

Tips for Pharmacists on Improving Children's Immunization Experiences



Getting injections can be distressing for children. The following recommendations have been shown to reduce discomfort and improve the child's overall injection experience. Pharmacists are encouraged to use one or a combination of the following tactics:

Have a **discussion to prepare the child for the injection**, if appropriate depending on the age of the child.^{1,2} Include topics such as why they need the injection and what to expect during the procedure.^{1,2}

Position the child comfortably for both the parent and the child (e.g., bear hug or on the parent's lap).³

Recommend and educate on the proper use of **topical anaesthetics** (e.g., lidocaine-prilocaine, tetracaine or liposomal lidocaine) if appropriate.³

Distract the child using age appropriate distractions, such as toys, books or videos.²

Encourage children three years of age and older to **take slow deep breaths** to relax them and to reduce pain.³

Provide praise and perhaps a reward after the vaccination (e.g., a sticker or small toy).^{1,2}

Position the child supine or use excessive force to restrain the child.³

Tell the child it will be painless (instead tell them they might feel a pinch).²

Apologize for the injection.²

References:

1. Gouvernement du Quebec. Reducing the Pain and Anxiety of Vaccination in Children (2019). Available at: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/advice-and-prevention/vaccination/reducing-pain-and-anxiety-of-vaccination-children/>. (Accessed: 14th June 2019)
2. Alberta Health Services. Tips to Make Immunization Easier for Children (2018). Available at: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hp/cdc/if-hp-cdc-ipsm-tips-make-imm-easier-child.pdf>. (Accessed: 11th July 2019)
3. Taddio, A. et al. Reducing the pain of childhood vaccination: an evidence-based clinical practice guideline. CMAJ 182. E843-55 (2010).



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