

Preventing contamination when taking a sample for blood culture

**Patient who
needs a sample for blood
culture**

If taking a sample for blood culture is clinically indicated then

Ensure that:

- **blood culture bottle tops are decontaminated** by rubbing with an antiseptic containing 70% isopropyl alcohol and left to dry
- **hand hygiene is performed** immediately before the process of taking a blood culture sample (WHO Moment 2)
- **a single-use skin antiseptic containing 70% isopropyl alcohol is used** to cleanse the skin site and left to dry
- **aseptic technique is maintained** including use of gloves; don't touch critical parts, including the skin following disinfection
- the **blood culture bottle is inoculated first** (if taking blood for other samples)

Practice points

Documenting date and time of taking a sample for blood culture is an important step.

The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves is important in all procedures where blood and body fluid risk exists.

The featured recommendation on hand hygiene does not detract from other times when hand hygiene is recommended and will be monitored against (namely the 5 Moments for Hand Hygiene).

The featured recommendations do not aim to cover emergency situations, which require clinical judgement for patient care actions.

For further information on the background to these recommendations and the literature reviews that informed these please visit <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk> as well as referring to your local teams and policies.

Also see NHS Education for Scotland <http://www.nes.scot.nhs.uk> and Healthcare Improvement Scotland <http://www.healthcareimprovementscotland.org/home.aspx> for additional information on education and patient safety improvement. Also refer to the Standard Infection Control Precautions Section of the National Infection Prevention and Control Manual <http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/haic/ic/nationalinfectionpreventionandcontrolmanual.aspx>.