



“If you’re like most people, you hate the thought of a needle going into your arm. When I’m drawing blood, I try to be as painless as possible. A lot of patients tell me they don’t feel the needle stick when I’m taking their blood sample.”



- **Education needed:** Certificate program in phlebotomy
- **Salary range:** \$22,000 – \$40,000 annually
- **Related jobs:** Clinical laboratory technician, laboratory assistant, nurse, respiratory therapy technician

### ➤ What I do every day

Phlebotomists withdraw blood from patients to be analyzed later in a laboratory. Before I take a blood sample, I need to know the type of laboratory test that is requested and I must make sure I have the correct patient. When drawing blood, I obtain the exact amount of blood needed for the lab test, place it in the correct preservative, and label the specimen for transport to the laboratory for analysis. I keep track of the patients I see by entering data into the laboratory's database.

### ➤ The best part of my job

Having patients tell me I'm gentle gives me a great feeling. Some patients even ask for me personally when they come for a blood test.

### ➤ The worst part of my job

It's very hard to obtain blood from a crying infant or toddler. I don't like taking samples from small children who don't understand why I'm sticking them with a needle.

## Phlebotomist

### ➤ What I need to know and be able to do

Phlebotomists must understand the circulatory system and know proper techniques of blood sample collection and storage. They need to be aware of patient rights, including the patient's right of confidentiality, plus medical law and medical ethics. They should enjoy working with all types of patients and health care professionals. They should be patient, dependable, and compassionate.

### ➤ How I prepared to be a phlebotomist

In high school, biology, science, and psychology were my favorite subjects. I enrolled in an accredited certificate program in phlebotomy when I graduated from high school. After completing the program,

I took a national certification exam to become a certified clinical laboratory phlebotomist, which increased my salary.

### ➤ How I could have prepared better

Knowing how to interact with nervous patients is very important. When I first started, I felt uncomfortable with fearful patients. And I felt very guilty when they said I hurt them, even though I thought I was being gentle. Courses in human psychology and communication would have been beneficial.

# HEALTH AND MEDICINE

↑ CAREER  
LAUNCHER

## Phlebotomist

English  
Skill Check

### ► Skill Check 1

Many people are nervous about having blood drawn. Some are afraid it will hurt, while others are frightened by the idea of a needle going into their arm. Your job as a phlebotomist is to reassure the patient and to draw blood samples as painlessly as possible. Before you draw blood, you always speak calmly and quietly to patients and make them as comfortable as possible.

Choose a friend to play the part of a patient who is afraid of having blood drawn. You will play the part of the phlebotomist. Conduct the conversation below. When you are finished, evaluate your performance and answer the questions.

#### Conversation

Patient: I really hate to have blood drawn. I'm a real chicken.

Phlebotomist: You're not the only person who feels that way. Many people get scared when they need a blood test.

Patient: I don't think I'm ready yet. Can you wait?

Phlebotomist: Certainly. Have you ever had blood drawn before?

Patient: Only once, and it really hurt. My arm was black and blue for weeks.

Phlebotomist: It sounds as though you didn't have a very good experience the first time. That might be why you're a little worried today. Let me explain how I'll draw your blood. Would you like to see the equipment I'm going to use?

Patient: Yes, please.

(continued)

# HEALTH AND MEDICINE

**CAREER  
LAUNCHER**

## Phlebotomist

English  
Skill Check

### ► Skill Check 1

(continued)

1. Why did you offer to show the patient the equipment?

---

2. What tone of voice did you use? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How would you change your comments to reassure the patient even more?

# HEALTH AND MEDICINE

↑ CAREER  
LAUNCHER

## Phlebotomist

English  
Skill Check

### ► Skill Check 2

The law protects a patient's right to privacy. This means that employees of health care facilities, including phlebotomists like you, must not give out personal information about patients to anyone. Phlebotomists could unintentionally release personal information about a patient by speaking too loudly in public areas of the hospital or medical office, talking carelessly to other employees, or giving out confidential information when answering questions about a patient to the patient's well-meaning friends.

In the space below, write three answers you might use when a person who should not have access to a patient's medical information asks questions about a patient's tests or condition.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

# HEALTH AND MEDICINE

↑ CAREER  
LAUNCHER

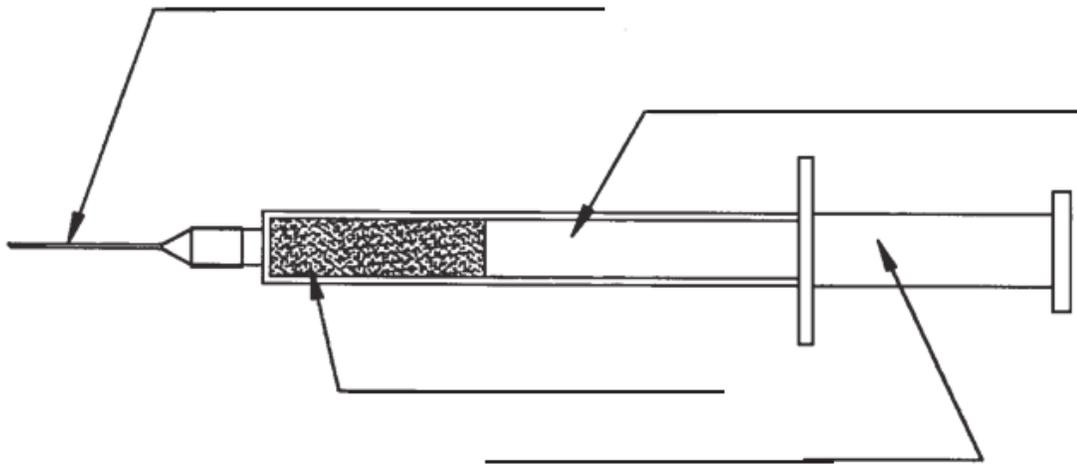
## Phlebotomist

Science  
Skill Check

### ► Skill Check 1

As a phlebotomist, you use needles to draw blood from patients. The drawing below shows the kind of needle phlebotomists use. On the drawing, label the following parts.

Blood  
Needle  
Plunger  
Tube



# HEALTH AND MEDICINE

↑ CAREER  
LAUNCHER

Phlebotomist

Science  
Skill Check

## ► Skill Check 2

As a phlebotomist, you puncture veins to draw blood. From the list below, identify the structure other than veins that carries blood through the body and that you should never puncture to draw blood.

- a. artery
- b. lung
- c. stomach
- d. nerve

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_