

Injectons for Type 1 Diabetes: How to Help Your Child

Needles are used during immunizations, blood draws, or even IV placement. Children with type 1 diabetes, however, have needle pokes daily. These can include frequent insulin injections, finger sticks for blood sugar testing, and insulin pump site changes. It is helpful to decrease needle fears if you can reduce pain and anxiety.

Not knowing what to do to help your child can be very stressful. Here are some ideas that we hope you may find helpful.

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 injection or 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 the use of vibration and cold to reduce needle poke pain. The device works best, for most people, when placed near the site of the needle stick, 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 can be found and devices can be ordered at: www.buzzy4shots.com.

Age of Child	Ideas to Try
4-6 years old	Deep breathing, telling a story, puppet play, music, singing, TV, talking about favorite places, a book to look at such as I-Spy.
6-11 years old	Music, deep breathing, counting, stare at something without blinking, make your child laugh, music, video games, talking about favorite places or past event
12 years old and older	Music, movies, video games, squeezing a stress ball, talk about things they enjoy, ask if they have helpful ideas

Be With Your Child

For younger children, be with your child to hold and comfort them during painful or fearful times, like finger sticks and insulin pokes. The stress that a child feels before and during these events will increase the amount of pain felt. Children tend to feel less pain when a support person is with them to comfort them.

For older children who are learning to poke themselves, it is helpful to be there for support and advice. This can make it more positive and decrease pain and anxiety with needle sticks.

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 with the child during a needle stick make an impact. Talk to the child about their behavior before, during, and after an injection or finger poke. Let the child know when it is “all done” and praise the child. Allow them to tell you how they feel. It may cause the child more distress if you say you are sorry this has happened, criticize, or give complete control to the child, so these should be avoided. Here are some words and phrases listed below that can be helpful.

Phrases to Avoid

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

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.”

If you reduce the pain and fear of needle sticks 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.