NYC HEALTH+ HOSPITALS | Queens

NURSING PRACTICE REVIEW

Process for Difficult Venipuncture (IV insertion)

Practice Guideline

- **Position the patient in a comfortable position with the arm supported.**
- **Identify venipuncture site as per protocol.**
- **Choose the appropriate needle size and type.**
- **Use a vein-finding device.**
- **Apply a tourniquet to help visualize the vein. Palpate the vein.**
- **Use index finger to trace path of vein, which should be straight and visible for 1 inch.**
- **Perform venipuncture.**
- **Access site using aseptic technique.**
- **Adjust the needle angle to match the vein's angle and direction**
- **If the initial site is not accessible after initial attempt, try a different site.**
- **If unsuccessful, escalate.**

1. **Seek assistance from a vascular access specialist (critical care, ED or IV nurse)**
2. **Assisting nurse evaluates the patient's venous access.**
3. **Based on assessment – performs venipuncture or notifies provider.**
4. **Document interventions and observations.**

References:
1. Infusion Nurses Society. Infusion Therapy Standards of Practice. Journal of Infusion Nursing. (2020).
2. Initiating a Peripheral Intravenous (IV) Access Using Needless System (Medlock), Clinical Nursing Policy. (2022).

Issued: 2/1/25
Applicable: All Clinical Care Areas