

A Better Immunization Experience For Your Toddler

Be Calm

Stay calm, use your normal voice, and hold your child in a relaxed way.



Why it works:

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

Encourage 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 breathing triggers relaxation and also takes their attention away from the procedure.

Preparation

Ask your child if they have ideas for how to manage the pain.

When describing how it will feel, use words such as pressure, squeeze, or poke, and tell them it only lasts a few seconds.

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 something unpleasant is about to happen and they may end up being more upset.

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.



Distraction

Bring toys or books from home. Talk or sing to your child to keep their focus on the distraction.

Why it works:

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



Hold Upright



Why it works:

Hugging securely in an upright position is comforting and keeps the child still. It makes them feel more secure and in control.

Recognize the Effort

Keep a good attitude. Say things like: “I’m so happy you got the vaccine!” and “I knew you could do it!”

Why it works:

This helps the child to feel good about the skills they learned from the experience – skills that will help in future difficult situations.