

(needle fear) easing the sting

Good News!

There are ways to make needles less painful and less frightening. Read on to find out more!



“I’m brave at work,
but I’m scared of needles!”

People have different reactions to needles. When getting an injection or infusion, some people:

- Have a slower heart rate and their blood pressure may drop
- May sweat
- May hear ringing in their ears or feel sick
- May feel like they will faint

Fear of needles can cause some people to be afraid to get the treatment they need. This can be a problem for people who need a single injection or who need regular infusions as part of their treatment for a medical condition.

An infusion is when fluid or medicine is put into a vein with a needle.

Not getting treatment can lead to health problems.

**If you are afraid of needles, you are not alone.
There are millions of people like you.**

Understanding needle fear

Who has to have needles?

Almost everyone needs to have a needle at some time. Needles are used to take blood or to give medicine or vaccinations. People with certain health conditions need them more often. Needles are used in the treatment of many conditions, such as lysosomal storage disorders (Gaucher, Fabry, MPS I, and Pompe diseases), diabetes, cancer, and other chronic diseases. They are also used to treat pain or to numb parts of the body before surgery.

What causes the fear of needles?

The fear of needles can be inherited. That means the fear is passed on to family members. The fear of needles can also be something you learn over time. Having one painful needle experience can cause the fear. The fear may not lessen even with more experience with the use of needles, in fact it may get worse.

Who is afraid of needles?

Men, women, and children can be afraid of needles. In fact, 1 in 10 people has some fear of needles.

Patients who have veins that are hard to find can also become afraid of needles. It can be difficult to insert a needle for drug administration in veins that are hard to find. This can happen with people who are older, overweight, or dark skinned.

**By managing the fear, you can be less worried
and get the treatment you need.**

Making infusions easier

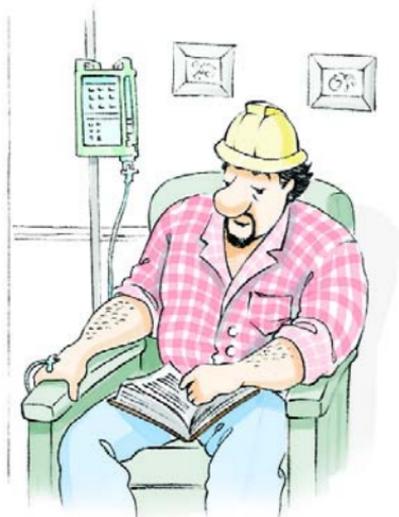
BEFORE Infusions

To make infusions a little easier, you can:

- Keep warm
- Exercise
- Drink plenty of fluids

Your doctor or nurse can:

- Apply medicine to the skin before the infusion is started to lessen the pain
- Talk with you about your fear
- Find the veins more easily by:
 - Making sure you are warm and comfortable before starting
 - Looking for a vein in the arm or hand that is below the level of the heart
 - Gently tapping the skin over the vein to make it easier to get into the vein
 - Using an armband to push the vein out to make it easier to see
 - Having you make a fist several times
 - Putting a warm compress or cloth over the vein (or putting your arm in warm water) for 2 to 3 minutes



DURING Infusions

Your doctor or nurse can:

- Have you lie down and put your legs up to increase blood flow to the vein
- Turn your attention to something else. For example, you may want to listen to your favorite music or read a book

AFTER Infusions

Ask your doctor or nurse to remind you to:

- Be proud. You did it!
- Focus on how much you helped your health. You did not let fear stop you from getting the care you need

Tell your doctor

or nurse about your fears. They can help!

Remember, your doctor and your nurse are there to help you. Talk with them about your fears before you start your infusion. With support, you may have less fear over time.

To make it more comfortable for people who have to have many infusions, your doctor may suggest the use of a port. A port is a small device placed under the skin to make it easier to find and access the vein. Ask your doctor or nurse about other ways to help make getting a needle a little easier.



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