



INJECTION SUCCESS:

**Making routine injections
a part of life**

Introduction



This guide has been created to help you and your family successfully manage your child's injections.

You will find some practical tips to help make routine injections a normal part of your family life.

This guide is intended to complement, not replace, the important advice from your healthcare team. It was developed with the input of child-life specialists and nurses who counsel families like yours. Let us help guide you along the way!



Introducing your child to their injections





You and your child have just learned he or she needs regular injections: now what? You may be feeling different emotions like anger, fear or anxiety. As a parent, it is natural to feel concerned or worried. It's important to keep a positive attitude, you can succeed! Follow the advice of your healthcare team, and talk to your child and entire family.

Speaking openly with your child will help you successfully manage injections. The more your child understands that injections are a must, the better the chances for success. Open communication also helps build trust. Empowering your child can help make injections a normal part of daily life. Some things to discuss with your child include:

- Why the injection is needed and how it will help.
- It's important to develop and follow a routine that's reasonable.
- The value of sharing their feelings, particularly those of frustration. Children need to know it's perfectly natural to be upset, however the treatment plan remains.

Making injections part of a routine





Rather than let injections control your life, there are simple ways to fit them into your family routine. Try working your child's injections into a routine such as before a meal or bedtime. The timing of the injection will depend on your doctor's or nurse's advice and the type of medication your child requires.

Some children find comfort in taking their injection in the same room each time. For example, the kitchen is a good room to use. Often the injection supplies are stored there. The kitchen is a comfortable, shared room that encourages members of the household to see, hear and possibly help in the injection process.

Having treatment by injections is not a choice. Encourage your child to help in the routine. Give him or her tasks to involve them in their care. This will encourage their interest and cooperation. The following are examples of choices to give your child:

- “What injection site do you want to use today... the right or left thigh?”
- “When you are holding still do you want to push the plunger or count with me?”
- “What do you want to use to numb the injection site, a frozen spoon or freezie?”



Growing up with injections

Here are some simple tips you can use with your child at each age.

The Infant/Toddler (0-4 years of age)

- Infants are comforted by routine. Bundle them using the same blanket or give them their favourite teddy bear or toy to hold each time you inject.
- Toddlers enjoy repeating things. Choose a word or phrase that is special to him or her. Perhaps it's a repetitive song or favourite story. This will help your child participate and think about the song or story rather than the injection.
- Show them love and praise with a hug after the injection.

School age (4-11 years of age)

- Distraction is helpful for a younger child. Blowing bubbles or watching something interesting may encourage him or her to hold still.
- Older school age children will show interest in helping with the injections. Encourage your child to help as much as he or she can manage safely. Begin with simple tasks like choosing the injection site, cleaning the skin or pushing the button or plunger. Build on each success by adding more tasks of involvement one at a time.
- Listen to your child's wishes when making decisions about his or her participation.

- Always praise your child for every success, no matter how small.
 - o “Look how well you held still”
 - o “You’re learning fast”
 - o “You’ve got that down pat”
 - o “You did it that time . . . keep it up”
 - o “TERRIFIC”

Tween/Teenager (11-19 years of age)

- Teenagers generally do not want to be different than their peers. The decision to let others know about the injections needs to be discussed with your teenager and the healthcare team.
- Your teenager may be able to give his or her injection from start to finish. While independence is a goal, it is important you remain involved by watching your teenager give the injection and help out whenever needed.

There’s no magic age at which children are suddenly able to give their own injections. Celebrate each “win” or accomplishment along the way. Express your pride and support through positive words, a special activity or item, or by spending time doing something you enjoy together. These rewards can be used for a child of any age, and before you know it your child will have experienced many successes.

Sometimes the routine of daily injections can take its toll on your teenager and may lead to a missed injection. It’s not uncommon for parents or care providers to give their teenager added support by helping with injections occasionally and ensuring the medication is given.

Making it a family affair!



It can be easy to lose sight of the big picture while focusing on your child's injections. Be aware of the effect on everyone in the family.

A brother or sister may:

- Feel guilty that their sibling needs an injection;
- Be afraid that they too may have to take injections; or
- Be jealous or angry that their sibling seems to get more attention.

These emotions can affect the family's team approach. Consider the following tips to involve the entire family in a positive and healthy manner:

- Encourage family members to share their thoughts and feelings.
- Continue to spend some quality time with other children in the family.
- Brothers and sisters may want to learn more and help with the injections. Encourage involvement by suggesting tasks which are both safe and manageable by the sibling. This might include holding their sibling's hand, distracting them, speaking words of encouragement or being part of playtime afterward.



Injections away from home

Whether off to camp, a local sleepover or on a family trip, a little planning can help ensure the injection routine continues.



Travelling with injections

- Check with your doctor or nurse a few weeks before leaving on a trip. Things to think of include: travel health insurance, travelling with supplies and what to do in an emergency. The doctor may provide a letter that outlines the need for you to travel with your medical supplies. The letter helps with airport security or border officials.
- Keep your child's medication and supplies with you at all times because medication can freeze in the suitcase compartment of the plane or your luggage can get lost by the airline. Pack the medication and supplies in the carry-on bag in the original packaging.
- Take enough supplies to last the whole trip and some to spare. Be sure to bring all distraction items or rewards along that are part of your injection routine.
- Bring your doctor's or nurse's contact information in case you need their help while you're away.

Summer camp

- Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about your child's interest in attending a camp.
- Consider choosing a camp with a nurse or doctor who can help with your child's injections and any concerns that may arise.
- Most camps want both you and your child's doctor to provide health information about your child. This will include any medications or treatments that need to be given during camp. It's important information is up to date when your child arrives at camp.

Tips for multi-home families

- Maintain the same injection routine at each household. This will add to your child's continued comfort and success with the injection routine.
- Attend doctor or clinic appointments together. This helps everyone understand the treatment routine and feel well supported.
- Develop a plan around injection supplies for each home. It may or may not be best to have supplies kept at each home as medication expires over time. Discuss this with your doctor or nurse.
- A small journal or calendar may be kept with your child that outlines injection information so the person giving the injection knows where and when to give it. This journal will help with keeping the routine the same.



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This booklet was sponsored by an educational grant from EMD Serono Canada Inc.
SZ036E