

Treating Your Child's Pain: Medical Procedures

During certain medical procedures, your child may experience pain. These procedures can include having blood drawn, having breathing or feeding tubes put in, or lumbar punctures (spinal taps). Luckily, pain from these activities does not last long. Read on to find out how your child's pain from medical procedures can be managed.

Pain medicines

There are a wide variety of pain medicines that can control pain from procedures. In some cases, they are given before or during the procedure. Afterward, they may be needed for a few hours or days until the pain goes away.

Pain medicine is usually given to a child in a way that does not hurt. Most pain medicines are given in pill or liquid form or put into a vein through a small tube (IV). The decision about which one to use will depend on your child's age and the procedure your child is having.

There are 3 main types of medicine used for this type of pain.

- *Non-opioids* such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen (Tylenol is one brand of acetaminophen. Advil and Motrin are brands of ibuprofen.)
- *Opioids* such as codeine and morphine
- Topical and local *anesthetics*, such as lidocaine, and "numbing" *creams*

Other things you can try

Before and during painful procedures, try the following to help ease your child's pain:

- **Be in the room with your child.** While there is no scientific proof that this will lessen your child's pain, it can lower your child's distress.
- **Distract your child.** Blowing bubbles, listening to a story, listening to music or singing a song, playing with puppets, or playing a handheld video game may help take attention away from the pain.
- **Soothe your child.** Give your baby a pacifier or a favorite object to hold. Massage, cuddle, or rock your child, or listen to soft music.
- **Let your child "help"** with the procedure and make choices such as what color bandage to use.
- **Prepare your child.** Before the procedure, let your child know what to expect using words she will understand. After the procedure, be sure to give plenty of praise and reassurance that she will be OK.

Managing pain at home

Once the procedure is done, you can help your child be as pain free as possible. Your child's doctor will give you information about how to continue using pain medicines at home. You can also continue to use some of the other pain relief methods listed previously. Be sure to call your child's doctor if your child's pain continues or gets worse.

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From your doctor

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