

# Refinement: Taking Blood Samples from Minipigs in a Sling

*Did you know that it is possible to take blood samples from unanaesthetised minipigs almost without restraint?*

Helle Lorentsen

At our handling and dosing courses, we teach participants how to handle the minipig while taking blood samples from its jugular vein.



Smaller animals are usually easy to handle in the blood bench

Many minipig users are probably familiar with the method of using a blood bench and rolling the minipig on its back. This procedure requires 2 to 4 persons, depending on the size and temperament of the minipig.

Some minipigs struggle during fixation – most likely because being manipulated on the back is an unnatural posture for an animal.

Therefore, taking blood samples while the minipig rests in a sling is an alternative method worth considering.

One of the advantages of taking blood samples while a minipig is in a sling is that the procedure is less stressful for minipig (refinement) and personnel alike. Also fewer people need to be involved in the procedure.

At Ellegaard we have tried this method on untrained minipigs at different ages. Even when minipigs were placed in the sling for the first time, it was possible to perform stress-free blood sampling on each animal. Some of the minipigs were even so relaxed that one person could do the procedure alone.



Taking blood samples from a minipig in a sling



For large blood volumes, you can use an extension which makes the sampling easier

- Also consider the ergonomic aspects. The best solution is if the height of the sling can be adjusted to make the insertion site readily accessible.

Apart from training the minipigs to feel comfortable in the sling, attention should also be paid to training personnel for the procedure.

You are always welcome to attend one of our handling and dosing courses at our facility in Dalmoose, Denmark.

We can also arrange a visit to your facility where the method can be demonstrated. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need further information regarding this blood sampling procedure.

We appreciate having good contact with you in any matter concerning a successful experience with the minipig.

If you already have taken blood samples from minipigs in a sling, we would like to hear your experiences and comments.

If you are considering this blood sampling method, there are few things to be aware of:

- If you have a sling, you need to cut an extra hole to expose the insertion site. This can be done easily with scissors.
- Before placing the minipig in the sling, you can mark the insertion site as the skin tends to curl up a little due to pressure from the sling.
- After taking the blood sample, remember to apply pressure to the site of the vein puncture.



You can cut an extra hole in the sling for taking blood samples

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