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PREPARING FOR A BLOOD TEST OR VACCINE

Advice for children aged 5–11



Division of
Clinical Psychology



NHS
Hertfordshire Community
NHS Trust

THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR CHILDREN AGED 5 TO 11, BUT IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PARENTS AND CARERS TRY TO SUPPORT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THIS INFORMATION

YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE A VACCINE OR BLOOD TEST. THIS LEAFLET HAS SOME IDEAS TO HELP YOUR APPOINTMENT TO GO AS WELL AS POSSIBLE.

YOU CAN ASK A PARENT OR CARER TO HELP YOU TO COMPLETE THIS PLAN.



We'll be talking about grown-ups, but really we mean anyone who is looking after you. This might be a mum or dad, a foster mum or dad, a grandparent, or someone else.

MY PLAN

My name is:

Who will bring me

The grown-up who will come into the clinic with me is:

My favourite position

My grown-up will help me decide my position.

- I would like to sit upright
- I would like to lie down

Keeping my arm still

- I would like to keep my own arm still
- I would like my grown-up to help me keep my arm still

Where I will sit

- I would like to sit on my own seat
- I would like to sit on my grown-up's knee

What I will bring

This is what I would like to bring in with me:



Will I look?

- I want to look
- I don't want to look

Which arm will I choose?

- Left
- Right

If my clinic has numbing cream, would I like it?

- Yes
- No

What will happen?

I have chatted to my grown-up, and I know why I'm having the blood test or vaccine, where I will go and when, who will be there, and what will happen (e.g. the feeling of a pinch or scratch). I know it is ok to cry or scream or shout.

- Yes
- No

HOW CAN MY GROWN-UP HELP ME?

Which technique would I like my grown-up to help me with.

Tense-Relax exercise?

Yes No

Deep, slow 'Tummy breathing'?

Yes No

My favourite place?

Yes No

Look at what I can see out of the window? Yes No

I-spy?

Yes No

Blow bubbles?

Yes No

Have my grown-up to stroke my arm?

Yes No

Talk about fun times and loved ones?

Yes No

Other idea?

Yes No

What idea?(Sing, music)

This is what I would like to do after my appointment:



EXERCISES TO PRACTICE

Try to do these twice daily for up to 10 minutes, in the days before your appointment.

The Tense-Relax exercise

Tense leg muscles for 15 seconds, and then relax for 15 seconds. Do the same for your upper body, but keep arms and head relaxed. Repeat until feeling warmer in your face.

Deep, slow, 'Tummy breathing'

Sit comfortably. Take slow, deep breaths.

- In for 4, while the air goes into your lungs and your tummy goes out.
- Pause for 4.
- Out for 4.
- Pause for 4. Repeat...

My favourite place

Imagine your favourite place. What can you see, hear, smell, taste and touch there?



VISION



HEARING



SMELL



TASTE



TOUCH

AUTHORS

The authors have written this document on behalf of the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP), one of the divisions of the British Psychological Society (BPS). The DCP works closely with a number of organisations including the NHS, across disciplines, the government, and multiple professional bodies and groups in the voluntary sector, to promote and develop clinical psychology as a body of knowledge and skills.

These leaflets intend to provide a preventative resource for everyone, as well as support for those who have a needle phobia, defined as avoiding the procedure itself, (Orenius & Sailus, 2018).

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FURTHER RESOURCES

Needle Pain Management for Vaccinations & More
Skip Solution for kids in pain kidsinpain.ca

Nervous about needles? Information for families
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children gosh.nhs.uk

Overcoming your needle phobia (fear of needles)
Guy's and St Thomas' guysandstthomas.nhs.uk

Nervous about needles?
Great Ormond Street Hospital gosh.nhs.uk



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The British Psychological Society is a registered charity which acts as the representative body for psychology and psychologists in the UK. We support and enhance the development and application of psychology for the greater public good, disseminating our knowledge to increase public awareness.

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