

Bravery Plan for Vaccines



SHOULD I TELL MY CHILD IN ADVANCE ABOUT GETTING THE FLU SHOT OR ANOTHER VACCINE???



We know that vaccines are often stressful for kids and their caregivers. Although we may have the instinct to avoid talking about vaccines with our kids, we know that they generally do better when they feel more prepared and know what to expect. For children 4 years old and older, creating a bravery plan 1-2 days BEFORE your child's vaccine is one way to help your child feel more prepared. Below are the steps to create a bravery plan. You can also use the same steps to help make a bravery plan for other fears.

1. About 1 to 2 days before the vaccine, tell your child about the upcoming doctor's visit and vaccine.

"Tomorrow, we are going to your doctor's office for a checkup to make sure your body is strong and healthy. When we are there, you will be getting a vaccine to help keep you healthy. The vaccine goes in your arm with a needle. You may feel a little poke or pinch for a second."

2. Prepare your child for the FEELINGS they may have and also express confidence they can get through these feelings.

"Sometimes kids feel scared or nervous and other times kids feel braver. I bet we can make a plan to help you get through any tricky feelings you may have before or during the vaccine."

3. Make a plan for 1-2 things you and your child can do, say, or think BEFORE and DURING the vaccine to move through these tricky feelings.

"A bravery plan is a plan to help you know what you can do, say, or think to feel braver before and during the vaccine. What do you think would help?" Let your child share ideas and you can also offer some. Things that are distracting and comforting work best. For example, planning to bring a stuffed animal, playing a game on a phone, "I spy," or "Guess the Animal" may help distract your child. Offering choices can also be helpful. For example, you can offer for them to sit in your lap or hold your hand. If your child protests making a plan, keep calm and say something like, "No big deal. When you're ready, I know we can figure out a plan to be brave." Then, try again later. Keep in mind that bravery plans take practice, so if it doesn't help the first time, keep trying. The goal is not to take away all fear but to help your child feel more prepared and capable of coping through tricky situations.

4. Make a plan to reward your child for facing a fear.

"When you're done, would you like me to help you pick out a sticker before we go home?"

CAREGIVER TIPS

1. Distract your child before, during, and after the vaccine.
2. Stay calm -- Keep a laid back tone and model slow, deep breaths.
3. Rub or stroke your child's skin, away from the injection site, right before, during, and after the poke.
4. Avoid too much reassurance or apologizing and instead focus on bravery and distraction.
5. Make your own bravery plan.



My Bravery Plan



1. SITUATION when I will use my bravery plan:

2. FEELINGS I might have before, during, and after this situation:

3. Things I can DO, THINK, or SAY to myself to help move through these tricky feelings and to help face my fears:

4. REWARD for facing my fears and practicing bravery: