

TIPS for Caregivers

How to help your child cope during a medical procedure

Babies:

- Sucking (e.g. feeding or pacifier)
- Distraction with objects or toys
- Cuddling
- Music/singing

Toddlers and Preschoolers:

- Sucking (e.g. pacifier)
- Blowing a pinwheel
- Cuddling
- Books
- Telling stories
- Counting
- Music or singing
- Pretend play
- Videos

School-Age Children:

- Relaxation exercises
- Blowing a pinwheel
- Choosing to watch the procedure or look away
- Holding or squeezing hand
- Books (e.g. Where's Waldo, I Spy)
- Counting
- Music/singing
- Playing "I Spy"
- Videos or games

Teens:

- Relaxation exercises
- Choosing to watch the procedure or look away
- Holding or squeezing a hand
- Books
- Conversation (e.g. talk about a favourite place)
- Music
- Videos or games

ALL AGES

Helpful Caregiver Behaviours:

- Modeling being calm
- Providing distraction and support
- Suggesting ways to cope
- Giving honest answers to your child's questions (e.g., "It may feel like a pinch")
- Bringing a familiar toy or blanket
- Praising your child (e.g. for holding arm still)

Unhelpful Caregiver Behaviours:

- Getting upset
- Apologizing or bargaining
- Criticizing
- Making many reassuring comments (e.g. "It won't hurt at all")
- Talking about previous negative experiences

For more detailed suggestions, refer to "Tips for Caregivers: How to help your child cope during a medical procedure" pamphlet. Modified from "Keys to Comfort" guide by J. Hardial and C.T. Chambers (2003)