

# Tips for Helping Your Child With Medical Care

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Your child's care can often require specialized testing or treatments. These are often referred to as procedures. Our goal is to make these procedures as stress free as possible.

There are different strategies that parents and staff can use that may be helpful for your child regarding their medical care. Different strategies work for different children. We want to work with your child's style.

The Psychosocial Team and the Child Life Specialists at Dana-Farber/Boston Children's are specially trained in these techniques and can teach you ways to help your child cope with medical care.

These are some of the strategies that can help to relax and focus your child's attention.

## Breathing Exercises

- Blow a pinwheel, party blowers, bubbles
- Blow out imaginary birthday candles
- Practice using relaxation breathing

## Imagination

- Develop a story using a favorite character (TV, book, pet or a favorite activity)
- Use different senses in your story – smell the flowers, hear the wind, taste the candy
- Help your child to focus on physical sensations he/she is experiencing, and talk about how it feels, changes, etc.

## Distraction

- Focus on things like pop-up books, egg timer or color wheel
- Sing along with a favorite tape
- Hold hands, rub legs, back, arms, or offer a favorite stuffed animal to hold
- Use humor, if it does not annoy your child
- Talk with your child about recent or upcoming activities that they enjoy or are excited about

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## Encouraging Statements

- Make statements that are short, true, easy to repeat, and will comfort your child:
  - ❖ "You are doing a good job staying still"
  - ❖ "This is almost done"

## Ways to help your child:

- Share your ideas on how best to support your child.
- Encourage your child to learn and try different techniques
- Reassure your child in matter of fact way, he or she can do it
- Give lots of praise
- Help your child to practice relaxation
- When possible, give your child choices
- Keep your focus on your child
- Comfort your child by holding hands, rub legs, back, arms, or offer a favorite stuffed animal to hold
- If your child prefers to focus on the medical procedure give reassuring, simple information

## Contact Us

### For patient care assistance, please call the following phone numbers:

- Jimmy Fund Clinic (617) 632-3270  
Business Hours 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Page Operator (617) 632-3352  
Off hours: weekdays after 5 p.m., holidays, and weekends  
Page pediatric hematology/oncology fellow on call
- Life Threatening Emergencies dial 911