

## Getting Ready for Your Child's Shots Tips for a Successful Clinic Visit

**Protect your children. Get all their shots on time. The shots are free.  
Call your local public health unit or doctor to make an appointment.**

As a parent, you want to help your child when they are getting their shots or vaccines. It is normal to feel upset or worried. Getting your child's shots can be harder on you than your child.

Here are some concerns you may have:

- Your child may feel pain or cry.
- Your child may have a bad reaction to the shot.
- Your child may fight or kick.

Reading this BC HealthFile is a great first step to help your child have a good clinic visit.

### BEFORE THE SHOTS

#### How can I prepare?

##### **Tip #1: Ask questions**

If you have questions about your child's shots, get them answered *before* your visit. This will help you feel more ready. You can call the BC NurseLine and speak to a registered nurse, or you can call your local public health unit or your doctor.

##### **Tip #2: Check the list**

Here is a checklist to help prepare for your clinic visit.

- Bring your child's records or health passport.
- Bring a toy, teddy bear, or blanket.



- Be prepared that your child may get 3 or more shots.
- Dress your baby in easy-to-remove clothing.
- Dress your toddler in a big T-shirt and loose pants.
- Bring a treat or reward for their success.

##### **Tip #3: Calm your worries**

At the clinic, let your nurse or doctor know if you are anxious or worried; they will be able to help. It is helpful to stay calm, as your child will pick up on your feelings. If you wish, bring another adult family member for extra support.

### DURING THE SHOTS

#### What are ways to help during the shots?

##### **Tip #1: Hold your child**

It will be easier to give the shot if your child's arms and legs are held steady. The nurse or doctor will help you safely hold your baby or child. Sometimes if a child moves too much the needle pops out too soon and the shot may have to be given again. Holding a child firmly can keep that from happening.

##### **Tip #2: Soothe your baby**

- ✓ Talk softly
- ✓ Touch
- ✓ Hug
- ✓ Look at your baby's eyes and smile

## Soothe your toddler

- ✓ Talk, sing, or tell a story
- ✓ Use a hand puppet, or hug a teddy bear
- ✓ Help your child breathe in slowly before the shot
- ✓ Help your child ‘blow’ out the sting during the shot – bubbles can be used
- ✓ Point to things in the room
- ✓ Say it is OK to cry
- ✓ Hug your child
- ✓ Let your child know it may hurt a little but the ‘owie’ will go away fast.

You will be asked to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after the shots, just to make sure your child is feeling OK.

## AFTER THE SHOTS

- ✓ Hug, soothe, and touch your baby. Breastfeeding helps.
- ✓ Give a special reward. “You did great! Here’s a special reward for being such a good helper.”

## What questions should I ask before leaving the clinic?

- What side effects could my child get?
- What should I do about side effects?
- When should I be worried?
- Who can I call if I need help?
- When is my child’s next shot?

## Book your next clinic visit before you leave the clinic. Your child needs shots at:

- 2 months
- 4 months
- 6 months
- 12 months
- 18 months
- 4-6 years old (before Kindergarten)

Your doctor or nurse may give you information to take home. For information about side effects and how to comfort your child at home, see the Child Health Passport at [www.health.gov.bc.ca/cpa/publications/childpassport.pdf](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/cpa/publications/childpassport.pdf).

NOTE: Acetaminophen, for example Tylenol<sup>®</sup>, can be given if fever or soreness is present after getting the shot or vaccine. Acetylsalicylic acid, also known as ASA or Aspirin<sup>®</sup>, should NOT be given to anyone under 20 years of age due to the risk of Reye's Syndrome.

## A word about play after the shots

Play is helpful! Your baby can crawl, roll and play as normal. Your toddler can play ball, go swimming, or do any other activity.

## More BC HealthFiles on childhood immunization:

[#50a Your Baby’s Immune System and Vaccines](#)

[#50b The Benefits of Vaccinating Your Child](#)

[#50c Childhood Vaccines are Safe](#)

[#50d Childhood Vaccines: What is in the Vaccines and Why](#)

[#50f Childhood Vaccines: Questions and Answers](#)

For more BC HealthFile topics visit [www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm](http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/index.stm), or visit your local public health unit.

## Call the BC NurseLine to speak to a registered nurse, available 24-hours every day:

- In Greater Vancouver, call 604-215-4700
- In BC, call toll-free 1-866-215-4700
- Deaf and hearing-impaired, call 1-866-889-4700
- Pharmacist available 5pm to 9am every day
- Translation services in over 130 languages upon request.

Visit BC HealthGuide OnLine – a world of health information you can trust at [www.bchealthguide.org](http://www.bchealthguide.org)



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