



Tips to help your child during a vaccine visit

We want to help provide an emotionally safe experience for you and your child during your child's vaccine visit. Here are some tips to make the visit as easy and comfortable as possible.

Prepare yourself:

- Try and schedule an appointment time that works best for your schedule.
- Kids know when we are nervous. Make sure you remain calm to best support your child's needs.
- Please bring only the child(ren) who is receiving the vaccine to the appointment in order to eliminate any distractions.
- Have a plan for the 15 minute observation period following the vaccine. Maybe bring a book or small electronic device to help pass the time. The vaccine locations are planning to have coloring sheets available.

Prepare your child:

- Let them know they are going to get a vaccine: some surprises are fun, but not a surprise trip to the doctor. You know your child best so tell them with enough time to process the information, but not too long where they have to wait and think about getting the vaccine for days.

For example, if the appointment is first thing in the morning, tell them the night before that way there is enough time to ask questions and come up with a comfort plan.

- **Not sure what to say? Try this:** "We need to go to the doctor to get some medicine to help keep your body healthy. BE PREPARED: Most kids will respond with, "Will I have to get a shot?" Answer honestly, "Yes, this kind of medicine is a shot (or poke) and I have some ideas on how to make the shot/poke as easy and comfortable as possible."
- Your child may show they are nervous or scared by crying or telling you, "I don't want to go."

Here are some ideas to help comfort them:

- Step 1: Acknowledge they are scared and let them know it is okay to feel nervous
- Step 2: Work on a plan to make the vaccine visit as easy and comfortable as possible.

- Does your child want to sit in your lap or sit next to you when they get the vaccine?
 - Do they want to watch or look away?
 - Which arm or leg? (depending on age for arm or leg)
 - Do they want the medical team to count “1-2-3” before giving the vaccine?
 - Relaxing breaths: breathe in through your nose like you are smelling a flower and release the breath out of your mouth like you are blowing out a candle.
 - Cold spray (“Elsa spray”) - used on the skin before the vaccine to make the skin really cold so they don’t have to feel the poke as much.
 - Distraction- i.e. play I Spy, talk about “the best day ever”, play or sing a favorite song
 - Try holding a comfort item (i.e. a teddy bear) or a squeeze ball
 - Step 3: Communicate with your medical team what you think might work best for your child. Your medical team may forget to ask about a comfort plan so be your child’s advocate and speak up.
- Don’t forget to prepare your child for what they may feel during and after the vaccine.
- During: The vaccine may be uncomfortable or feel like a pinch or a poke, but your comfort plan should help so they don’t feel the poke as much.
 - After: An 8-year-old recently described it as, “My leg feels crampy.” After the vaccine, it is common to for there to be localized discomfort at the injection site. You may say, “Some kids say their leg/arm feels sore after getting their vaccine” or “Some kids have told me they didn’t feel good after their vaccine, if you don’t feel good, please tell me.”

*If your child has sensory or developmental needs, please communicate what will work best for your child upon arrival to the visit so we support you.

Visiting Cook Children’s? Ask us about our Comfort Menu. We believe “*Every child deserves an equal opportunity to have their fear and pain addressed. Communicate, collaborate, and create a comfort plan that works for them.*” -Comfort Menu Mission Statement