Choosing the right safety lancet for the volume of blood required

- The volume of capillary blood required to perform a test varies, depending on the test type and testing instrumentation.
- Safety lancets have varying needle gauges and puncture depths and are designed to produce a range of blood volumes necessary for different tests.
- The volume of blood that can be expected from a safety lancet of given gauge and depth specification will vary from patient to patient.
- In general, the greater the device needle diameter and puncture depth, the greater the volume of blood produced for testing.
- There are many factors that influence the blood volume produced from any given sampling episode; these include patient hand temperature, safety lancet specification and post-puncture massage technique.

EXPERT TIP
- The higher the gauge number, the smaller the needle diameter, and the smaller volume of blood produced for testing.*

* For example, a 30-gauge (30G) needle is thinner than a 21-gauge (21G) needle and would, therefore, be used for taking smaller volume blood samples.