

Are you feeling nervous about needles?

Feeling nervous or anxious before getting a shot, or before any medical procedure involving needles is completely normal! It's a natural reaction to something that might seem scary or unfamiliar. But here's the truth: you are stronger than you think, and you've got this! At Tamalpais Pediatrics, we understand that facing your fears head-on can be challenging, but we are here to support you every step of the way.

We want you to know that it's okay to feel a little jittery or worried before a needle poke. Many people, both young and old, experience some level of anxiety when it comes to vaccinations or medical procedures involving needles. However, what's important to remember is that these feelings don't have to control you. With the right mindset and support, you can conquer your fear and emerge stronger on the other side.

That's where this packet comes in. Throughout the following pages, you'll find information, tips, and tricks aimed at helping you navigate through your anxiety surrounding needles. From relaxation techniques to helpful videos, checklists, stories, and a workbook with various activities, we've created a collection of strategies designed to empower you to face your fear confidently. Our goal is to provide you with the tools you need to not only manage your anxiety but also transform it into a source of resilience and courage. So, take a deep breath and know that you're not alone. We believe in your ability to overcome your fear of needles, and we're here to lend a helping hand along the way.

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Helpful information for kids and parents/caregivers:

What is needle phobia? Anxiety is a normal, natural feeling that everyone has and it is pretty normal to be fearful of something that might hurt you (like getting a shot or poke). For some people, this fear grows too big for the situation and interferes with doing medical procedures that you need for your health, like shots, injections, or blood draws.

Will I faint? Some people feel faint, or do faint when they see blood or have to get an injection or blood draw. If this sounds like you, practice the **Applied Tension Technique** (more details on page __) when doing exposures. The Applied Tension Technique involves tensing the muscles in your body (not the muscles involved with the poke!), which then raises your blood pressure. If your blood pressure increases, you are less likely to faint. To do this, tense the muscles not involved in your poke for about 10-15 seconds, then relax and repeat. The goal is not to become completely relaxed, as this would cause your blood pressure to drop. Instead, the goal is to let your body return to a normal state (not overly tense or completely relaxed).

How do I overcome Needle Phobia? Some kids and teens are able to get through pokes with distractions and rewards to motivate them. If this isn't enough because the fear response just too big, you can overcome this fear through BRAVE PRACTICE (also called "exposure"). This practice involves practicing facing the situation you fear (like getting a shot) to re-train your brain's fear response by learning through experience that needles aren't so bad.

Check out the box below for examples of things you can do to begin re-training your brain. You can start easy and move slowly to harder ones when you feel ready. Or, you can speed things up by doing harder things. Try to stick with each activity until you notice that it gets easier to approach the situation or complete the task. Don't stop if your anxiety is high or it can be hard to come back. Remember: anxiety cannot hurt you!

Easier steps

- ♡ Draw pictures of needles, blood or blood draws
- ♡ Watch positive videos about how vaccines work
- ♡ Smell an alcohol swab
- ♡ Play with and hold a tourniquet and bandages
- ♡ Sit in lab waiting room for 10

Medium steps

- ♡ Place tourniquet on arm
- ♡ Wipe alcohol swab on arm
- ♡ Perform fake steps of a shot or blood draw on a family member
- ♡ Receive pretend shot with a dull item (e.g., finger, pencil)
- ♡ Sit in a medical clinic room for 10 minutes (no shot)

Challenging steps

- ♡ Watch a video of a shot (where the patient is calm)
- ♡ Watch a video of a blood draw while holding your arm behind the screen
- ♡ Going through the steps of a shot in doctor's office
- ♡ Getting a shot or blood

Rewards can help! This is hard work! Planning a special reward for after you successfully get the shot or complete the procedure can help motivate you to do the hard task. It can also help to have a reward system for doing daily practice of some of the steps above, and not just for the final goal. Rewards for daily practice might be smaller (points to earn a larger prize) and rewards for the full shot/procedure might be larger.

Tips for brave practice: When you do brave practice, it can help to repeat the activity a few times to help you get used to it. Also, if you will need to get more than a handful of pokes per year, it might be helpful to even practice watching the shot to really conquer your anxiety, instead of relying on distractions.

