



AAP Immunizations Frequently Asked Questions: Comforting Baby During Vaccination

How can I comfort my baby during vaccinations?

Immunizations may hurt a little, and your baby may cry for a few minutes. There may be some temporary swelling where your child was injected. However, protecting your child's long-term health is worth a few tears. Parents can do several things to comfort their baby during and after immunizations:

- **Stay calm.** Your baby can pick up feelings from your expressions and body language.
- **Be supportive.** Talk soothingly and touch your baby during shots. Make eye contact and smile. If your child is old enough to understand, explain that immunizations help prevent some very serious illnesses.
- **Hold your baby.** Ask your pediatrician if he/she is comfortable immunizing while you hold your baby. If so, hold your baby on your lap. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) resource below describes the best position for your child.
- **Breastfeed.** Breastfeeding moms may wish to breastfeed baby during vaccination or immediately after to lessen pain and stress. Ask your pediatrician what is best. Your baby may also find sucking on a pacifier soothing.
- **Swaddle:** Swaddle your baby immediately after shots.
- **Be attentive.** Review the VIS when you get home. Give your baby plenty of fluids and call your pediatrician if you see a reaction that concerns you. Comfort and play with your child after the immunization. Acetaminophen can be used to help relieve some of the more common side effects, such as irritability and fever, but always check the dosage with your pediatrician.

Another tip for a smooth immunization visit is to **be prepared:**

- Take your baby's immunization record,
- Read the Vaccine Information Statements (VISs), and
- Ask your pediatrician questions.

More Resources:

- CDC: How to Hold Your Child During Vaccinations:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/holds-factsheet.pdf?nav=eml>
- CDC: Tips for a Less Stressful Shot Visit:
<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/downloads/tips-factsheet.pdf?nav=eml>
- California Department of Health: Comfort your Child Before, During, and After Shots:
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/immunize/Pages/ComfortMeasuresforInfants.aspx>
- Immunization Action Coalition: After the Shots- If Your Child Needs Comfort:
<http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4015.pdf>

Still have questions? E-mail: cispimmunize@aap.org.

The information contained in this document should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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