



# Blood sample collection for patients with Muscular Dystrophy

## A guide for staff

### Patients with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy and other major forms of muscular dystrophy including Duchenne and Spinal Muscular Atrophy often report painful and traumatic blood collection experiences.

The following information may assist phlebotomists and medical staff to understand the options available for these patients for consideration to ensure a positive blood collection experience.

#### Prioritise tests

Phlebotomists can communicate with the referring doctor to prioritise the most important test(s). A finger prick or skin puncture collection may be performed if the tests requested can be performed on low volumes of blood. Low volume point of care analysers such as i-STATs may be suitable for basic panels.

#### Consider paediatric solutions

Utilising paediatric blood collection solutions may help—for example butterfly needles with smaller gauges or smaller paediatric containers.

#### Communicate with your patient and consider the following:

- Are they well hydrated? Patients should drink plenty of water before their blood draw—being dehydrated, particularly after a long journey to the collection centre, may cause veins to be flatter than normal.

- Is their arm cold? Warming the arm before the blood draw can help—suggest using a heat pack (for example, a wheat bag).
- Have they had a negative experience in the past? Ask patients to let you know if they've had a previous negative experience with blood collection. They can request the most experienced technician by calling ahead to the collection centre.
- Would they benefit from a numbing cream? This can be applied 30 minutes prior to attending for collection.
- Is there an alternative stick site? Ask if they would like their blood drawn from another site, for example, the back of their hand if they know this has worked better in the past.
- Utilise vein finder technology if it is available.

#### Special equipment

With patients who are extremely difficult to collect, recommend that the patient talk to their doctor about whether ultrasound assisted blood collection would be an option.