What about the actual medical visit? Brave practice should reduce the level of anxiety during actual medical needle encounters, but anxiety can still ramp up unexpectedly during those visits. Here are some strategies that can help actual medical visits (vaccination, blood draw, etc.) go better. Check the box for any you want to try:

- Distract (like watch a video, have a conversation, listen to music)
- Give a choice between two options about the situation (do you want me to talk or not talk; do you want to sit on my lap or sit on your own).
- Providers can tell the youth what to expect and describe what they are doing (unless the youth prefers not to know).
- Do not physically hold the youth down unless it is a medical emergency. Better to leave without a shot and come back later, rather than create a terrifying memory that makes the next shot harder.
- Do not delay or draw out the procedure, as waiting can make anxiety grow.
- Medical providers and caregivers: Your body language and face should be calm and show you are confident the youth can handle this. Give validation and express confidence: "I know this is hard, and I know you can do it."
- Do not deny that there can be pain or discomfort. If pain is a concern, consider using a topical anesthetic (numbing cream) or shot blocker if available.
- Remind youth about rewards. Consider having a reward or treat immediately available.
- Remind the youth of past successes.
- The youth can prepare a helpful thought to remember, such as: "It may be painful and that lasts about 5 seconds."
- Other ideas:
 -
 -

(Source: Northampton Pediatrics, 2021)

Applied Tension Technique For Children or Teens Who Faint at the Sight of Blood or Needles

Most people feel a bit uneasy when they see blood or have to get a needle. For some people, however, seeing blood or needles causes them to feel light-headed or actually faint. It is rare to faint from anxiety unless you have this problem. Children or teens who faint when they get an injection or have blood drawn might benefit from learning a simple technique that will help them either prevent fainting altogether, or speed up the recovery time if they do faint.

Why does my child faint at the sight of blood or a needle? Fainting is due to a sudden drop in your child's heart rate or blood pressure. In most cases, fainting is harmless. It is important, however, that you discuss your child's fainting with a doctor before teaching this technique or exposing your child to situations (such as needles or blood) that could cause fainting.

The Applied Tension Technique

The Applied Tension Technique is a strategy developed to help prevent fainting or help people recover faster if they do faint. The technique involves tensing muscles in the body, which then raises blood pressure. If your blood pressure increases, you are less likely to faint.

How To Do It

Have your child sit in a comfortable chair and tense the muscles in his or her arms, legs and trunk for about 10 to 15 seconds. Your child should hold the tension until he or she starts to feel a warm sensation in the head. Then, have him or her relax the body for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat five times.

Practicing

Encourage your child to practice the above strategy five times per day for at least a week.

Helpful Tips:

- **Speedy Recovery!** If your child does faint, you can help him or her recover faster by lying him or her down and elevating the feet.
- **Tense & Relax!** If you tense your arm when you are receiving a needle, it can be more painful. Encourage your child to relax the arm that will be receiving the needle, while tensing the other parts of the body. Have your child practice this before going to get a needle.

- **Warning!** If your child develops a headache when trying the applied tension technique, encourage him or her to reduce the level of tension or the frequency of practices.
- **Warning Signs!** It can be helpful to have your child learn to recognize the early signs of his or her blood pressure dropping, such as feelings of lightheadedness. Encourage your child to use the tension technique as soon as he or she starts to experience those sensations.
- **Practice!** Even though this strategy sounds simple it takes practice to be helpful!

GAME PLAN

BECAUSE YOU ARE THE BOSS OF YOUR BRAIN AND BODY!

Everything your medical team does is to HELP you be or get healthy!
How will this procedure help you be healthier?

IF there can be a choice (sometimes there isn't), where on your body do you want to do the procedure?

Who do you want to be there? _____

What position? Lap? Next to someone? Laying down? Sitting up?

Where do you want your parent/caregiver to be? _____

What do you want them to do? _____

Who do you want to talk, if anyone? Who would you like to be quiet?

People who talk: _____

People who stay quiet: _____

Do you want to watch the procedure or focus on something else? The procedure More fun something else

Do you want to be told what is going on before and /or during the procedure? Yes, before Yes, during No..I'd rather just pay attention to something else

If you do want to be told when the needle goes in, what words do you want used to let you know? 1-2-3 count "Here it comes..." Something else? _____

Which skills do you want to use today?

Choose and circle as many or as few as you like!



BLOCK THE SIGNAL:

Would you like either or both of these?

- Numbing medicine Vibration



DISTRACT YOURSELF:

What would you like to focus on?

- Video: which one? _____
 Distraction card _____
 Something else? _____



USE YOUR IMAGINATION:

Where would you like to go in your imagination today?



BREATHE FROM YOUR BELLY:

As you take those good, deep breaths, do you want...

- Someone to breathe with you? Who? _____
 Bubbles A pinwheel Nothing...I'll do it myself!



REMEMBER YOU ARE AWESOME!:

What is a great memory you could think about today?

