



# TIPS & TRICKS TO HELP YOU AND YOUR CHILD GET THROUGH THE NEEDLESTICK



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## BEFORE

### Make a plan.

Talk to your child about getting the vaccine.

- Tell younger children on the same day as the vaccine.
- Give older children more time to ask questions. Talk with them about a plan for the vaccine so they feel in control.

Decide what to bring to distract your child when waiting and during the vaccine:

- Bring a new toy or game, a favorite toy to squeeze or something to listen to music or watch videos on.

Ask your provider about numbing medications that may be available to be used prior to the vaccination

### Be honest.

- If your child asks if the vaccine will hurt, tell them the truth. You can say, "Some kids say they feel a small pinch and some pressure. You can tell me what you feel after it's done."
- If they are scared, let them know their feelings are okay. Let them know some people get nervous before seeing the doctor and it is normal to feel that way. Tell them you will be right there with them and you will get through it together.
- Your child may ask you a question you are not sure how to answer. It is OK to say you don't know and can ask when you get there.

## DURING

### Give them a choice.

Allow your child make as many choices as possible:

- Do they want to watch or look away?
- Do they want to listen to music or watch a video?
- Do they want the provider to count to 3?
- For kids 10+: Do they want you to be in the room with them?
- Do they want to sit on your lap or by their self?

### Decrease pain and anxiety.

- Let your child sit up during the vaccine. For children ages 2 to 3, you can hold them on your lap when they are sitting on your lap.
- Doing something else can decrease your child's pain during the needle stick: blowing bubbles, I-spy books or playing a cellphone game.
- Try not to say things like "you are OK" or give false ideas like "you won't feel a thing". Do not focus on the pain.

More important information on the other side




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## HOW TO HOLD YOUR CHILD WHILE SITTING UP ON YOUR LAP


1. Inside arm tucked under adult's armpit
2. Adult's hand restrains outside arm close to the child's body
3. Child facing the adult with legs straddled over the adult's lap with adult hugging the child on their chest



1. Child sits on your lap or stands in front of you as you sit
2. Hold both of the child's legs between your thighs
3. Hug your child during the injection



1. Inside arm tucked under adult's armpit
2. Adult's hand restrains outside arm close to the child's body
3. Child positioned sideways on lap with child's legs held between adult's legs



## AFTER

Show them praise and let them know what they did well. You can say things like:

- "You did it. I know you were really nervous about that."
- "I'm so proud of you for telling us how you feel and for holding so still."

Tell them it is normal to have a sore arm or not feel well for a day or two afterwards. This means their body is making ways to protect itself.

- Place a clean, cool washcloth on their arm. Keep moving or exercise the arm.
- You can give over-the-counter medicine for pain (acetaminophen or ibuprofen) only if your child can take these medications (check with your provider if not sure)

## Looking for more information on vaccine management?

- **Comfort Positioning for Pediatric Procedure**  
[rebrand.ly/ComfortingPositions](https://rebrand.ly/ComfortingPositions)
- **Coping Strategies for Childhood Immunizations and Pain: The Coping Toolbox, a Child Psych Podcast**  
[rebrand.ly/CopingStrategies](https://rebrand.ly/CopingStrategies)
- **Distraction in Action Helping Your Child During Medical Procedures**  
[rebrand.ly/DistractionAction](https://rebrand.ly/DistractionAction)
- **HELP Eliminate Pain in Kids and Adults**  
[rebrand.ly/HELPKids](https://rebrand.ly/HELPKids)
- **Reduce Vaccine Pain in Infants**  
[rebrand.ly/InfantVaccinePain](https://rebrand.ly/InfantVaccinePain)
- **Reduce Vaccine Pain in Kids and Teens**  
[rebrand.ly/VaccinePainKidsandTeens](https://rebrand.ly/VaccinePainKidsandTeens)
- **It Doesn't Have to Hurt Parent resource**  
[rebrand.ly/ItDoesntHaveToHurt](https://rebrand.ly/ItDoesntHaveToHurt)
- **It Doesn't Have to Hurt YouTube video**  
[rebrand.ly/ItDoesntHaveToHurt\\_Video](https://rebrand.ly/ItDoesntHaveToHurt_Video)
- **How You Can Help Reduce Your Kids' Immunization Pain**  
[rebrand.ly/ReduceImmunizationPain](https://rebrand.ly/ReduceImmunizationPain)



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These tips were developed by a multidisciplinary team of health care professionals with expertise in children's pain management, from across multiple pediatric organizations, and was produced by the Rush University Medical Center Patient Education Planning and Development Oversight Committee. It was re-purposed by the Chicago Department of Public Health with permission.

The information contained in this brochure is believed to be accurate; however, questions about your individual health concerns or treatments should be referred to your health care provider.