

# Tip of the Month



## Sir Lance-Alot

***In a hospital far, far away*** walks Sir Lance Alot, a brave and fearless phlebotomist whose kingdom is of the little people in the Valley of the Newborn Nursery. Everyone who serves in the kingdom has the same common purpose: to meet the needs and ensure the well-being of the tiny princes and princesses who dwell there, each in their own crystal carriage. Often travelers from far and wide huddle outside the kingdom's glass wall to pay homage.

But Sir Lance Alot's mission is unique: extracting blood samples from the new arrivals. Before entering the Valley's inner sanctum, this faithful phlebotomist always shows respect for its royalty by observing proper hand hygiene and infection control protocols. This includes entering in the domain's required regalia, i.e., gown and gloves.

To ensure proper identification of each of the kingdom's residents, Sir Lance Alot bows to read the identification bracelet attached to the little princess and compares it to the information provided on the official edict of test orders. Only when there is a perfect match between all regal documentation will Lance Alot proceed. Instead of a fire-breathing dragon, Lance Alot uses a commercial heel warmer not exceeding 42° C to prewarm the infant's heel for several minutes. That way, our gallant servant won't be confused with his counterpart in the neighboring kingdom, Sir Squeeze Alot.

Next, Lance Alot examines the medial and lateral plantar surfaces of the heel. His goal: to fend off the evils of tissue fluid contamination by locating a site free from bruising, swelling, or a previous puncture. And after properly prepping the heel and allowing the skin to air dry,

Sir Lance Alot locates his trusty blade. His isn't just any sharps device. It's a single-use, safety incision device no longer than 2.0 mm. His puncture is swift and true. Proper positioning of the princess he is serving today further ensures Lance Alot will have no trouble capturing the well-formed drops of blood in the collection device.

Even the most magical of tales has a villain. In the Valley of the Newborn Nursery, bandaging the heel or inadvertently leaving supplies behind can pose choking hazards to the infant. Lance Alot rescues the little people from such peril by always inspecting the crystal carriage for any misplaced supplies, and applying pressure to the heel to stop bleeding. Lance Alot bravely slays inaccurate test results by properly labeling specimens before leaving the precious child, and promptly transporting them for testing.

Good phlebotomy technique doesn't have to only occur in a make-believe hospital far, far away. Be a real life hero in the here and now. Every newborn needs you to be its knight in shining armor, adhering to the standards without exception. Each time you correctly perform an infant heelstick, you're giving your tiniest patients the best chance at living happily ever after. And that's no fairy tale.