If possible, before it's time for the procedure, would you like someone (a nurse or child life specialist) to help you understand what will happen during the procedure? Yes No, I'm okay



And remember to remind everyone that it helps you



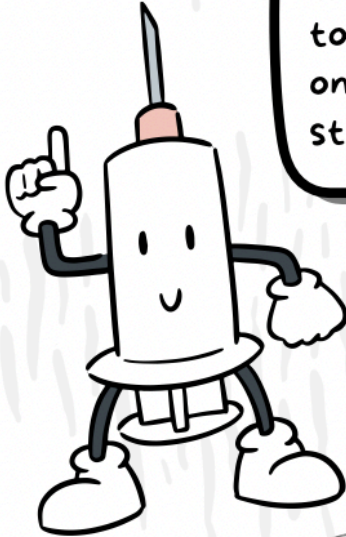
if the adults KEEP CALM...

VACCINES PROTECT ME!

ACTIVITY BOOK



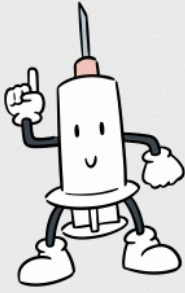
This activity book belongs to: _____



Hi! My name is Vinny the Vaccine. I'm here to help you learn about one important way to stay healthy.

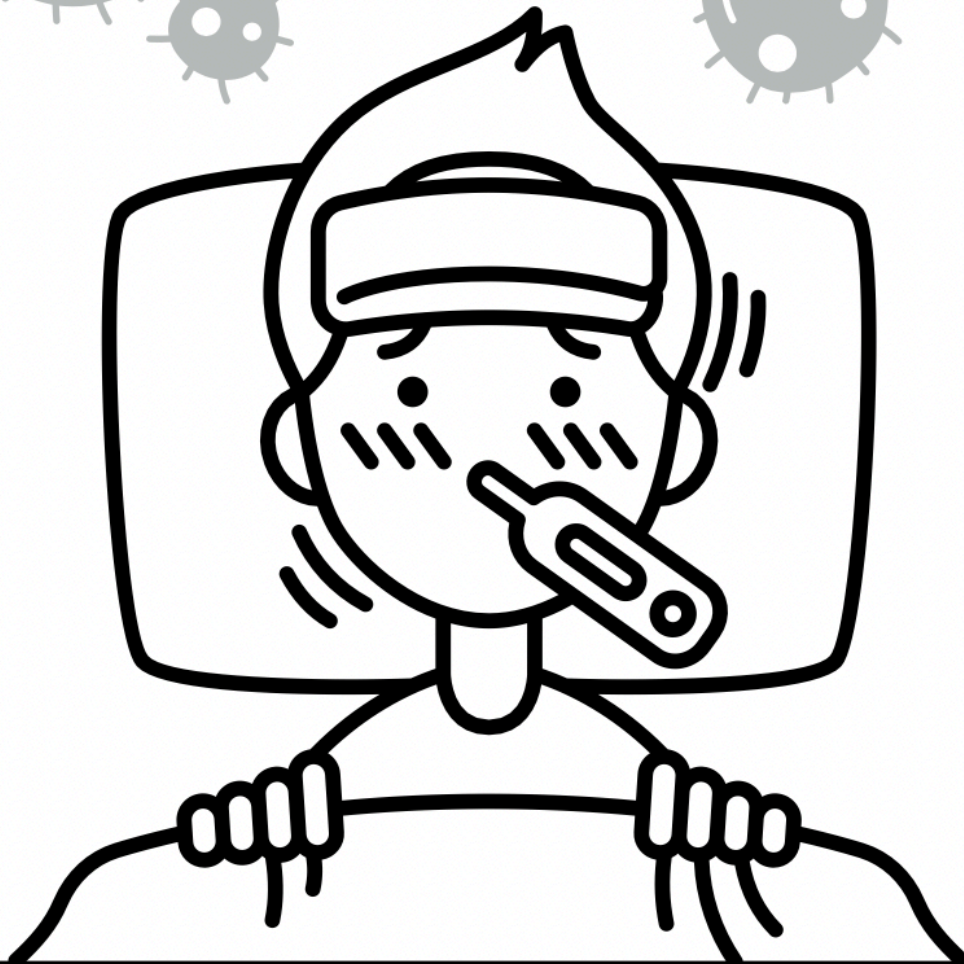
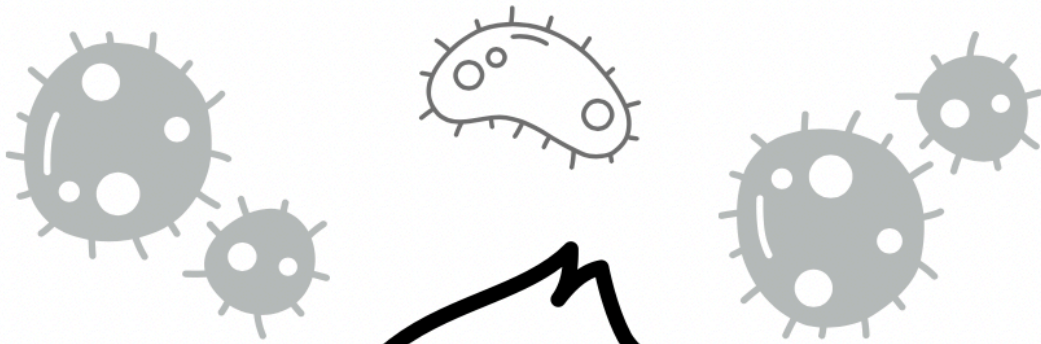
Vaccines!

