

## Injections for Diabetes: How to Help Your Child

Needles are used during vaccinations, blood draws, or even IV placement. Children with diabetes, though, have pokes daily. These can include frequent insulin injections, finger sticks for blood sugar testing, and diabetes technology (insulin pump or continuous glucose monitor) site changes. Here are some helpful ideas to reduce your child's pain and anxiety.

### Be Calm

A child can sense your anxious feelings. Your calm voice, words, and presence can help your child feel less anxious and scared.

### Use Distraction

Changing your child's focus from a painful event to something else can be very helpful. You could help them choose a special blanket or toy. You could read a fun book or play a game with your child.

Allow your child to be as involved in the process as they want to be. Some children find it less stressful if they can watch the poke and look away if and when they want to.

### Buzzy® Bee

This is a device to help with the pain of a needle. Buzzy® bee combines vibration and cold to reduce pain during a poke. The device works best, for most people, when placed near the site of the poke, like the insulin injection or pump insertion site. Sometimes it will need to be placed at other sites, like the opposite arm or leg. Buzzy® bee is believed to work because the vibration and cold block the pain signal from going to the brain. If the child is afraid of bees, Buzzy® also comes in plain black or as a ladybug. More information and devices can be found at: [www.buzzy4shots.com](http://www.buzzy4shots.com).

### Tips for Children 4-6 Years Old

- Deep breathing
- Storytelling
- Puppet play
- Music
- Singing
- TV
- Talking about favorite places
- Books to look at, such as I-Spy

### Tips for Children 6-11 Years Old

- Music
- Deep breathing
- Counting
- Staring at something without blinking
- Making your child laugh
- Video games
- Talking about favorite places or past event

### Tips for Children 12 Years Old and Older

- Music
- Movies
- Video games
- Stress ball
- Talk to your child about things they enjoy
- Ask if they have helpful ideas

### Be with Your Child

Hold younger children and comfort them. Stress will increase the amount of pain felt during pokes. Children tend to feel less pain when a support person comforts them.

Be there to provide support and advice for older children who are learning to poke themselves. This can make it more positive and decrease pain and anxiety with pokes.

Here are some positions to try depending on the age of your child.

### **Chest-to-Chest Hugging Hold**

- Child can sit on lap, facing adult
- Child can focus on something else
- View is blocked by the hug, a book, toy, or cell phone



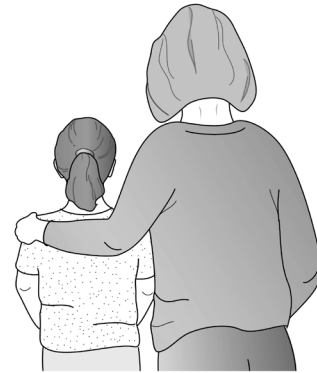
### **Sitting on Lap**

- Helpful with young school-age kids
- Child sitting on adult's lap
- Child's legs can be tucked between adult's legs
- Allows for hugging and hand holding
- Child can watch what is going on or look at something else



### **Sitting or Standing by Support Person**

- Helpful with older school-age kids
- Helpful with kids learning to poke themselves
- Can sit in chair or right next to child
- Can choose to watch or focus on something else
- May use book, toy, or other device to block view



### **Choose Your Words Wisely**

The words you use during a poke make an impact. Talk to your child about their behavior before, during, and after an injection or finger poke. Let them know when it is “all done” and praise them. Allow them to tell you how they feel. **Do not** say, “sorry this has happened,” criticize, or give complete control to the child, as these may add to your child's stress.

### **Phrases to Avoid**

- “This feels like a bee sting.”
- “Sorry.”
- “Be a big boy/girl!”
- “Don't cry. You're okay.”
- “You're okay.”

### **Phrases That Might Help**

- “Tell me how it feels.”
- “Other kids say it feels like...”
- “When I count to three, blow the feeling away from your body.”
- “That was hard. Great job keeping still.”

If you reduce the pain and fear of pokes it will help to keep your child in good control of their diabetes and to live a long and healthy life. As your child gets older, studies show that it can be helpful to let them practice pokes on an orange, sponge or soft doll. It helps to reduce their fear and reduce pain.

### **Create a Regular Poke Plan**

Routine and predictability will help your child cope with pokes. Give options to your child to create this routine. For example:

- Would you like to sit on the couch/chair?
- Whose hand do you want to hold?
- Do you want to watch the poke or play with something else?
- Do you want to count before the poke or no counting?
- Do you want to use Buzzy Bee?

Write down the plan to help stay consistent!