

# Your child is getting a vaccine

## Helpful tips



Vaccines are the best way to protect our children from many serious diseases. However, getting a needles may be painful and stressful for you and your child or teenager. The following are some tips to help.

### **Tips For Toddlers and Older Children**

#### **Prepare your child ahead of time**

- Read stories about visiting a doctor or nurse
- Don't keep getting a vaccine a secret. Tell older children the day before. For children under 4 years old, tell them just before the injection
- Be honest about how a vaccination feels (e.g. describe it like a pinch).
- Help your child relax by breathing deeply with them and relaxing their arm



#### **Distract your child**

- Help your child pay attention to anything besides the needle.
- You know your child best, what would work? Singing, telling a joke, looking at pictures or a video, hugging a parent or favourite toy.

#### **Position your child in an upright position**

- Hold your toddler or young children securely in a comforting hug, sitting upright on your lap, facing forward, or facing you (front to front), with the arm exposed. Lying flat on their back, or being held too tightly, can make injections scarier for children.
- Older children can sit alone if they will hold still and expose their arm.
- If your child continues to move, ask your healthcare provider about the proper hold technique that is safest for your child.



#### **For Teens**

- Let teens know about needed immunizations ahead of time.
- If needed, plan and practice deep breathing, using distractions such as playing games or texting on a cell phone, or listening to music with earphones

Offer everyone praise and a reward after vaccinations. This can help children and teens of all ages!

## For Infants



### **Breastfeed**

Breastfeed, or otherwise feed your baby a minute before the injection, as well as during and after vaccinations, to reduce pain and to provide comfort.

### **Hold comfortably**

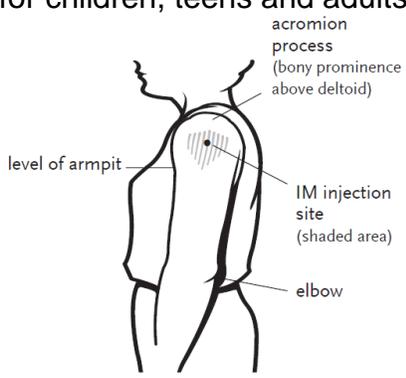
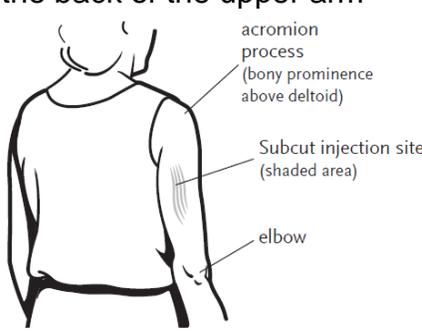
Hold your baby close to your body, in a front-to-front position with both legs exposed. This reassuring close contact can help to reduce pain.

### **Offer sugar water**

For babies 2 years old or less, who are not breastfed, give a few drops of sugar solution one minute before, and just before the injection. The sugar water is a good distraction for a baby. You can buy sugar solution at a pharmacy or make it at home by mixing 5 mL (one teaspoon) sugar with 10 mL (two teaspoons) water. Do not use honey.

## Lessen the pain with numbing creams

- Medications like Emla® (60 minutes) or Ametop® (45 minutes), Maxilene® (30 minutes) numb the skin. They are available without a prescription.
- 30-60 minutes before the injection, apply the cream or gel on the area shown in the picture below. Cover with plastic wrap and tape. Ready made patches are also available for a slightly higher cost. A video shows how to use numbing cream at <https://youtu.be/f1WpdIGP1MI>
- Check the instructions. If you are unsure, you can also ask the pharmacy team or your health care provider to show you the right locations to apply the cream. Often, more than one injection may be given, numbing cream might be needed on different spots.

<p>Numbering cream may be applied to the shaded area for children, teens and adults:</p>  <p>acromion process (bony prominence above deltoid)</p> <p>level of armpit</p> <p>IM injection site (shaded area)</p> <p>elbow</p> <p><a href="http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf">http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf</a></p>	<p>Measles-Mumps-Rubella and Varicella, are given by subcutaneous injection, on the back of the upper arm</p>  <p>acromion process (bony prominence above deltoid)</p> <p>Subcut injection site (shaded area)</p> <p>elbow</p> <p><a href="http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf">http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf</a></p>	<p>Numbering cream may be applied to the shaded area for infants:</p>  <p>IM injection site (shaded area)</p> <p><a href="http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf">http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2020.pdf</a></p>
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### **Sources of information and more great ideas:**

Canadian Paediatric Society, Caring For Kids

[https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/vaccination\\_and\\_your\\_child](https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/vaccination_and_your_child)

Sick Kids Toronto, About Kids Health: Pain-free injections

<http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca/En/HealthAZ/TestsAndTreatments/GivingMedication/Pages/Painfree-Injections-in-Babies.aspx>

