

# Vaccine Preparation

honest, child-friendly information to reduce fear and increase positive coping



## 1 PREPARE



### EXPECT

Consider a child's age, understanding and medical fears as you decide when to talk to them about getting a vaccine. The younger the child, the less preparation time. A toddler can be told earlier that day while a teen may need to prepare for multiple days before.

### EXPERIENCE

"Have you ever had a vaccine before?"

### EXPLAIN

"A vaccine is a liquid medicine that helps your body fight sickness. It is a quick poke. Some children say it feels like a pinch."

### ENGAGE

"Your job is to take a deep breath and help your arms and legs stay still."

## 2 PROVIDE DISTRACTION & CHOICES

### DISTRACTION:

Distraction is a way to support children during medical procedures by offering an alternative focus. It can also decrease a child's perception of pain.

#### IDEAS

- play dough
- a stress ball
- watching a video
- an I-spy book
- playing I-spy with objects in view
- listening to a favorite story or song

### CHOICES:

Choices help give a child some control. Be careful to only offer choices that a child can really make. Avoid asking, "Are you ready?" because that is not a choice the child has.

#### EXAMPLES

- Do you want to sit on your own or be in a loved one's arms?
- You can choose to squeeze play-dough, a stress ball, or a loved one's hand.
- Would you like to listen to music or a show?
- You may watch or look away.
- You can take 3 or 6 slow deep breaths.

## 3 TRY OR USE COMFORT POSITIONS

A secure comfort hold from a caregiver or staff member can provide safety, security, and comfort when receiving a vaccine. Here are three comfort positions to try. Find which one works best for your child.



Side hug, securing the child's arms close to their body



Back to front hug, keeping the child's arms and legs still



Front to front hug holding the child's head and body as their arms are tucked in front

*All of these comfort positions give the adult the chance to talk softly in the child's ear or sing a song. "You are holding so still. Great job." or "I can see this is hard, I am right here for you."*

## 4 SUPPORT & CLOSURE



### END

"It's all done!"

### ENCOURAGE

"You did it! You got your vaccine to help keep your body healthy."

### ACKNOWLEDGE

"You did such a great job sitting still. You must be proud of yourself. I am proud of you, too."

### EFFECTS

"Some children say that shaking their arm out helps."

### EXPLORE

A new toy, activity or sticker

## 5 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tips if you are participating in a drive-through vaccination



Waiting can be stressful. Come prepared for a long wait time. Bring extra toys, movies, snacks, drinks, diapers, wipes, and tissues.



Keep your child buckled in their seat or car seat to help keep them close, safe, and ready when your name is called.



You can still offer choices! "Do you want the music on or off?" or "I can hold your hand or rub your foot."



# You did it!

You removed feelings of doubt, question, and uncertainty and gave this child a sense of control, validation, and trust.

*CLDR is a nonpartisan non-profit and recognizes the personal nature of the choice to vaccinate. The information contained here does not constitute medical advice. It is for educational and informational purposes only to help children cope with the current health disaster. Please consult with a healthcare professional to receive personalized advice or treatment.*

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Turning Tragedy Into Triumph

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