



The 3 P's of Helping your Baby during Vaccinations

A Parent's Guide: **Babies up to 1 year old**



Vaccine injections can be painful and stressful for babies and parents, but you can really make a difference.

For your baby's next vaccine injection, plan with your health care provider to:

- 1) Apply topical anaesthetics to numb the skin – these are medicines you can buy at a pharmacy without a prescription.
- 2) Give your baby sugar water for comfort – make sugar water at home or at the clinic by mixing 1 teaspoon of sugar with 2 teaspoons of water.
- 3) Distract your baby – choose an age-appropriate item to bring.

Read the 3 P's of vaccination pain management below and combine these strategies to improve pain relief.

For more information and a video, visit the **SickKids** (The Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, Canada) website:
www.aboutkidshealth.ca/pain-free-injections

STEP 1: **P**HARMACOLOGICAL (PAIN MEDICINE)



Apply topical anaesthetics

TOPICAL ANAESTHETICS

- Available products: lidocaine (Maxilene™), tetracaine (Ametop™), lidocaine-prilocaine (EMLA™).
- Apply to either the upper outer part of the leg (infants less than 1 year), or upper arm (infants 1 year old), 30 to 60 minutes before injection – check product instructions.
- If 2 or more injections are planned, apply to both legs or arms.

- May cause temporary reddening or whitening of skin – this is normal. If there is a rash, talk to your doctor – it could be an allergic reaction.
- Avoid acetaminophen (Tylenol™), ibuprofen (Advil™), ice and cold sprays before injection – they have not been proven to reduce injection pain. After injection, acetaminophen or ibuprofen may be used to relieve fever or discomfort.

SUGAR WATER

Give sugar water



- Give your baby sugar water to drink right before the injection.

STEP 2: **P**HYSICAL (BODY POSITION AND ACTIVITY)



Hold upright

HOLD

- Hold your baby close during injection – in a hug or on your lap. This feels good and helps your baby stay still.
- Avoid holding your baby too tightly – this can increase pain and distress.

BREASTFEED

- Start breastfeeding your baby before injection and continue during and after injection.
- If 1 injection is planned, position your baby to expose 1 leg; expose both legs for 2 or more injections.
- If the baby cannot be breastfed, offer a bottle or pacifier starting before injection and continue during and after injection.



Breastfeed

STEP 3: **P**SYCHOLOGICAL (THOUGHTS AND BEHAVIOURS)



Deep breaths

BREATHE DEEPLY

- Stay calm and use your normal speaking voice. This helps your baby stay calm – babies look to their parents for how to act and feel.
- If you are nervous, take a few

slow, deep breaths to calm yourself before and during injection – breathe so your stomach expands, not your chest. You can do this while holding your baby.

DISTRACT

- Help keep your baby's attention away from the injection.
- Distractions you can use: rocking, cuddling, singing, talking, sucking (breast-feeding or pacifier). Distract with objects or toys (bubbles, pop-up books, rattles) when your baby is calm enough to do so; otherwise, distress can be increased.



Distract

These are scientifically proven ways of reducing pain in babies during vaccine injections.
Think about what worked and plan ahead to make the next vaccination less painful.