

## CLINICAL SKILLS: HOW TO TAKE BLOOD CULTURES

- Wash hands *using soap and water*
- Introduce self
- Check name with patient and on name band
- Ask permission to take blood sample to check for any bacteria in the blood
  
- Don gloves
- Gather and set up equipment (in a tray washed from inside-out first)
  - Blood culture bottles - aerobic and anaerobic
    - *make sure these are in date*
    - *note the optimal blood volume recommended on the side of the bottle (usually 8-10mls) - you should be aiming for adding this amount of blood to the bottle*
  - Chlorhexidine swabs
  - Barrel
  - Needle/Butterfly (depending on Medical School/Hospital Trust policy)
  - Tourniquet
  - Gloves
  - Cotton wool/gauze
  - Tape
  
- Return to patient
- Reposition patient's forearm with palm facing upwards
- Apply tourniquet and find suitable vein
- Wash hands and don new pair of gloves
- Wipe vein with alcohol swab - slowly and only once
- Take top off of both culture bottles and wipe the top of each one with separate wipes
- Wait for the tops of the culture bottles to dry (~30 seconds)
- Warn patient of a sharp scratch and insert needle
- If you are in the vein, insert the ends of the bottles into the barrel
  - Aerobic bottle first (as there will be spare gas in the needle or Butterfly)
- Remove the tourniquet
- Take out the needle and dispose of in sharps bin
- Apply cotton wool and tape
- Thank patient, tidy area and wash hands
- Record that sample taken in the patient's notes. Note down on the microbiology blood form: the differential diagnosis and any current antibiotics being given.