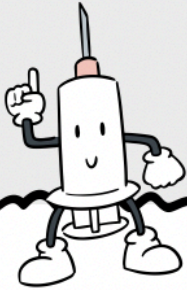




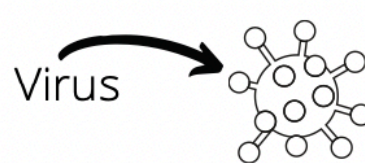
Have you ever been sick and felt tired, had a fever, or had a runny nose? Getting sick is NO FUN!

People can get sick when germs enter their bodies.

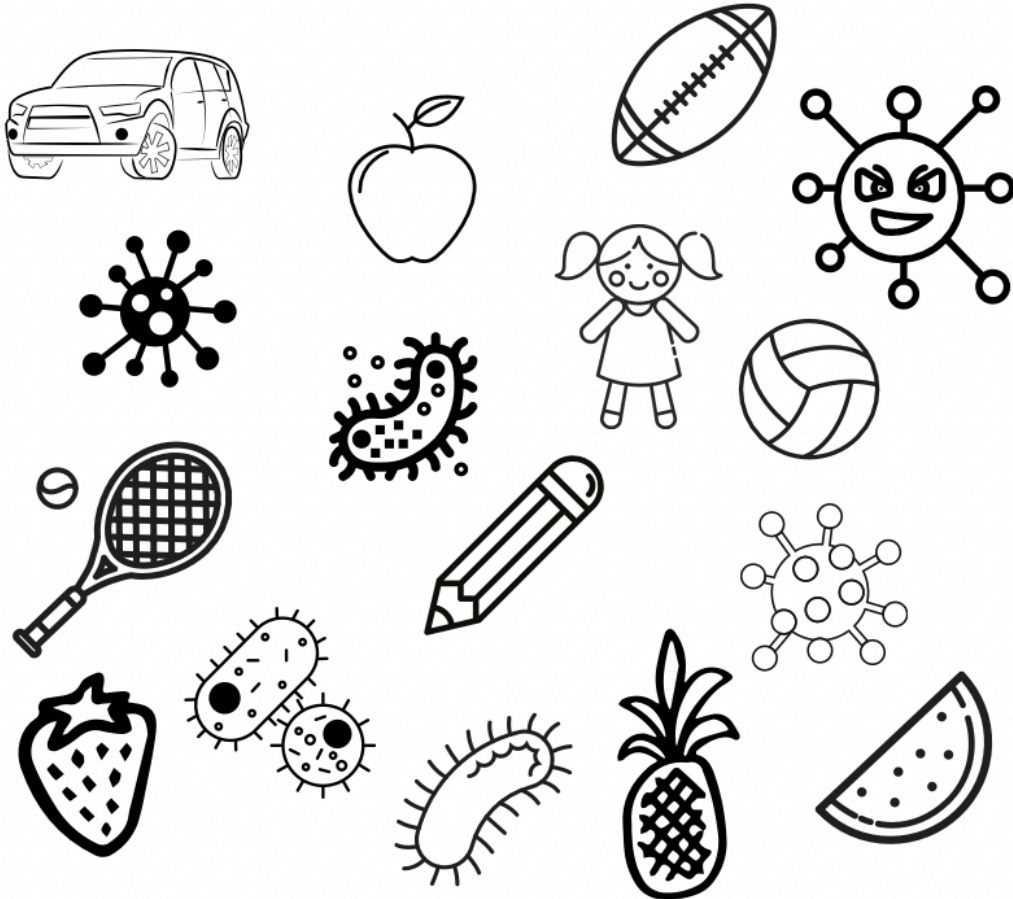




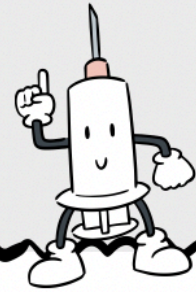
Germs are tiny living things like bacteria and viruses. They are too small to see with just your eyes, but they can still make you sick.



