

Supporting a Child During a Procedure

Getting Ready

Spend a few minutes with your child to get them ready for the procedure. Talk about the options to help them cope, including:

- numbing cream (topical anesthetic)
- counting or singing
- looking away or closing eyes
- watching something on a TV or device
- playing with a special toy
- choosing a comfort position
- having a special person nearby



Numbing Cream

Children of all ages can use numbing cream. Every stable child who needs to have a needle should be offered numbing cream or something similar.



Comfort Positions

Hold your child in a comfortable position that doesn't get in the way of the procedure. This helps your child to feel more in control and secure.

Distraction

Distract and reassure your child with a soothing voice and a loving touch.

- Caregivers are best at comforting their child.
- Offer something to watch or look at, use a toy or game, sing or count.
- Give your child a task: "You can help by taking big breaths with me."



What to Say

Children take cues from grown-ups in deciding how they feel. Provide calm reassurance. A child who feels in control is more likely to have a positive outlook toward future procedures.

- Do say: "I'm here for you," or "You can do this!" (referring to the coping plan).
- Don't say: "I'm Sorry." This tells your child that you think something bad is happening.
- Help make it a positive memory by complimenting your child on what they did well.
- Don't offer a treat to make up for the pain. But it's OK to offer a treat as a reward for being a good helper! Talk about what went well.