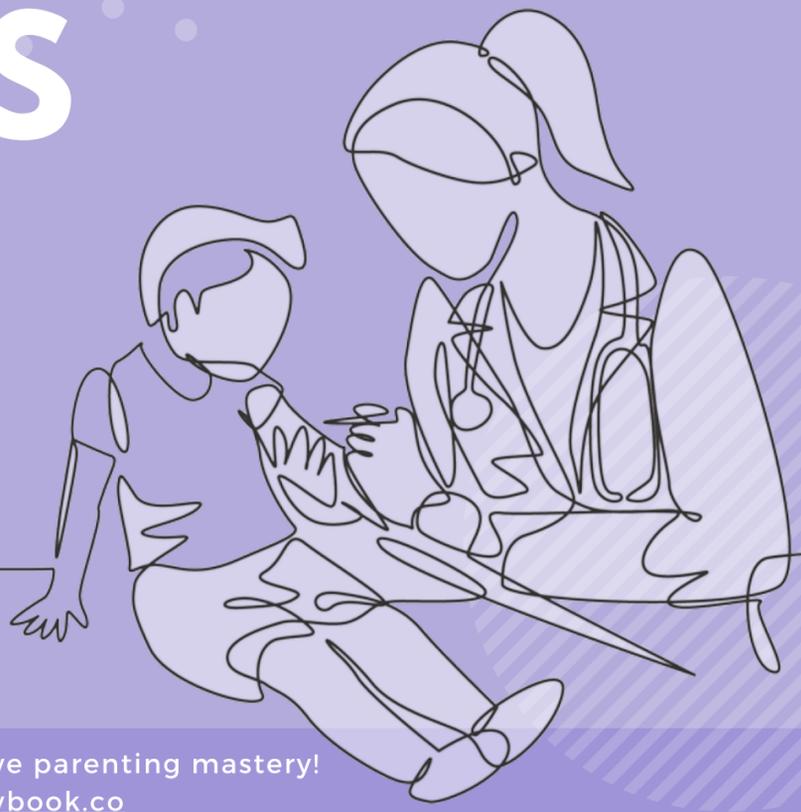


# VACCINES MADE EASY



BY DR. DINA KULIK

Helping parents achieve parenting mastery!  
[parentplaybook.co](http://parentplaybook.co)



## Vaccines can be scary for your child but we can make it easier!

During the Fall each year, we want to ensure as many kids (and their parents) as possible receive the influenza vaccine. Influenza (or the flu) causes a sudden onset of fever, muscle aches, sore throat, headache, cough and weakness. It usually lasts 2-7 days, though the cough and weakness can last up to 6 weeks!

Unlike the common cold, flu can lead to pneumonia or other serious illness. Kids get the flu most often, and kids less than 5 are at greater risk of complications.

The best way to stay healthy in flu season is to get the flu shot early, wash hands diligently and frequently and stay away from sick people. It does take 2 weeks for the flu shot to protect you well, so consider getting it early!

## Here are my top tips to prepare for your child's flu shot:

### Prepare your child

- Try to remain calm, as your child will feed off your emotions; fake it till you make it!
- Use a matter of fact and supportive approach.
- Avoid discussing the upcoming vaccine a long time before. Some kids will perseverate and can become more anxious leading up to the vaccine.

### When talking about the flu shot

- Stay calm
- Speak in a soft tone
- Answer questions honestly and with gentle words. Avoid the words 'pain' or 'hurt'. Consider words like 'squeeze', or 'pressure'.
- Honestly explain why they are getting the needle, such as, 'the vaccine will help you stay healthy.'
- Don't lie and say it will not hurt. Rather explain in a gentle, but honest way.
- Avoid apologizing. You are getting the vaccine for safety and health. Remain confident.



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## Minimize pain

- Consider using a numbing cream or patch (available over the counter).
- Apply 30-60 minutes before the appointment (as per the directions).
- Ask your doctor or health provider where to apply before your appointment.

## During the vaccine

- I suggest holding your child in your lap, in a bear hug, cuddling firmly in the seated position, holding their hands.
- Your child should remain upright, so they feel in control.
- This allows them to feel safe in your arms, and allows you to hold firmly and safely, to avoid needle stick injuries.

## Distraction!

- Babies - consider using pinwheels, bubbles, or toys with lights or sound during the vaccine.
- Older children - use deep breathing techniques - have your child (if not wearing a mask) blow bubbles, a pinwheel or party blower, or pretend to blow out a candle. Deep breathing makes the body relax and provides distraction.
- Older kids can also listen to music, read a book, or watch a show.

## Feed

- If you are breast feeding your baby, consider feeding before, during or after the vaccine. The comfort and sweet taste will distract your baby. Breast milk also has natural calming substances!
- Formula fed babies can drink from a bottle before, during or after the vaccine.

## Remember:

**The best way to stay healthy in flu season is to get the flu shot early, wash hands diligently and frequently and stay away from sick people.**

## #YouGotThis



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