Making Needle Pokes Less Scary

Getting a shot or blood draw can be scary for kids. Seeing your child upset is never easy. Here are some tips to help make your child's experience easier for both of you:

Before the Appointment

- **Practice deep breathing.** Help them learn to take deep, calming breaths. A simple trick is to have your child pretend to smell a birthday cake and then blow out the candle. You can pretend your finger is the candle.
- **Practice relaxing their body.** Have your child tense all their muscles, like a stiff robot. Then, have them completely relax all their muscles so they are limp, like a noodle. Remind them how important it is to stay relaxed during the poke.
- **Talk up their bravery.** Talk with your child about times they have been brave. Say things like, "Remember when you tried that new food? That was so brave!" or "You were so brave when you went down that big slide!" This helps them remember how strong they are.
- **Choose a distraction.** Help them pick out a fun video, music, book, or toy to bring to the appointment.
- **Build confidence with positive affirmations.** Have your child practice saying, "I am brave! I can do hard things!" while striking a superhero pose. This can really help them feel more powerful.
- **Pick a "bravery song" together.** Decide on a song you can both sing during the needle poke. A familiar tune can be both comforting and a fun distraction.
- **Plan a special reward.** Choose something simple like a sticker, a piece of candy, or extra time at the park. Ask them to tell you about their plan for after the appointment: "Where will you put your sticker?" "When will you read your book?" This can give them something positive to focus on.
- **Prepare for your child's appointment with our "Game Plan for Pokes & Procedures."** Find this helpful printable activity sheet at metropediatrics.com/comfort-promise.

On the Day of the Appointment

- **Choose an item from our Comfort Menu (on the back).** Before the poke, show them the comfort options like the ShotBlocker® or cold spray. Giving them a choice helps them feel more in control.
- **Your calm matters.** Kids often pick up on their caregiver's feelings. If you stay calm, it will help them feel safer.
- **Put your practice into action.** During the poke, use all the tools you've prepared. Play the video, do the breathing exercises, remind them how brave they are, sing your song, and encourage them to stay limp like a noodle.

Child Comfort Menu

We offer several options to help your child feel more comfortable during immunizations and medical procedures. Which would you like to try today?

ShotBlocker®

Textured tool that provides a distracting sensation (skin pressure)

Pinwheel

Spinning toy for deep breaths and distraction

Buzzy® Bee

Vibrating, cooling device to numb the skin

Putty Egg

Pliable putty for sensory play and stress relief

Cold Spray

Numbing spray for the skin

Fidget Toy

Sensory toy to calm and distract the mind

Distraction

Music, videos, or toys provided by you

Sour Lollipop

Distraction with a strong taste

Breathing Ball

Visual aid for relaxing breathing exercises

Bubbles

Playful breathing exercise and visual distraction

Metropolitan Pediatrics

Comfort Positioning is an option for all ages! Your medical assistant can show you how to use a secure, hugging hold with your child for added comfort.