

Make Your Child's Shots Less Stressful

Vaccines help protect babies and young children against 14 serious diseases. Even though you are keeping her safe from diseases, it's hard to see your child cry when she gets her shots. But you can take some steps before, during, and after a vaccine visit to ease the pain and stress of getting shots.

Read about the shots your child will get in advance. "CDC's vaccine webpage has a lot of useful information to help parents understand the importance of on-time vaccination," said Dr. Anne Schuchat, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "You can review this information before your appointment, and then, you can ask your child's doctor any remaining questions or concerns you have about vaccines."

You may also want to bring your child's vaccine record to show the doctor, and pack a favorite toy, book, blanket or other comfort item. For older children, be honest—shots can pinch or sting, but not for long. Remind them that shots help keep them healthy.

Distract your child with a toy, a story, a song, or something interesting in the room. Make eye contact with your child and smile, talk softly, or sing. Hold your child tightly on your lap, if you can. Take deep breaths with an older child to help "blow out" the pain.

After the shot, hug, cuddle, and praise your child. For babies, swaddling, breastfeeding, or a bottle may offer quick relief. Comfort and reassure older children if they cry.

If you notice redness, soreness, or swelling from the shot, place a clean, cool washcloth on the area. These reactions are usually mild and resolve on their own without needing treatment. If your child runs a fever, try a cool sponge bath. You can also use a non-aspirin pain reliever if your doctor says it's OK. Some children eat less, sleep more, or act fussy for a day after they get shots. Make sure your child gets plenty to drink. If you're worried about anything, call your doctor.

"Remember," added Dr. Schuchat, "keeping your child up-to-date on vaccines is the best way to protect against vaccine-preventable diseases."

Learn more about childhood vaccines at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

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This document can be found on the CDC website at:<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niiw/>