.

This will help the doctor know how to keep my body healthy.



First, I am going to check in at the front desk.



Next, I will wait for my name to be called.





Sometimes it is hard to wait.

While I wait, I can play with
[insert child's preferred activities you will bring from home].



Note to caregivers: we recommend you bring a favorite activity to use as distraction.



When my name is called, I will walk back with the phlebotomist and sit in the chair.



First, I will roll up my sleeve.

Next, the phlebotomist will put a stretchy rubber band on my arm.

It will feel like a tight squeeze.



The phlebotomist will check my arm and my hand to find the right place.



Now they will clean my arm.

It will feel cold and wet.



Now that my arm is clean, I will
[insert distraction item here].

Caregivers:

If you feel distraction would be beneficial, make a plan ahead of time with your child.

Tell the phlebotomist what they will be doing for distraction (e.g., watching youtube, squeezing playdoh). Feel free to substitute for any activity that is available and helps keep your child's hands busy and their mind distracted.

If you are using items for distraction, make sure your child is holding the item BEFORE they get a poke/pinch.



Now it is time for the blood draw.

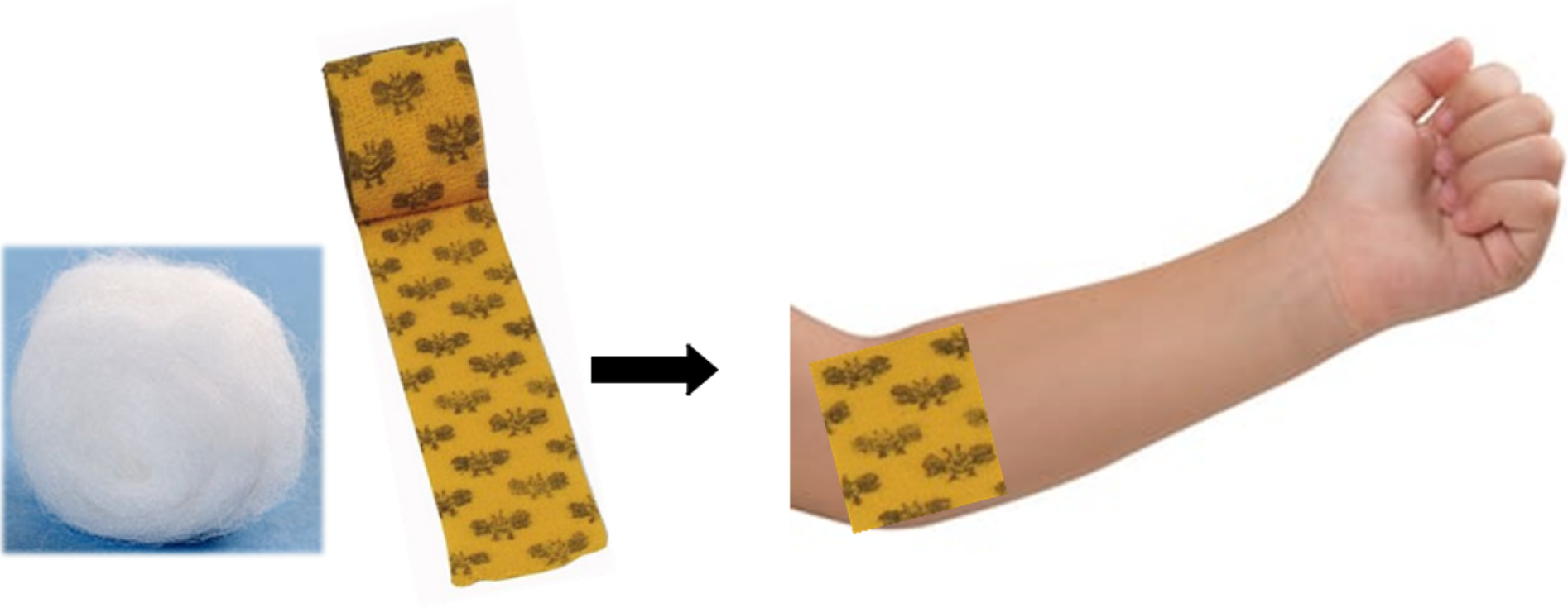
I will keep my body calm and still.

It will feel like a poke or pinch.

I can watch or look away and play with my *[insert fidget/distraction item]*.



Now they will put cotton and a stretchy sticker on my arm.



Caregivers, please let the team know if your child does not like band-aids.



I did a great job with my blood draw.

I was brave and my body was calm!

I am all done.

Now I can

[insert reward here].

Note to caregivers: If your child is motivated by rewards, it may be helpful to bring an item they can earn for completing their blood draw. Decide on this item ahead of time and bring it to the appointment. Give them the item immediately after completing the blood draw!



The End

Caregivers: Please review the following pages for addition visuals that may be helpful



Caregivers:

Here is a sample **“first-then”** visual to help your child understand how they will earn their reward. When using the blank template on the next page, please add a picture of what your child has selected to earn under the word, **“then.”**

You can present this by saying, **“First poke, then Switch”**.



FIRST

THEN



“First poke, then _____.”



A reward chart can help the child understand how they will earn their reward. They can earn a star or check for completing each step of the visit.

This can increase motivation during the appointment.

Please customize with a picture of what your child is motivated to earn on the next page.

I'm working for



I'm working for

□ □ □ □ □ □

= □



Visual Schedules

If your child benefits from the use of visual schedules, the next page may be helpful. As you point to each picture, you can briefly explain what will happen:

First, the phlebotomist will put a stretchy rubber band on your arm. It will feel like a tight squeeze.

Next, they will check your arm and hand to find the right place.

Then, they will clean your arm. It will feel cold and wet.

Next, it is time for the blood draw. It will feel like a poke or pinch. You will keep your body calm and still.

Last, they will put cotton and a stretchy sticker on my arm.

Then you will be all done and can *[insert reward here]*!

