Helping Your Child Cope With Medical Procedures

How to Get Ready

- Learn what will happen during the procedure. Ask about where it will be, how long it will take, and what tools will be used.
- You have the right to know what's going on, even in emergencies.
- Decide what to tell your child. A child life specialist can help you.

What to Tell Your Child

- Think about your child's age and personality.
- Explain what your child might see, hear, feel, taste, or smell.
- Some kids want to know a lot, others just a little. Tell them close to the time if they worry, or earlier if they need time to get ready.

How to Help Your Child Feel Better

- Give your child a job, like holding still or counting.
- Let your child make choices, like picking a song or toy.
- Listen to your child's feelings. It's okay if they cry. Crying is a form of coping.
- Stay with your child if you can. Ask if you're not sure.
- Distract your child with a toy, music, or story.

Age-Appropriate Ways to Comfort Your Child

For babies up to 1 year

- Talk or sing softly
- Offer a pacifier or blanket
- Play music
- Touch or massage them gently
- Dim the lights after the procedure (if possible)

For toddlers (1 to 3 years old)

- Offer a favorite toy or interesting new one
- Read a story together
- Play familiar music
- Blow bubbles or party blowers
- Gently rub your child's head or feet

For preschoolers (3 to 5 years old)

- Hold hands
- Count or say the ABCs
- Tell a story
- Blow bubbles or party blowers
- Play favorite music or sing songs
- Let your child choose whether to watch the procedure

For school-age children (6 to 12 years old)

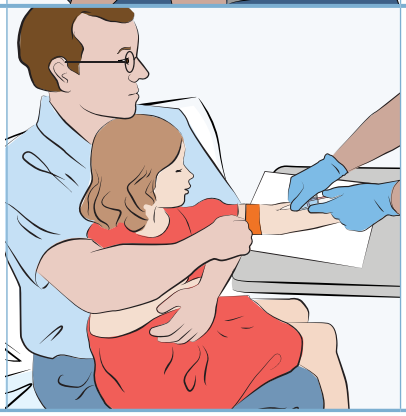
- Give your child a toy or ball to squeeze
- Do some deep, gentle breathing
- Play favorite music
- Have your child count backwards or by twos
- Ask your child to close their eyes and think of a favorite place
- Let your child choose whether to watch the procedure

For teens (13 and older)

- Do some deep, gentle breathing
- Play favorite music through headphones
- Help your child find something funny about the situation
- Ask your child to close their eyes and think of a favorite place
- Talk about your child's friends, hobbies, or upcoming events

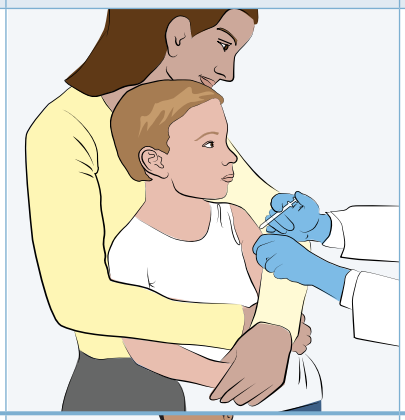
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Ways to Hold and Comfort Your Child

Position Name	Image	Description
Chest-to-Chest Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm, leg or back** **Common procedure:** Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw		Place your child facing you on your lap. Wrap your child's legs around your waist and support their head. Your child's arm can go under your arm (as shown) or over your shoulder. Your child can turn their head toward the procedure or away from it.
Chest-to-Chest Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm, leg or back** Common procedure: Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw		Place your child facing you on your lap. Wrap your child's legs around your waist and support their head. Your child's arm can go under your arm (as shown) or over your shoulder. Your child can turn their head toward the procedure or away from it.
Side Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm or thigh** **Common procedure:** Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw		Place your child sideways on your lap. Secure your child's arms with your own. Hold your child's hand.
Side Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm or thigh** **Common procedure:** Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw		Place your child sideways on your lap. Secure your child's arms with your own. Hold your child's hand.

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Ways to Hold and Comfort Your Child *(Continued)*

Position Name	Image	Description
Back-to-Chest Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm, chest** **Common procedure:** Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw, port access		Place your child on your lap so their back rests on your chest. Secure your child's arm with your own. You may also secure your child's legs by placing your legs on top of your child's.
Back-to-Chest Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm, leg or back** **Common procedure:** Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw, port access		Place your child on your lap so their back rests on your chest. Secure your child's arm with your own. You may also secure your child's legs by placing your legs on top of your child's.
Swaddle Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's limb; limb not being examined, tuck in swaddle** **Common procedure: Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw**		Wrap your child in a swaddle with all limbs tucked inside, except the one(s) being injected. Hold your child in a comforting position.
Side-by-Side Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm, chest** **Common procedure: Intramuscular injection, Intravenous/blood draw, port access**		Sit on the bed next to your seated child. Hug your child's shoulders securely. You can also hold their hand.

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Ways to Hold and Comfort Your Child *(Continued)*

Position Name	Image	Description
Stomach Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's arm or thigh** **Common procedure:** Intramuscular injection		Seat your child on the edge of the bed or exam table. Wrap your child's arms around your stomach. Hold your child's arm in place with a firm hug.
Sledding Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's private area, inner thigh** **Common procedure:** Urinary catheter insertion, pelvic exam		Place your child on your lap so their back rests on your chest. Secure your child's arm with your own. You may also secure your child's legs by placing your legs on top of your child's ankles.
Shoulder Hug **Gives the medical team access to patient's mouth, nose, ears** **Common procedure:** Nasal swab, NG insertion, suction		If the medical team needs access to your child's mouth, nose, or ears, you can hold your child over your shoulder. A second staff member may need to hold your child's head during the procedure.
Knee-to-Knee Hold **Gives the medical team access to patient's mouth, nose, face, and head** **Common procedure:** ENT Exam, Dental Exam		Sit knee-to-knee with the medical caregiver and lay your child so their back rests on your lap. Put your child's legs around your waist and hold their hands with your own.

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