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PREPARING FOR A BLOOD TEST OR VACCINE

Advice for young people aged 12–18



Division of
Clinical Psychology



NHS
Hertfordshire Community
NHS Trust

YOU HAVE BEEN OFFERED A VACCINE OR BLOOD TEST. THERE ARE WAYS TO HELP THIS GO AS SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE. SOMETIMES PEOPLE ARE A BIT WORRIED, AND IF YOU FEEL LIKE THIS, THAT IS OK.

WE HAVE PUT SOME IDEAS INTO A PLAN WHICH WE HOPE CAN HELP YOU. WE HOPE IT WILL HELP YOU TO FOCUS ON THE THINGS YOU CAN CHANGE. YOU CAN ASK A PARENT OR CARER TO HELP YOU TO COMPLETE THIS PLAN, A FEW DAYS BEFORE YOU GO.



MY PLAN

My name is:

Who will I bring to the appointment?

(Handy tip – bring an adult who doesn't mind needles!)

If my adult says it's ok for me to decide, would I like my adult to come into the clinic room?

- Yes No

My preferred posture

Your adult will help you decide your posture. If you feel faint, it may help to lie down.

The posture I prefer is:

- Lying down Sitting up

Keeping my arm still

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

Will I look?

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

What arm will I choose?

- Left Right

What will I bring?

What I will bring to distract myself? (take my mind off the procedure)

Phone? Book? Music? iPad? Game? Other:

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

- Yes No

What will happen

I have chatted to my adult, 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, scream or shout.

- Yes No

HOW CAN MY ADULT HELP ME?

Which technique would I like my adult to help me with. You can read more about these on the next page.

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

Have my adult to stroke my arm?

Yes No

Talk about fun times and loved ones?

Yes No

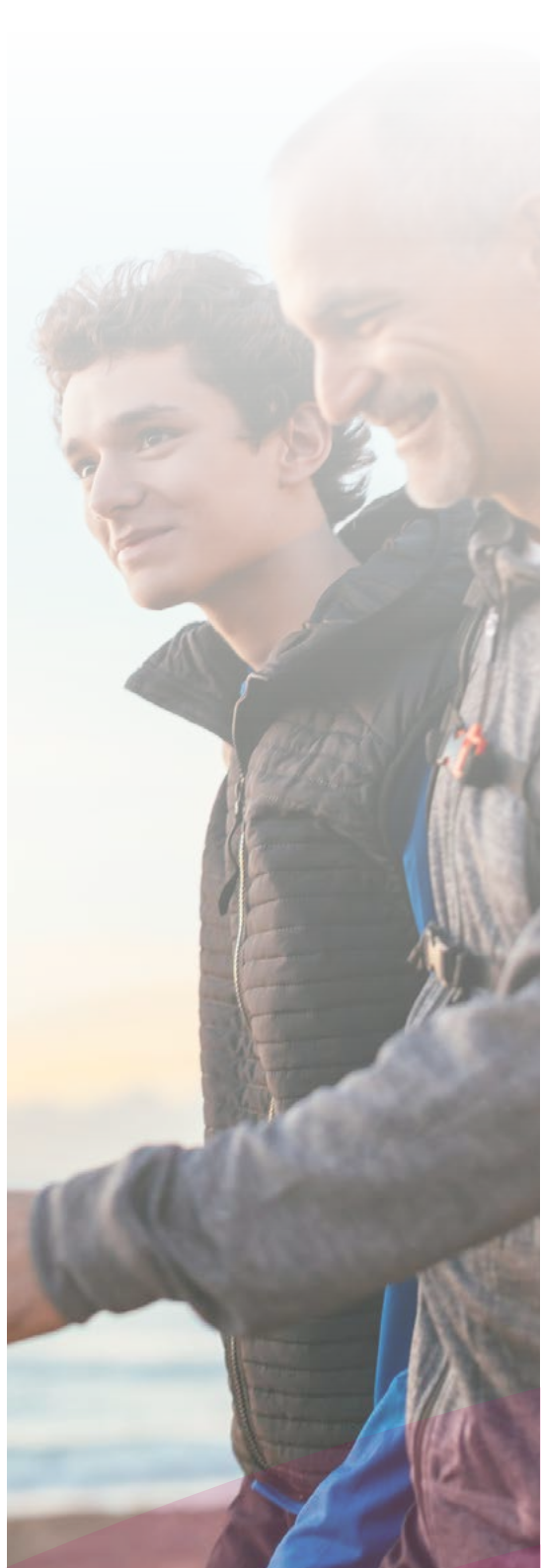
What/Who?

Other idea?

Yes No

What idea?(Sing, music, book, game)

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



EXERCISES TO PRACTISE

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

The Tense-Relax exercise

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

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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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