

# Reducing Pain from Immunization



**Don't Wait, Vaccinate!**

Vaccines protect children from serious diseases. Most children feel pain from the experience. Pain may cause the child to develop a fear of needles, other medical procedures, or medical staff.

If your child requires more than one needle, studies show that it is easier to get them all at once rather than returning to the clinic later on. Your child's immune system can easily handle many needles on the same day.

What can I do to reduce my baby's pain while he/she is getting their needles?

## Steps to reduce needle pain in babies:

**Cuddle your baby on your lap or in your arms while they are getting their needle.**

**If you are breastfeeding, feed your baby before, during and after the needle.**

Breastfeeding calms and comforts both the baby and mother and can actually reduce the baby's pain.

**If you are not breastfeeding, sugar water can be given to infants less than 12 months.**

To make sugar water, mix one teaspoon of sugar with 2 teaspoons of water. Give it to the baby with a cup, spoon, or syringe just before the needle and discard the unused portion.

*Do not use sugar at home to calm upset or crying babies.*

**Allow your baby to suck on their soother, thumb or your clean finger while they are receiving their needle.**

What can I do to reduce my child's pain while he/she is getting their needles?

## Steps to reduce needle pain in older children:

**Talk to your child about the vaccine and answer their questions.**

Why do I need a vaccine/needle? *"To help you stay healthy."* What will happen? *"The medicine will be put in your arm with a needle."* How will it feel? *"You may feel a poke, squeeze, or a small sting that will last a few seconds."*

**Plan what to bring to the visit.**

Help your child choose items to bring that are interesting (toys, books) and provide comfort (stuffed toy, blanket). These can be used to take your child's attention away from the needle.

**Have your child sit upright when getting their needle.**

Hug or cuddle your child on your lap. Do not lay them flat.

**Stay calm, smile and use a normal voice when your child receives the needle.**

Talk about things that focus your child's attention away from the needle. Involve your child in telling the nurse about something they enjoy, are looking forward to, or are proud of.

**Ask your child to take a deep breath.**

Deep breathing reduces the pain from a needle. Just before the needle take out a windmill, party blower or bubbles and ask your child to take a deep breath and blow on the object.

**Praise and reward your child.**

After the needle, tell your child he/she did well. Consider using positive recognition or rewards such as stickers or certificates to help them feel good about how they handled the procedure.