

SPEAKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT NEEDLES

**MAKING NEEDLE
PROCEDURES EASIER**



Tips on Speaking to Your Child about Needle Procedures

Remember

Every child is different, what helps one may not help another. You know your child best, so use your own judgement on what will help them most.

● Let Them Know Why It's Happening

Help them understand the reason (to stay healthy, to find out what's making them feel unwell, etc)

"The test helps the doctor check how your body is working."

● Tell Them in Advance (But Not Too Early)

Give your child enough time to prepare, but not too much time to worry.

- For younger children: tell them the day of.
- For older kids: a day or two is usually best.

● Talk About What Will Happen Step by Step

Keep it short and matter-of-fact:

"We'll go to the hospital, you'll sit in a comfy chair, a nurse will clean your skin, examine your arm with a strap, and then there will be a little pinch."

● Be Honest, but Keep It Simple

Use clear, age-appropriate language.

Avoid saying "it won't hurt". Instead say:

"You might feel a quick pinch or a sting. It will be over fast. You can do it!"



Before the Procedure

● Give Choices Where You Can

Having choices help children to feel more in control, especially when it comes to blood tests. Sometimes however, healthcare staff will need to help your child make choices, to ensure comfortable and safe procedures. It can be helpful to read the choices outlined on “My Needle Plan” with your child before any procedure.

● Practice Coping Skills Together

Try simple calming techniques like:

- Blowing bubbles or slow belly breathing
- Bring a stress ball or cuddly toy to squeeze.
- Imagining a favourite place or activity.
- Counting.
- Looking at a phone or video.

Remember, you can always check with your phlebotomist to see what coping skill they think might be most effective on the day.

● Bring Comfort Items

Pack their favourite toy, blanket, or book. Familiar things help them feel safe.

● Let Staff Know if Your Child is Nervous

Before the appointment or when you arrive, let staff know if your child is feeling especially nervous.



During the Procedure

● What to Say

Stay calm and positive. Acknowledge their feelings.



✗ “It won’t hurt at all.”

✗ “It’s fine, don’t cry.”

✓ “You are being so brave for giving it a go”

✓ “You have done hard things before, and you can do this too.”

✓ “I will be here with you the whole time if you need me”.

Remember

Your child may become upset during the procedure. This is okay and normal. It really helps kids to cry when they need to.

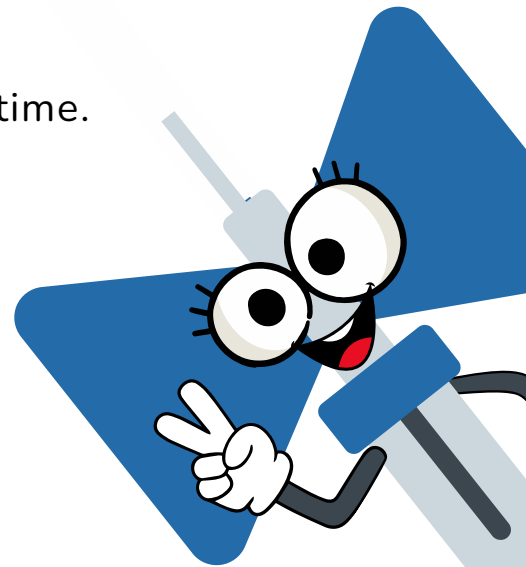
After the Procedure

● Celebrate Effort

If the needle procedure doesn't go to plan and your child was not able to go through with it, don't panic. This is common. Make sure to reassure your child that it's okay and that this isn't a failure. There's learning from every visit!

● Give a Reward if You'd Like

You can give a sticker, small treat, or extra playtime. This can help make the memory a little brighter.



After the Procedure

● If Things Don't go According to Plan

If the needle procedure doesn't work out, and your child couldn't do it, that's common. Make sure to reassure your child that it's okay, this isn't a failure. There's learnings from every visit!

● More Support

If you and your child are consistently having trouble with needle procedures, chat to your medical team to get more support.

