

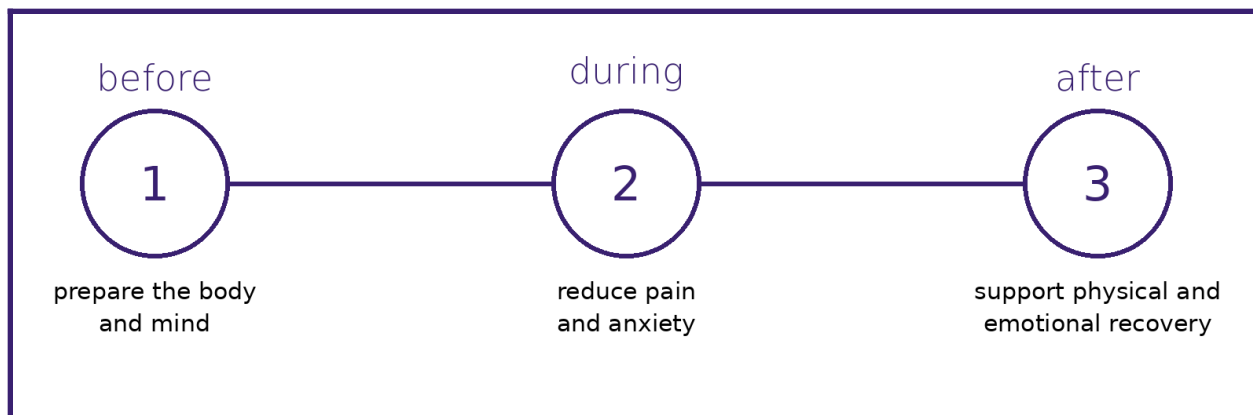
Needle care guide for **MAGIC** families

Evidence-based strategies for more comfortable injections, blood draws, IVs, and more

Children with endocrine disorders often receive hundreds, sometimes thousands, of needle procedures over the course of childhood. Growth hormone injections. Blood draws. IVs. Vaccines. Each experience shapes how a child feels about healthcare.

The good news is that needle pain and anxiety are not something we simply have to accept. Decades of research have identified simple, evidence-based strategies that can make these procedures significantly more comfortable.

The three parts of every needle procedure



Before the needle

Reduce pain

One of the most effective — and most underused — ways to reduce needle pain is applying a topical anesthetic before the procedure. Clinical practice guidelines consistently recommend topical anesthetics because they significantly reduce pain without affecting the effectiveness of medical procedures.

Helpful reminders

- ☐ Apply numbing in advance.
- ☐ If more than one injection is planned, numb each injection site.
- ☐ Ask your healthcare team where the injection(s) will be given if you're unsure.
- ☐ For children receiving growth hormone, rotating injection sites helps reduce soreness and skin changes over time.



Optional tool: Prepare Patch

A 4% lidocaine patch designed to numb the skin before needle procedures. Apply according to package directions before the procedure.

Prepare emotionally

Children do best when they know what to expect. Avoid surprises whenever possible.

Instead of:

"It won't hurt."

Try:

"You might feel a quick pinch. I'll be with you the whole time."

Offer choices whenever you can; this restores a sense of control.

- ☐ Which arm?
- ☐ Video game or bubbles?
- ☐ Sit on mom's lap or dad's?

Preventing Fainting

If your child (or you) tends to feel dizzy or faint during needle procedures, applied muscle tension may help. Here's an easy exercise to try.

Before the procedure:

1. Sit with both feet flat on the floor.
2. Squeeze your knees together (tighten thigh and buttock muscles) for about 10 seconds.
3. Relax for 10 seconds.
4. Repeat before and during the procedure.

During the procedure

Pain and anxiety influence one another. The more anxious we become, the more painful a procedure can feel. Active distraction tends to work better than passive distraction alone. Slow, deep breathing helps calm the body and can reduce both anxiety and the perception of pain. Using the smallest needle suitable for the medication or procedure and administering the injection slowly and steadily can also help.

Position for comfort

Whenever possible:

- ☐ Hold younger children upright (exception: if there's a history of fainting, lying down can be helpful).
- ☐ Keep the injection arm or leg relaxed.
- ☐ Avoid unnecessary restraint - use hugs instead.

Use active distraction

Evidence supports:

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|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Blowing bubbles | ☐ Music/Videos | ☐ Guided breathing |
| ☐ Books | ☐ Favorite toy | |
| ☐ Vibration/Cooling | ☐ Storytelling | |

After the needle

Recovery matters. The needle procedure isn't over when the needle comes out. Soreness, tenderness, bruising, and the way a child remembers the experience all influence how they feel about the next one. Supporting recovery is part of compassionate healthcare.

Help the body recover

Talking about the experience helps children process what happened and gives them a greater sense of control over future procedures. Listening also helps them feel seen and supported.

Depending on the procedure:

- ☐ Gentle movement, including getting outdoors if your child feels up to it.
- ☐ Ice or heat (follow your healthcare team's recommendations)
- ☐ Hydration
- ☐ Comfort measures (e.g. Thimble Recover patch for soreness or bruising)



Optional tool: Recover Patch

A soothing patch with turmeric and arnica, designed to support comfort after routine needle procedures.

Help the mind recover

Celebrate effort.

Instead of:

"See? That wasn't so bad."

Try:

"You did it- even when it was challenging!"

Children remember feeling supported more than they remember exactly how much something hurt. Talk about it.

After the procedure, ask:

- ☐ What helped the most?
- ☐ What was the hardest part?
- ☐ What should we do the same next time?
- ☐ What should we do differently?

These conversations help children process the experience and build confidence for future procedures.

Things parents tell me

"I'm more nervous than my child."

That's understandable. It means you care deeply. Give yourself grace, too. Taking a few slow breaths before the procedure helps you settle, and your child will often take their emotional cues from you.

"I don't want to lie and say it won't hurt."

Don't. Honest preparation builds trust.

"My child remembers every shot."

That's exactly why reducing pain and anxiety as well as supporting recovery matter.

"I'm worried my child will hate me for giving these injections."

If you're giving regular injections, there may be moments when your child is upset with you. That doesn't mean you're doing something wrong.

Before each injection, take a breath yourself. Children borrow our nervous systems. Your calm becomes their calm.

Years from now, they are unlikely to remember every injection. They will remember the parent who showed up every day, who comforted them afterward, and who did everything they could to make a difficult experience a little easier.

Quick reference checklist

Before

- ☐ Topical anesthetic
- ☐ Know the injection site
- ☐ Hydrate (if appropriate)
- ☐ Explain honestly
- ☐ Bring active distraction
- ☐ Offer choices

During

- ☐ Comfort positioning
- ☐ Relax the muscle
- ☐ Slow breathing
- ☐ Active distraction
- ☐ Applied muscle tension (if prone to fainting)

After

- ☐ Praise effort
- ☐ Hydrate
- ☐ Comfort soreness
- ☐ Encourage movement
- ☐ Remember: recovery is part of the experience

Why this matters

Pain isn't just physical. Repeated painful healthcare experiences can contribute to needle fear, anxiety, and avoidance of medical care later in life.

Every needle procedure is an opportunity to reduce pain, build confidence, and strengthen trust in healthcare. Small changes matter.

Learn more at :



thimblehealth.com/blogs/guides

Selected references

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