

# Tips for Parents



Help your child be more comfortable with vaccines.



## Use play to practice beforehand.

Use a favorite toy or a play medical kit to act out what happens at a vaccine appointment to help them understand what to expect.



## Be honest.

Explain the vaccine might pinch for a minute, but that it won't last long and it's going to keep them from getting sick.



## Bring a comfort item from home.

Young children might bring a teddy bear, a favorite blanket or a book to look at. School-aged children, could use a phone to play a game or watch a video.



## Stay calm yourself.

Children pick up on the emotions of others. Take a deep breath and smile. If you are relaxed, they will feel relaxed.



## Hold little ones in your lap.

This can be comforting.



## Pretend to blow bubbles.

Have your child pretend to blow bubbles or blow out candles if they are worried about pain. Slow, deep breaths can be calming, as opposed to the shallow, fast breathing caused by nerves.



## Pour on the positive praise.

Afterward, tell your child what a great job they did. Offer a reward like a sticker, a stop for ice cream or a trip to the park on the way home. This will help create a positive memory associated with that day.

## Avoid these actions:

- 1. Don't lie.** Avoid saying things like: "It won't hurt a bit!" When your child is getting a vaccine, telling them otherwise can weaken trust between the two of you.
- 2. Stay away from scary words or threats.** Using harsh words like shot, pain or ouch, or making vaccines a threat can worsen their fear. Choose words like vaccine and pinch, and emphasize the reason they are getting the vaccine is to keep them healthy.
- 3. Don't threaten or scold them.** Don't criticize even if your child cries or screams. Reassure them that you're right there and it will be over quickly.