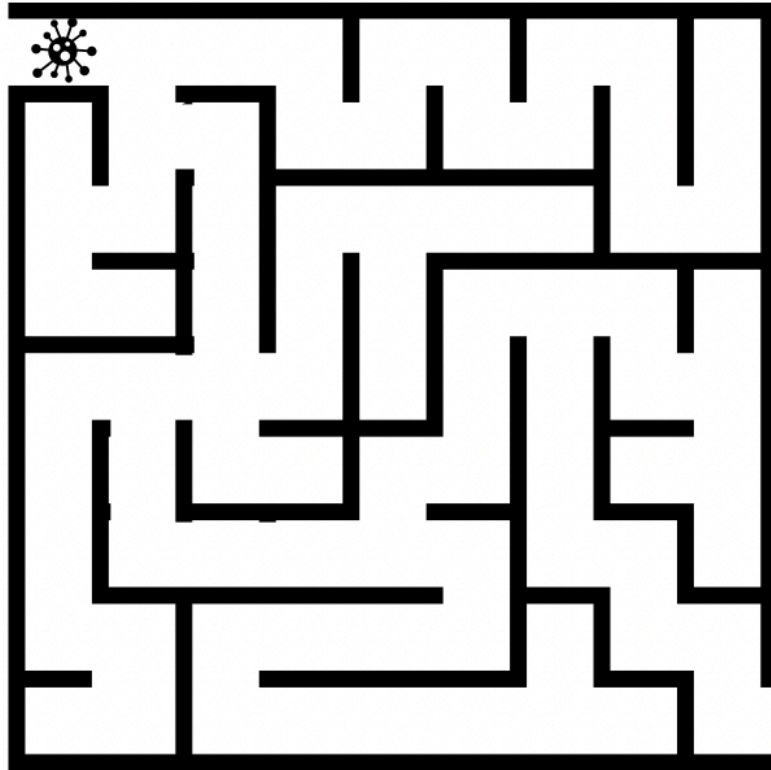
ACTIVITY: Circle all the images of bacteria and viruses below.

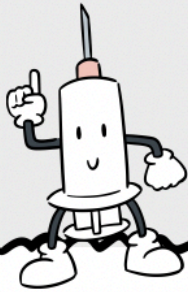


Germs can be spread from person to person through the air in sneezes and coughs. They cause diseases you may know about such as colds, flu, and even chickenpox.

