



PREPARING CHILDREN FOR INVASIVE PROCEDURES

Preparation for a procedure is very important. It will not stop them feeling pain and they may still cry, but you can help reduce their anxiety and increase their levels of cooperation by preparing your child ahead of time, and supporting them during the procedure. The older your child, the earlier in advance you can begin preparation.

Here are some **general guidelines** for preparing your child for a test or procedure:

- Explain the procedure in language your child understands.
- Make sure your child understands the exact body part involved, and that the procedure will be limited to that area e.g. for pre-school/ travel immunizations, upper arms.
- To the best of your ability, describe how the test will feel.
- Give your child permission to yell, cry, or otherwise express any pain verbally.
- Suggest ways for staying calm such as counting, deep breathing, and relaxation (thinking pleasant thoughts).
- Allow your child to participate in simple tasks e.g. helping to put magic cream on for blood tests.
- Include your child in the decision-making process, such as the time of day they will go for the appointment.
- Let your child to hold your hand or the hand of someone else helping with the procedure. Physical contact like this can help reduce pain and anxiety.
- Stress the benefits of the procedure and talk about things that the child may find pleasurable afterwards, such as feeling better or going home. After the test you may want to give your child a treat, but do not make this conditional on "being good" for the test.

There is a book available at reception going through blood tests which you are welcome to borrow whilst you are here.