

Immunizations at School

Say, Do, Reflect

What you can Say

- Use calm, supportive & confident language
“Feeling nervous or scared is okay. You can do it.”
- Remind them that they are brave
“You can do hard things! Remember when you learned to ride your bike?”
- Acknowledge that it can hurt, but don’t apologize
“It may sting, but it will be over in a few seconds.”
- Celebrate their success
“You did a great job! I’m proud of you.”

What you can Do

- Give your child some distraction tools
Read a book, listen to music, or sing the alphabet.
- Teach them ways to stay calm and relax
Comfort breathing (see below), a favourite toy, bring a friend or someone they trust.
- Offer your child numbing cream, which blocks pain receptors in the skin
Creams and patches can be purchased from your local pharmacy.

How you can Reflect

- Help them reframe their experience
Ask them what went well and what strategies helped.
- Have them make a note or video
They can express their own feelings and read/watch before future vaccines.
- Avoid downplaying their feelings
“I know it’s not fun, but we need vaccines to stay healthy.”
- Discuss how they may feel and what they can expect
“Side effects are common and expected. I can help.”

Positive Self-Talk

- Positive self-talk gives children coping skills, reframes their thinking, and builds self-esteem.
- Instead of: Try saying:
“I can’t do it” “I can do it”
“I don’t feel brave” “I am brave”
“I will fail” “I want to succeed”
“I don’t want to” “I will try”



Comfort Breathing

- Deep breathing triggers the body to relax its stress response.
- In through nose & out through the mouth.
- Inhale, counting to 5; exhale counting to 5.
- 4 quick breaths in through nose & a big sigh out.

More Information



Distraction Techniques
bit.ly/3UnyPiV



Learning How to Manage Pain
During Medical Procedures
bit.ly/3DHmf3H



Simple, Positive Language
bit.ly/3LuMIO0



How to Apply Numbing Cream
bit.ly/3qs1qZU



Commitment To Comfort
bit.ly/3R0YwTE

Immunizations at School

You May Be Wondering ...

Where do immunization happen at the school?

Your child will be immunized in a quiet space such as a classroom, staff room, or library. Only students with **valid consent forms** that have been signed by a parent/guardian will be called down, and will sit one on one with a nurse. After immunization, they will return to their classroom activities when they are ready.

My child is very anxious about immunizations. How can I help them be **successful at school**?

More than 60% of children have needle fear or anxiety. To support them:

Be honest about what they should expect and how they may feel

Be creative in choosing comfort strategies that give them control and build confidence

Consider using **numbing cream** to reduce the pain caused by the needle.

How do I get my child's immunizations at a **clinic**?

In Alberta, once students enter grade 1, routine immunizations are offered and completed in school. **Clinic-like appointments at the school may be arranged** for immunization day, and parents may have the option to be present. Share your concerns with your school nurse to develop a plan for your child.

My child has a history of fainting. Should they still be **immunized at school**?

Yes! There are several strategies that can be used to be successful with school immunizations:

Lay down and use **muscle tension** during immunization

Have a **healthy breakfast** in the morning and adequate **snacks/lunch** after immunization

Deep breathing and **distraction** to control anxiety

If your child has a medical condition and is being followed by a specialist, and you have questions about immunizations at school, you may contact your school nurse to discuss further.

Was this information useful?

Take a quick survey to let us know what you think!