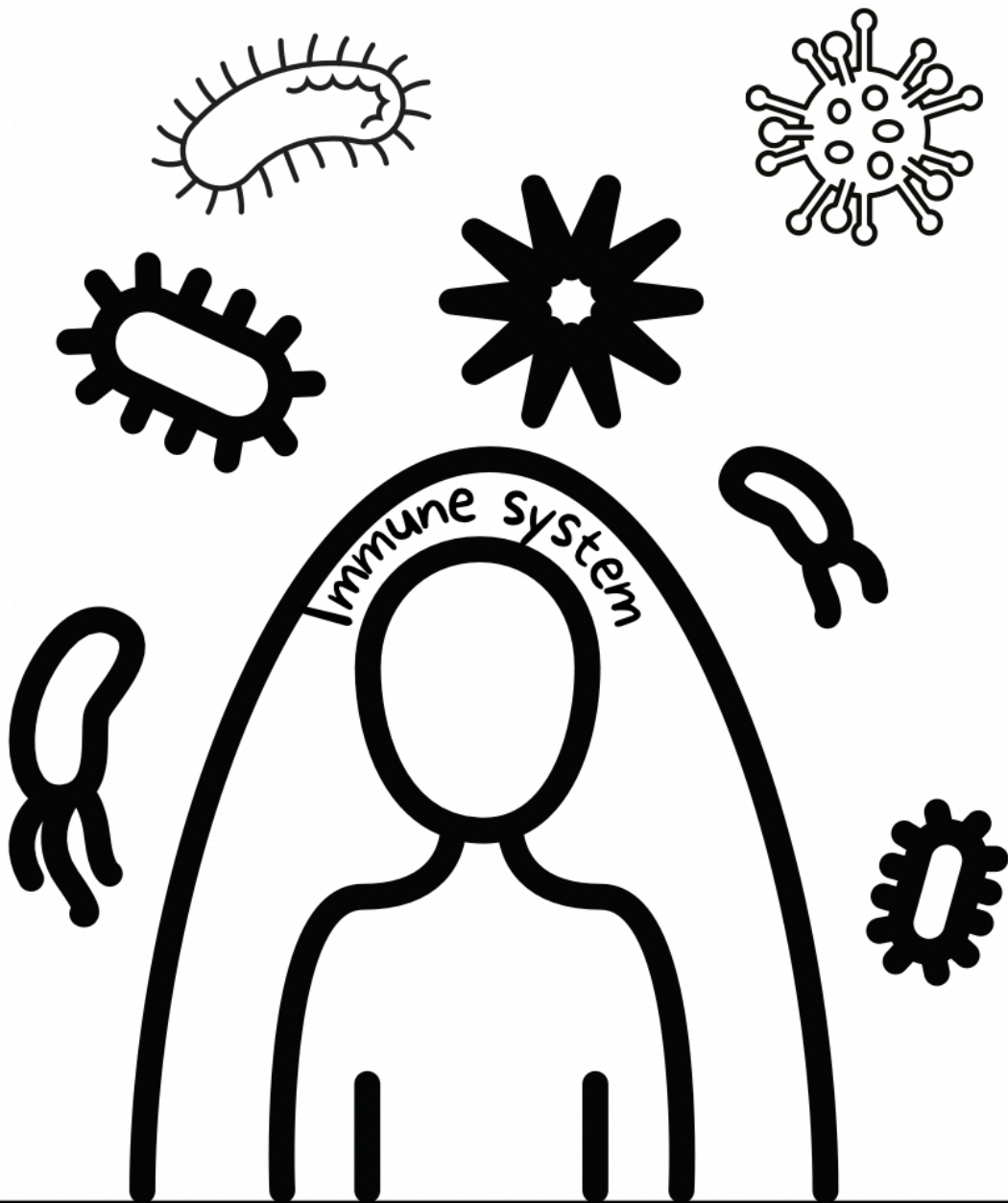


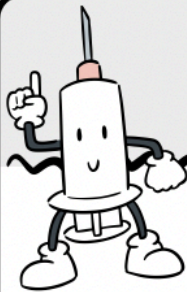
ACTIVITY: Follow the path of the germ through the maze between the two friends in the image below.





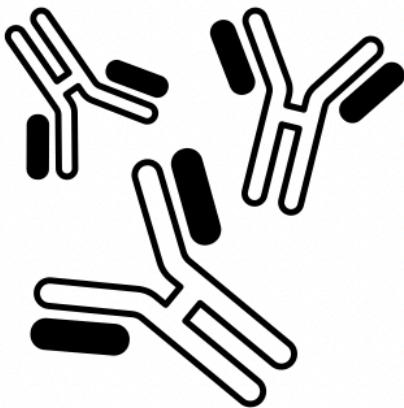
Fortunately, your body works to protect you against these germs! Bodies have an immune system to fight against germs and to shield you from getting sick.





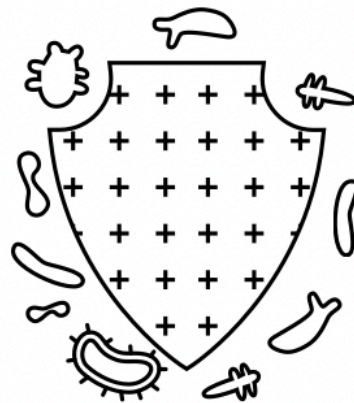
So I bet you are now wondering how your immune system works. Let me explain!

When an unwanted germ enters your body, your immune system will start to make antibodies.

