




Making the Procedure Easier, No Matter How You Are Infusing

 **Numbing Creams/Cold Sprays:** Many people use a numbing cream such as EMLA or Ela-Max. Prescription PainEase cold spray seems to help some. Most creams work better if they are on for about an hour. A word of caution about numbing creams: they can make the veins compress and flatten out due to the constriction effects from the active ingredients, so if you or your family member have very difficult veins, numbing cream may not be a wise option for you.

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 **Sticker Charts/Prizes:** Your child may enjoy placing the sticker on the chart after each infusion. You could give him or her a special treat after so many successful infusions. You know your child, and you can work together to find what special treat works best. Other families choose not to reward for pokes – do what works best for you.

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 **Routine and Distraction:** Watch a movie to distract little kids or let them indulge in some screen time to help ease anxiety. Fun fact: If you pop a


VERY sour candy in your mouth right at the time of the stick, the brain focuses on the sour sensation and reduces the nerve response at the site of the pain. Strange but true! Keep your routine fairly constant—kids thrive knowing what to expect.

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 **Be Honest:** Don't say, "This won't hurt." Needle pokes hurt – they aren't fun, and when you say it's not going to hurt and then it does, your child loses trust in you and the process increases their fear and anxiety. Be matter-of-fact. It's totally okay to say, "This is going to sting a little," or "Let's count to five together and the poke will be over by then."

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 **Don't Expect Bravery:** It's okay for kids to cry, it's okay to be angry that this is happening, and no one can always put on a brave face. Tell your child that showing feelings about the situation is okay, but throwing tantrums or refusing to do it is not. Let them know the infusion has to happen and it's going to be a lot easier if everyone cooperates.

 **Let Them Ask Questions:** If they have concerns, talk through them BEFORE the stick or procedure.


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 **Kids Follow Your Cues:** Be matter-of-fact. Don't increase their anxiety by feeling sorry for them and worrying over them. Focus on getting it done.

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 **Praise 'Em When They are Good (And Even When They Aren't):** It doesn't matter if it went spectacularly or horribly, tell your child "Thank you" and "Good job for trying," every time. If they could cooperate more or do better, let them know if there was improvement from the time before, and then tell them how much they improve each time. If it was just a bad day, let them know they did great, especially since it was a particularly tough day.

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 **Give Yourself Some Credit:** This is HARD! You did it. You and they got through it. It can be just as stressful on us as it is for them. You'll be able to do it next time too.