

Preparation

Immunization Q+A



In general, tell young children (under 4 years old) just before the procedure and older children at least 1 day before – it helps them to plan how they will cope. How to tell them what to expect:

Q What will happen?

A - You will get a medicine called a vaccine given in the arm/leg with a needle.

Q Why is the vaccine being given?

A - To keep you healthy.

Q How will it feel?

A - There may be a pinch and some pushing or pressure that will last only a few seconds.

Be straight forward when answering your child's questions and concerns.

Opposite to what you may think reassuring your child "It will be over soon," or apologizing "I'm sorry you have to go through this," before the immunization may make them think that the injection will be worse than it is.

If you have questions, ask your healthcare provider or go to www.immunizebc.ca

Why is pain from immunization a concern?

Vaccines protect your child from serious diseases.

Most children can feel pain from the experience. Pain may cause your child to develop a fear of needles or other medical procedures.

To prevent this, combine these strategies for a better immunization experience for you and your child.

Positioning



For infants and young children, hugging in an upright position is comforting and keeps the child still. It makes them feel more secure and in control.



With older children, ask them to relax their arm and hold it still.

A Better Immunization Experience

For You and Your child



A Better Immunization Experience



Infants

Breastfeeding

Feed your baby before, during and after the vaccines.

Why it works:

The physical closeness and sweet taste of breast milk will calm your baby.

Formula fed babies:

May be offered a sucrose solution by the nurse or doctor immediately before the immunization.

Why it works:

This solution, given 1-2 minutes before a medical procedure, causes the release of natural pain reducing chemicals in the brain.

Numb The Skin

Medications to numb the skin are available without a prescription. Talk to your immunization provider about when and where to put on the cream or patch.

Why it works:

The active ingredients in these products reduce feelings of pain by blocking pain receptors in the skin.



All Age Groups

Be Calm

Stay calm, speak in an even and soft tone of voice.

Why it works:

If you are relaxed and speak calmly, your child will feel that everything is ok.

Deep Breathing

Help your child to take deep breaths by having them blow bubbles, blow at a pinwheel, or blow out a pretend candle.

Why it works:

Deep breaths help both parent and child relax and takes focus away from the procedure.

Distraction

This involves taking your child's attention away from the procedure.

Choose something that will work for the age of your child.

Distractions can be: toys, books, music, and talking about something other than the procedure.

Why it works:

The part of the brain that processes pain is less active when children are distracted during immunizations.

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ImmunizeBC.ca