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Dose of fun eases kids' anxiety

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Page 1 of 1

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DIXIE SULDA

ZOE Edwards is not a fan of needles.

But the five-year-old – who is fighting leukaemia and needs monthly chemotherapy treatments and blood tests – will now find her visits to the Women's and Children's Hospital a little less nerve-racking.

The hospital's SA Pathology centre has a new waiting room designed to make visits less distressing for young patients. The waiting room – funded by a \$40,000 grant from children's charity Variety SA – now has an LED-lit floor, virtual-reality goggles, new TVs and toys to help distract children before their appointment.

Zoe was diagnosed with leukaemia almost two years ago and visits the hospital for treat-

ment and tests every month. Her father, Stuart Edwards, said visits to the pathology rooms were the part of her hospital visit she liked the least. Mr Edwards said the new waiting room would reduce Zoe's anxiety before her blood tests.

"It makes a huge difference, that period they're waiting ... the more distracted they are, the better," he said.



HAPPY WAIT: Zoe Edwards, 5, and Michael Pearce, 12, have fun in the new SA Pathology waiting room at the Women's and Children's Hospital.

Picture: TOM HUNTLEY