



**CHU  
Sainte-Justine**  
Le centre hospitalier  
universitaire mère-enfant  
**Université de Montréal**

# Supporting your Child through a Brief Medical Procedure

Helping Parents, Children and Youth



**toit  
doix**  
POUR des soins  
tout en douceur



## Did you know...

- ▶ Common brief medical procedures can be upsetting and distressful for children, youth and even you.
- ▶ These procedures can be necessary for your child. They may include an intravenous line for fluid or medication administration, a blood or urine test, wound or fracture repair, or medical imaging (e.g. x-ray).
- ▶ There are simple strategies to help your child get through these procedures.
- ▶ Combining different strategies will help your child even more!

## Before the procedure

### *Some procedures can be avoided... sometimes*

- ▶ If your child has a gastroenteritis or another viral infection, hydrate them well using diluted apple juice or rehydration solution. Administer small and frequent quantities. This will reduce the risk of requiring an intravenous line to rehydrate your child.
- ▶ If your baby needs a sterile (clean) urine test, a catheter may be necessary to administer the test. However, a newer and more comfortable procedure may be available. Ask your healthcare provider if it would be appropriate for your child:

<https://babyology.com.au/health/baby-health/wee-search-theres-better-way-get-urine-sample-babies/>

or

<http://www.urgencehsj.ca/savoirs/prelevement-durine-clean-catch-chez-la-fille-inf/>.



- ▶ Many clean cuts to the face can be glued with medical glue to avoid stitches. Do not hesitate to ask the healthcare provider if this solution may be used instead of stitches.

### *Prepare yourself and your child*

- ▶ Have a discussion with your child about where you are going and how people there will help them feel better.
- ▶ Help your child reduce their fear of doctors and nurses by trying to remain composed.
- ▶ If you have time before leaving home, pack a bag with your child's favorite toys for distraction during the procedure.
- ▶ If you didn't have time to pack anything, ask if toys, games or books are available on site to distract your child during the procedure.






### *While waiting, help reduce anticipation and fear by using distraction*

- ▶ Have them listen to their favorite music.
- ▶ Talk about their favorite activities.
- ▶ Talk about a recent fun event.
- ▶ Have them choose a song or video that they can play during the procedure.



## Be part of the care

- ▶ Treat pain with acetaminophen or ibuprofen. If your child is older than six months and suffers a limb injury, ibuprofen should be favored (if there are no contraindications such as kidney disease). This will make it easier to help your child. 
- ▶ Before a needle procedure, if time permits, ask if a numbing cream (such as Emla or Maxilene cream) would be appropriate. This can reduce the pain related to needles such as blood work, injections, vaccines, and intravenous lines. Certain analgesic vaporizers or vibrating and cooling devices can also be used. 
- ▶ If a finger prick is planned, warm your child's fingers. 
- ▶ If you are breastfeeding, consider breastfeeding your baby before and after a needle is administered. Ask your healthcare provider if it is possible to continue during the procedure.
- ▶ If your child is less than 6 months, ask if sucrose (sugar water) is available. Sucrose can help reduce your baby's pain during a procedure even more when given with a soother. You can also prepare your own solution: Mix 1 teaspoon of sugar (1 restaurant packet of sugar) in 2 teaspoons of water and dissolve it well. Be ready to give it at the time of procedure.



## During the procedure

### *Help your child collaborate with the medical team.*

#### **If possible, have a parent or caregiver support your child during the procedure**

- ▶ In some centres, a Play therapist can help support your child.

### *Help your child stay in a comfortable position*

- ▶ Younger children can sit on your lap for some procedures, using a hugging hold. 
- ▶ Babies can be held in a "kangaroo position" on your chest or wrapped securely in a blanket. Breastfeeding can be used for some procedures such as heel prick or vaccination. Sucrose can be used with a soother if breastfeeding is not possible. Give sucrose 1-2 minutes before the procedure and repeat during the procedure, a few drops at a time, with a syringe. 

***Use distraction to help your children keep their mind off the procedure. Distraction can reduce their distress and help them feel better***

- ▶ Tell a story. Bring them into an imaginary world.
- ▶ Discuss a nice activity that your child enjoyed.
- ▶ Play a "Search and Find" game.
- ▶ Have them play their favorite game.
- ▶ Use your cell phone or tablet to play music, videos or games.
- ▶ Sing a song to your child.



***Use relaxation techniques with older children and youth***

- ▶ Ask your child to take deep breaths and to blow it out slowly. Blowing bubbles and pinwheels can make it fun!



***Avoid words that could be confusing to your child***

- ▶ Avoid saying "It's over" when the procedure is still ongoing.
- ▶ Avoid saying "I'm sorry" as you are doing what is best for your child.
- ▶ Try to use encouragement and humour.
- ▶ Stay as calm and relaxed as possible and use a soothing voice.



**After the procedure**

***Help your child think of something else as they go through the next steps***

- ▶ Hold, cuddle, rock and/or breastfeed your baby; cuddle your child.
- ▶ Help your older child see the positive side of the process.
- ▶ Comfort your child with their favorite toys, teddy bear or blanket.



You know your child best: help your healthcare provider give the best care to your child.





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