



# How To Make Your Child's Immunizations Less Stressful

## TIPS FOR PARENTS - WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

Immunizations help protect babies and young children against 14 serious diseases. Even though you are keeping your child safe from diseases, it's hard to see your child cry when receiving immunizations. Immunizations can be stressful but you can ease your child's discomfort. Below are some steps you can take before, during and after an immunization visit to ease the pain and stress of getting immunizations.

### **Come prepared!**

- Read about the immunizations your child will get in advance.
- Ask your child's doctor any questions you have about vaccines.
- Bring your child's immunization record.
- Pack a favorite toy, book, blanket or other comfort item.
- Be honest - immunizations can pinch or sting, but not for long.
- Remind your child that immunizations help keep them healthy.
- Engage other family members, especially older siblings to be supportive.
- Avoid scary stories or making threats about getting immunizations.

### **Make immunizations easy.**

- Distract your child with a toy, a story, a song or something interesting in the room.
- Make eye contact with your child and smile, talk softly or sing.
- Let your child know everything is going to be okay.
- Hold your child tightly on your lap, if you can.
- Take deep breaths with an older child to help "blow-out" the pain.
- Point out interesting things in the room to help create distractions.
- Tell or read stories.
- Support your child if he or she cries. Never scold a child for not "being brave".

### **Be supportive.**

- Hug, cuddle and praise your child.
- For babies, swaddling, breastfeeding or a bottle may offer quick relief.
- Read the Vaccine Information Sheets from your health care provider so you will know what to expect after the immunizations.

### **After the immunizations.**

- Observe your child for the next few days. You might see a small rash or notice a fever. If your child has any reaction that concerns you, call your doctor or seek medical attention.

For additional information about childhood immunization schedules or vaccine-preventable diseases, please visit the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' web site at <http://health.mo.gov/immunizations>.

