
Pain Reduction with Immunization

Vaccines are medicines that protect against infectious diseases. Vaccines are given with a needle. Children, their families are often scared of injections. Here are some suggestions you might want to try.

1. *Psychological - Mind*

Stay calm

It is natural for a child to be afraid. Fear and crying are not signs of failure. Your actions and words can affect your child's reaction. If you are calm and use your normal voice, your child will feel that everything is okay.

Distract your child

Take your child's attention away from the injection by using distraction. Ask your child to take slow, deep breaths. Children can do this by blowing bubbles or pinwheels, which also distract the child. Other examples of distraction strategies include:

- Babies: toys, pacifiers, singing, directing the baby's attention to something in the room that would be of interest for them.
- Toddlers: toys, pop-up-books, party blowers, kaleidoscopes, singing, directing the toddler's attention to something in the room that would be of interest for them.
- School-age: toys, stories, videos, books, joking, counting.
- Adolescents: games, videos, books, joking, music, talking about something unrelated to the procedure.

Before the procedure, tell your child:

- The reason for the procedure. For example, "to help you stay healthy." What will happen. For example, "You will get medicine called a vaccine in your arm using a tube that looks like a little straw called a syringe".
- How it will feel. For example, "You might feel a pinch and some pushing or pressure that will last a few seconds."

- What you are going to do about their possible discomfort. For example, "Some children think it is uncomfortable and some think it is okay. We don't know how it will feel for you. We are going to do different things so that it does not feel too uncomfortable for you." Then tell your child what you will do.
- What they can do to help. For example, "You can help by holding still and breathing deeply with me."

When talking to your child, avoid words that focus attention on the procedure, such as "hurt," "pain," or "shot."

Avoid reassuring words such as "It'll be over soon," or "You'll be okay."

Avoid apologizing or sympathizing, for example, "I'm sorry you have to go through this," or "I know it hurts."

2. *Physical - Body*

Breastfeed your baby

You can breastfeed your baby before, during, and after vaccine injections. Hold baby in a sitting position if possible.

Give sugar water to your baby (newborn to 12 months of age)

If your baby cannot be breastfed, then consider giving sugar water. Mix 1 teaspoon (5 ml) of white sugar with 2 teaspoons (10 ml) of water. Put a couple of drops in your baby's mouth with a spoon a minute before the vaccine injection.

Do not use sugar at home to calm upset or crying babies. It is only for managing pain from medical procedures.

Don't forget to clean your baby's mouth with a soft, wet cloth or soft-bristled baby toothbrush.

Provide physical comfort

Have your child sit upright. Hold babies and young children in a position that is most comfortable for them, for example, on your lap in a bear hug. Hugging feels comfortable and helps children to stay still. Sit on a chair or stand against the examination table to minimize the risk of accidental falls.

Firmly hold your child if necessary, but do not use force; this increases distress. For children 4 years of age and older, offer to stroke or rub the skin near the injection site before and during the injection

3. Pharmacology - Medicine

Use topical anaesthetics

Topical anaesthetics are pain-relieving creams that are applied to the skin. Can be used in children of all ages and are useful for school-age children who are anxious.

- They must be applied 30 to 60 minutes before the injection.
- Apply them to the correct location
- Remove cream or patch 5 to 15 minutes before injection

Intramuscular (IM) Sites for Immunizing



<i>Routine Immunization Schedule</i>		
Age	Right Arm	Left Arm
12 months	✓	✓
18 months		✓
4 years old		✓

<i>Routine Immunization Schedule</i>		
Age	Right Leg	Left Leg
2 months	✓	✓
4 months	✓	✓
6 months		✓



Subcutaneous (SC) Sites for Immunizing

<i>Routine Immunization Schedule</i>	
Age	Left Arm
12 months	✓
18 months	✓



For more information, contact your local Public Health office.
