

## Helpful Tips in Preparing Your Children For Shots

### **Tell The Truth!**

If your child asks if they are going to get a shot-be truthful! You can use language like “The shot is something that protects you” “You are not getting punished”. An appropriate response to give if your child asks is its going to hurt? “It may hurt, but only for a few seconds”.

### **Discuss Don't Dwell**

Don't give your child too much detail prior to the office visit. Giving detail can ruin a child's day and increase their anxiety leading up to the visit. Role play is a good way to walk through what your child might expect once they arrive at the office.

### **Talk to Doctor/Nurse about scheduling**

Try to schedule the shot at the time of day when you know your child is at their “best”. For example, if they appear more irritable after school try to schedule the shot for morning time.

### **Consider a Reward**

Set up a reward prior to arriving at the office. Sit down with your child and come up with an agreed upon reward and the stipulations around receiving that reward. You can even have your child pick out a special band aid to use once the shot is given.

### **Use Coping Strategies (Deep breathing, squeezing, music, imagery)**

Review coping strategies with your child prior to your arrival. Decide which ones will be most helpful to use if the child starts to become nervous during their visit.

### **Distract**

Bring your child's favorite book, stuffed animal or toy to play with during the visit. During the actual shot try to sing/play a song, count or read a story. It will be over before they know it!

### **Provide Immediate Relief/Praise**

Once the shot is complete give your child affection in whichever way is comfortable for your family. Make sure to praise the child for a job well done!

### **A Calm Attitude Starts with the Parent**

Children can be acutely aware and highly sensitive to their caregivers emotions. If you can stay calm through the process the hope is your children will pick up on your emotional cues.