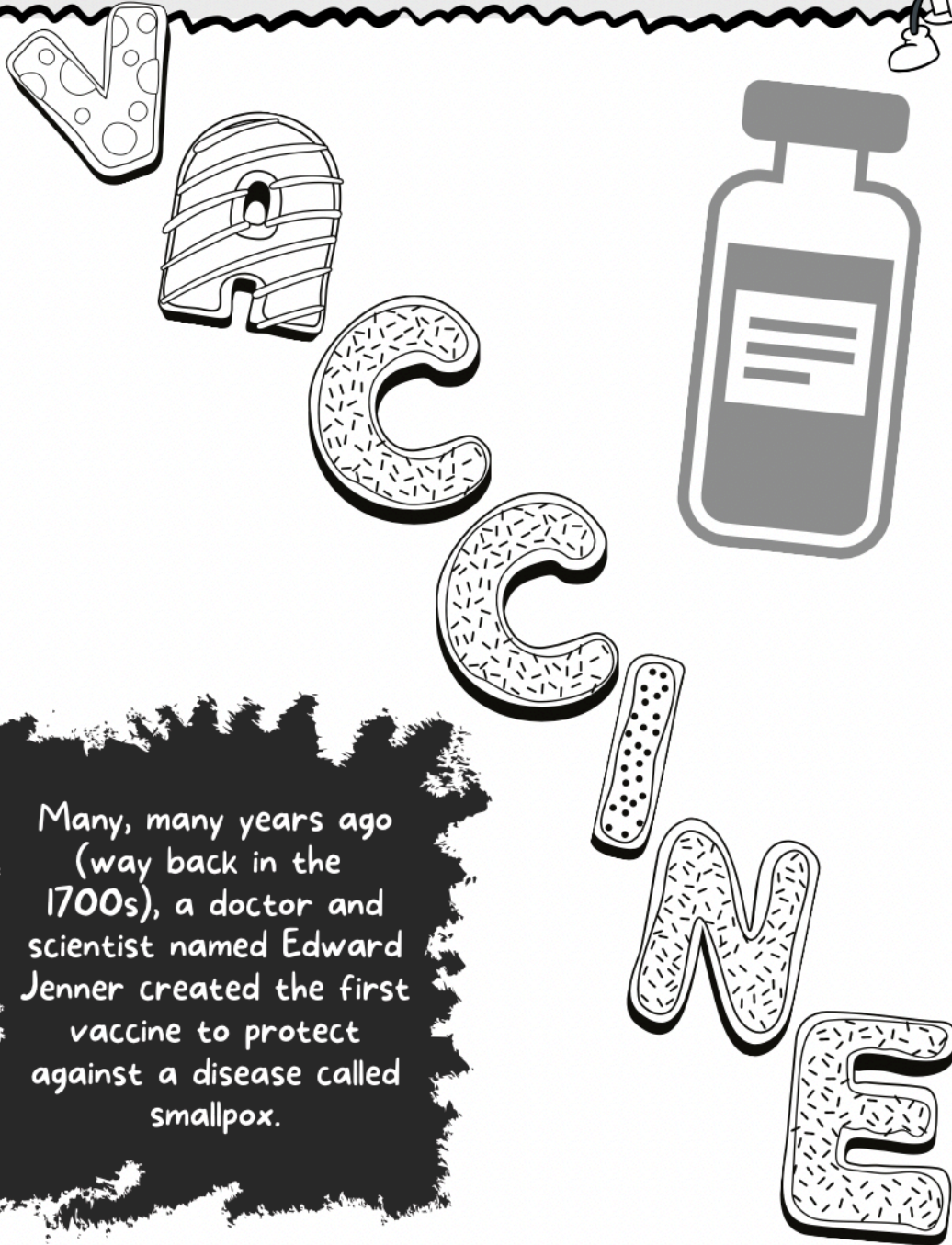
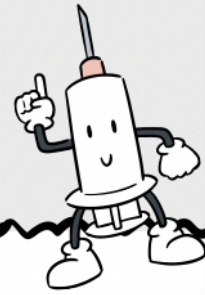


This is what antibodies look like!

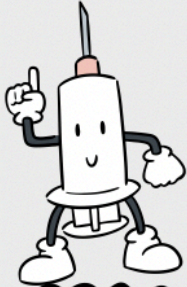
These antibodies then find and destroy the bad germs to keep you healthy.



For some diseases, scientists created a way to help the immune system prepare for incoming germs...VACCINES! Vaccines are one of the most important tools available to help prevent diseases.

