



Nervous about getting needles?

Most vaccines are given with a needle. Some people are afraid of needles, which can make it harder to get vaccinated. Here are some useful strategies to help you improve the vaccination experience.

For parents

BEFORE

- Explain the process using words your child will understand.
- Be honest and neutral about how the vaccine will feel: “You may feel some pressure or a poke on your arm.”
- Explain why the vaccine is important: It will help protect you and your family.
- Say what you will do to help them manage pain or fear (play a game, hold a toy).
- Think about using a numbing cream or gel. These are available over the counter, or speak with your health-care provider. Apply the product 30-60 minutes before the needle.

DURING

- Stay positive and calm.
- Hold your child on your lap or touch them to provide comfort
- Encourage them to relax their arm and let it feel loose and jiggly like cooked spaghetti.
- Distract them with songs, jokes, toys, bubbles, or mobile devices.

AFTER

- Congratulate them.
- Ask your health-care provider which medications you can give your child to help manage common side effects like sore muscles and mild fever.

For everyone

The **CARD** system is a way for everyone to remember ways to help make the vaccination experience better.

COMFORT

Sit upright and relax your arm.
Wear a short-sleeve shirt.
Bring a comfort item.



ASK

What will happen?
What will it feel like?
Can I have privacy?
Can I use a numbing cream?



RELAX

Bring a support person.
Take slow, deep breaths.
Engage in positive self-talk.



DISTRACT

Talk to someone.
Play games.
Listen to music.



You can also

- Talk to your health-care provider about your fears.
- Ask if the vaccine can be given in a private place.