



NEWSLETTER

For Children in Focus at 5 years

What happens at the 5 year clinic?

A random sample of 1,200 Children of the Nineties are invited to the Children in Focus clinic. Measurements and observations made on these children as they grow and develop are of enormous value. They would be valuable on their own, but what makes them even more so is the wealth of other information we have about the children and their environment from your questionnaires. This not only gives a detailed picture of the Children in Focus, it also gives us insights into the other 14,000 Children of the Nineties whom we do not yet have the opportunity to see.

Ears

We shall be using the toys and loudspeaker to look at hearing again as we did at 3½, as well as our regular look at glue ear. For the first time we shall be doing a pure-tone audiogram which looks in more detail at the hearing in each ear. We shall be able to tell you if we think your child needs to be referred for more hearing tests.



Communication



We are going to look at the way the children communicate. One of the questions we want to answer is how much this might have been affected by episodes of glue ear they have had.

Teeth



We last looked at teeth at 3½ and we would like to see how they have developed since then.

Growth and Skin

We shall measure the fat layer under the skin using calipers. They look fierce but they are spring loaded and gently press against the skin. They do not hurt. As well as the usual growth measurements we shall take the childrens' blood pressure and look at moles and skin conditions again. We will send a drawing in advance for you to mark them on.



Blood sample

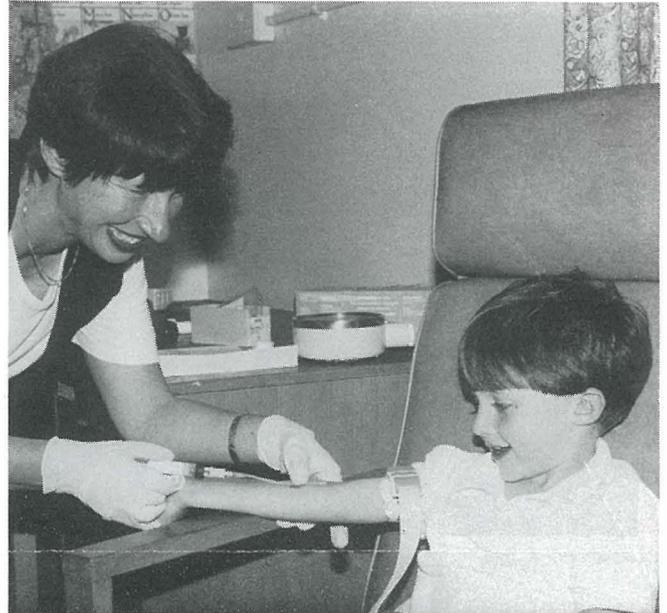
We have been very pleased by your responses to our questionnaire about blood taking. It confirms our impression that the vast majority (91%) of you are happy about the way we are doing it, and glad that you gave consent, and most of the children felt little or nothing while it was being done. We are looking carefully at the comments that some of you made to see how we can improve the procedure still further.

Because we have been so successful, and your children have reacted so positively to our procedures, we intend to publish our blood taking procedure, your responses and those of the children in a scientific journal. We hope that our experience will lead to improved techniques being used elsewhere when blood samples are needed from children.

We shall be asking for another sample this time to follow up our studies of allergies, anaemia and a variety of other aspects of health. As before we shall let you know if your child is very anaemic but all other analyses will be done anonymously

and only linked to other information about the children by number and not to named children.

We shall of course have a suitable video for the children to watch. As usual, if you really don't want your child to have blood taken let us know.



Dietary diaries

Now that the children will be at school for much of the time, we would like to see how their diets have changed since the last dietary diaries were collected when they were 3½.



Lung function and exercise

We shall be measuring the children's pulse rate and blood pressure again, and then asking them to blow out hard to measure how much air they can blow out quickly. They will then be asked to do some physical exercise, while we measure their pulse rate. Then we will look again at how much they can blow. This is part of a study into the children's lung function, and will help us find out what in the environment might effect a child's lungs.



Allergies

Pollen, cats and housedust mites are among the many common substances which cause snuffles, asthma, eczema and other problems in people who are allergic to them. Skin tests can give clues as to whether a person is allergic to a particular substance although not everyone whose skin reacts actually shows an allergy. We would like your permission to skin test your child and we will let you know the results. We will test for reactions to horse, dog, cat, egg, milk, fish, peanut, house dust mite, grasses, and moulds.

