

Distraction techniques to minimise a child's anxiety during vaccination

Getting vaccinated can be daunting for children. They may be anxious or scared of needles. Distraction is an approach that helps a child cope during an invasive procedure such as a vaccination. This resource provides some distraction techniques you can use to take the child's focus away from the vaccination procedure.

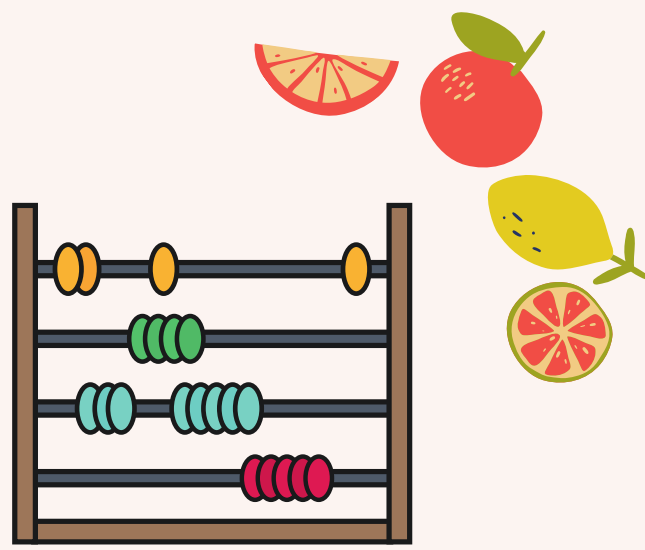
Guided imagery

Ask them to picture their favourite place or a happy memory in their mind. Ask them to tell you about it and name all of the things they can see.



Counting games

Ask them to count to 100 in multiples of 5, count how many red things they can see, or name 5 different fruits.



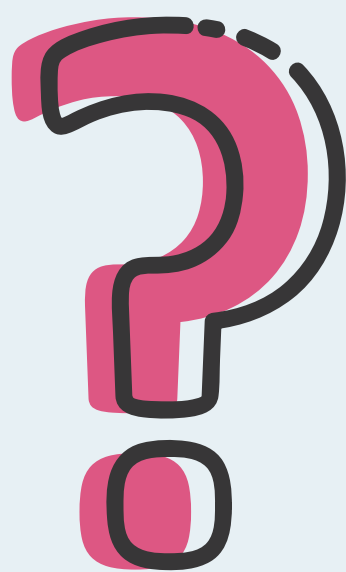
Talk to them about their day

What did they have for breakfast? What did they do before coming for their vaccination? What will they be doing afterwards?



Ask them questions

Try asking them what their favourite lesson is at school, what sports they enjoy, what their favourite food is, or if they have any pets.



Breathing techniques

Encourage them to take deep breaths and focus on their breathing.

They could imagine they are blowing up a balloon or keeping a feather in the air using their breath.



Toys, books and games

Whilst they are waiting they may like to read a book or play with a game (if you have these available).

They may have brought their favourite toy with them to play with.



Try making them laugh

Tell them a joke. Here are a few you could try:

What is a toad's favourite drink? Croak-a-cola.

What wobbles in the sky? A Jelly-copter.

What do you call a sleeping dinosaur?

A dino-snore! How does the ocean say hello? It waves.



Ask their accompanying adult to help

If they are accompanied by a parent or carer, they can help calm and distract the child during the vaccination and keep them entertained whilst they are waiting in a queue or in the observation areas.

