



Helping Your Child at Wound Care

The best thing to do for children and teens, while at the visit, is to be a calm presence with them. Talk to them, cuddle them, hold their hand, play with them, and let them know you are staying with them.

Explain

It is important to explain to children why they are at the visit and that doctors and nurses are helpers. Explain, even to young children who are not talking yet, about the doctors visit.

Some examples of what to say include:

- We came to the doctor's office today because you have a (wound, rash, boo boo, etc). The doctors and nurses will look at the area to see how they can help you.
- If the child has a dressing on the wound, explain that the nurses and doctors will remove the dressing (sometimes it is best to call it a band aid or bandage and point to it for younger children), check the skin, and help it.
- Sometimes doctors need to look at the genital or other private areas. If this is the case, let your child know this by saying, "sometimes doctors need to look at the skin on your private area where your underwear is" (or the terms you use for this area of the body). Let them know this is okay because you are with them and you are at the doctor's office together. Older children can be given a choice as to if a caregiver stays in the room or not.
- Avoid telling scary stories or making threats about doctors offices or pokes. It is important that children understand that their illness and coming to the doctor does not mean they did anything wrong. Sometimes people get sick and need help.
- If your child asks if they are going to get an injection/shot/poke or has to have labs drawn, be honest in your answer. If you don't know, it is okay to say, "I don't know." Explain why some times pokes are necessary, such as to take care of our body, help us get healthy, help us feel better, or keep us from getting sick as is the case with immunizations.

Please see reverse side for additional information.

If you want or need assistance supporting your child, our Child Life Specialist can be reached at 325-747-6198.

Scan to Watch a Short Video
on Supporting Your Child
in the Hospital



Source: University of Iowa Stead Family Children's Hospital

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Pain Management

- Consider if pain medicine is needed and proactively give pain medications in time for it to work before the appointment.

Comfort Positions

- Hold your child in your lap or sit next to your older child, especially if they are receiving wound care or a poke. This is also good to do during physical exams. Let your child see, feel, and hear your calm voice.
- Comfort them if they become upset. Validate their feelings with statements such as, “I hear you are upset and I am here with you,” then hold and cuddle them or their hand.



Distraction

- For younger children, gently help keep the child’s hands busy and away from wound area. This is a natural response, however, the child should remain snug in your arms and their hands should remain away from the area. Staff will assist you with positioning and options for distraction.
- Talk about what you two can do together while the bandage is changed such as pretend to be a statue holding each other, deep breaths, play a game or watch a video on the phone, sing a song, or squeeze a stress ball. Scan the QR code below for tips.
- Some children like to look at what is being done to them and this does not upset them. Let them look if they want to and validate any feelings they have.
- Validate what the child is doing well by saying, “I see you working hard at holding your arm still.”

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