

# Reducing Hurt During Needle Procedures

*Procedures, especially those involving a needle or poke, can be stressful for children or teenagers.*

## Helpful Tips:

- Caregiver being a calm and attentive presence before, during, and after needle procedures.
- Being honest about needle procedures. Avoid threatening or teasing about needle procedures.
- Giving reasonable choice, such as what to play while receiving a vaccine, to give child a sense of control.
- Sitting in a position of comfort, upright in caregiver's arms, or with caregiver next to them.  
Please gently keep infants' and childrens' hands away from the poke site. The staff can assist you in positioning. Babies can be swaddled and held, breastfed, or placed skin to skin.
- Provide comfort, distraction and validation of feelings.



## Specifically Helping with the Hurt

Young infants established in breastfeeding can begin breastfeeding 2-5 minutes prior to the needle procedure, continue during the poke, and after for comfort as infant desires. This is especially helpful during vaccines.



## 24% Sucrose

Concentrated sugar (Sweet Tooth/Sweet Em/Sweet Ease) acts as a pain reducer during infancy and can be given orally with a pacifier, syringe, or on a finger. There is not evidence this will interfere with breastfeeding. A dose should be given 1-2 minutes prior to the procedure and a partial dose can be given at the beginning of the procedure.



## Buzzy the Bee

Buzzy the Bee or Lady Buzz combines vibration and cold at the poke site to lessen the hurt.



## Shot Blocker

Shot Blocker saturates the sensory signals around the poke site distracting from the hurt signals associated with needle procedures. It is helpful for some pre-school and older children.



## Cold Spray (numbing)

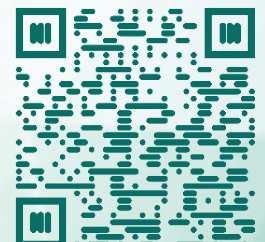
It can be helpful for some older children.



## 4% Lidocaine (numbing)

Do not use in children who are at risk for methemoglobinemia, allergic to caine medications, or unsupervised.

\*see back for additional instructions



Scan to visit our Child Life website for additional information.

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## 4% Lidocaine (numbing)

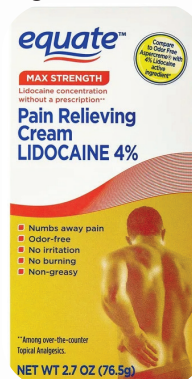
- 4% Lidocaine cream applied to the child's skin is available over the counter. \*see examples at bottom of page
- Do not apply to skin that is cut, scraped, red, swollen, or sore. There is no need to wash skin prior to application.
- Apply a thick layer (do not rub in) about 2 stacked pennies worth for infants and a quarter size for older children at the sites of the anticipated poke.
- Cover with a clear non-absorbing dressing such as tegaderm, plastic wrap, non-absorbent bandaid or press and seal.
- With Tegaderm, fold small portion of diagonal corners under for easier removal. \*see photo F
- Do not allow child to put the cream or plastic covering in their mouth as it presents a choking hazard or suffocation risk.
- Infants and young children should be watched continually. Consider applying in car upon arrival to office for immunizations.
- 4% lidocaine cream should be applied 30-60 minutes prior to needle procedures. For persons with more melanin in their skin, it is recommended product stay on longer than 30 minutes. No child should have lidocaine on for longer than 2 hours.
- Limit 4 doses in 24 hours.

| Well Check Age | Location to Place Lidocaine                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 months old   | A on both legs<br>B on 1 leg                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 4 months old   | A on both legs                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 6 months old   | A on both legs                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 1 year old     | A on 1 leg<br>B on both legs<br>E on both arms                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 15 months old  | A on both legs                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 18 months old  | If planning to get Hepatitis A vaccine, A on 1 leg<br>E on both arms.                                                                                                                                                       |
| 2 years old    | If Hepatitis A vaccine has not been given, A on 1 leg<br>E on both arms.                                                                                                                                                    |
| 4 years old    | A and B on 1 leg                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 11 years old   | C on both arms if child is very thin or prefers pokes in legs then A on both legs.<br>*The 2nd HPV is usually given 6 months after 1 <sup>st</sup> .<br>Place lidocaine at C on 1 arm or leg if child prefers pokes in leg. |
| 16 years old   | C on both arms                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

\*If planning for flu vaccine, usually given in fall/winter, or COVID vaccine, A for children 4 years of age or younger or are very thin. C for children 5 years of age and older.

\*If child has missed vaccine doses, catch up doses may be needed.  
Please speak to doctor's office for numbing locations.

\*Three examples of 4% lidocaine cream available over the counter. Check active ingredients for 4% lidocaine. Do not use if child is allergic to caine medications, risk for methemoglobinemia, or allergic to product contents.



**A**  
middle thigh



**B**  
side of thigh



**C**  
upper arm  
deltoid muscle



**D**  
back of  
upper arm



**E**  
bend of  
arm for  
lab draws



**F**  
stretch  
opposite  
corners to  
remove