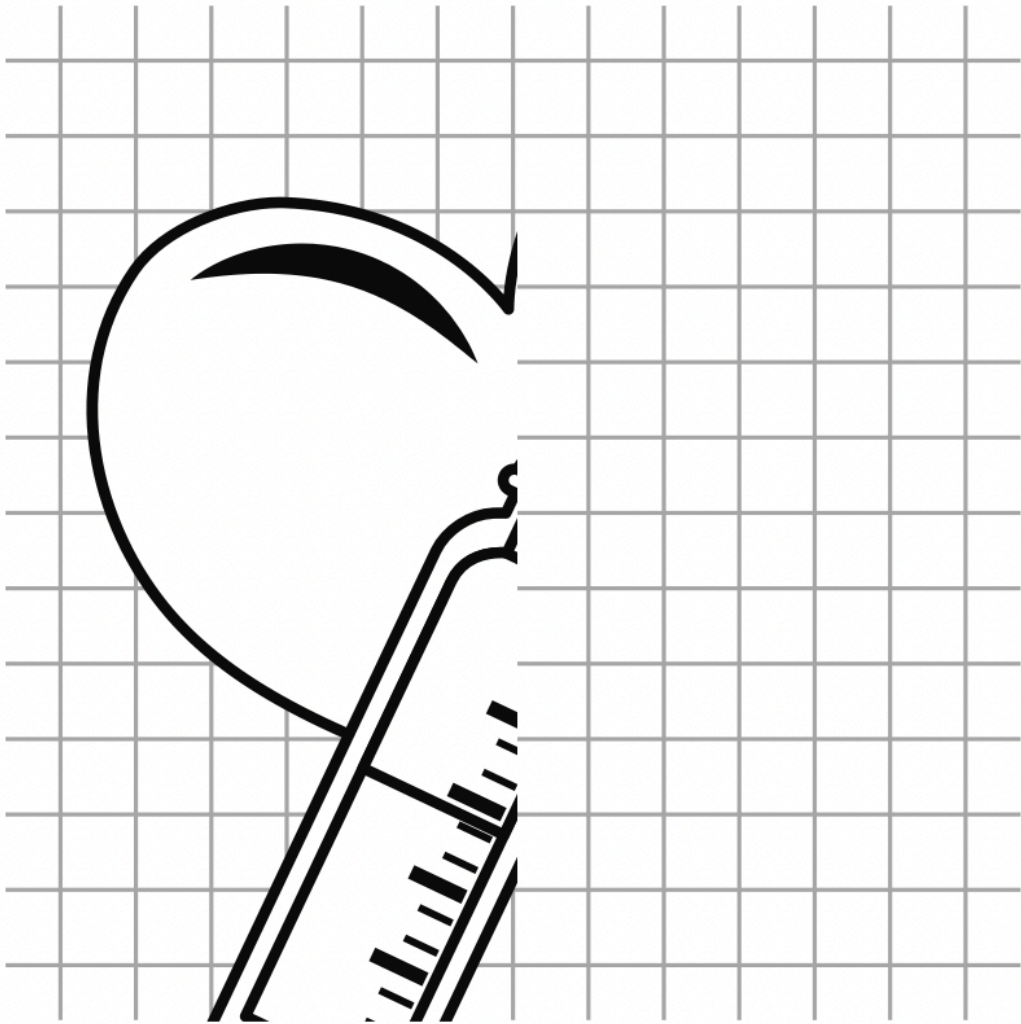


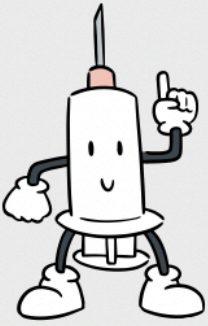
Many, many years ago (way back in the 1700s), a doctor and scientist named Edward Jenner created the first vaccine to protect against a disease called smallpox.



Vaccines are shots that teach the immune system to identify and protect against harmful germs without you having to get sick. They help your body create antibodies **BEFORE** germs enter your body so that your body is prepared to fight.

ACTIVITY: Use the grid to help complete the other half of this image:



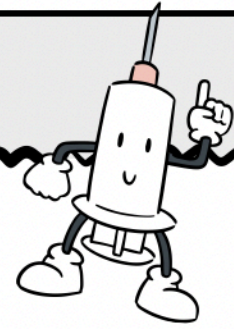


Vaccines are needed from the time you are a baby all the way through becoming an adult. Getting vaccinated protects yourself, your family, and others. When enough people are vaccinated against a disease, it's harder for that disease to spread to others. This means that your entire community receives some protection.

ACTIVITY: Use the space above to draw a picture of your family and friends that you protect by getting vaccinated.



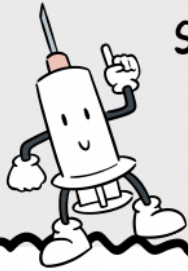
There are currently vaccines that protect you against 16 diseases in childhood and adolescence!



ACTIVITY: Find the 16 disease names in the word search below. The diseases are listed in the list at the bottom of this page.

Q G H G T B H H A S A W A X L
V M S D G O P E I J R B I X A
S J N U X G V T A B U I R P C
V Y T S B O I C D C B X E N C
X C G X Q T P Q W D E M H E O
F R I H A Z X N I J L C T U C
W J O P R Q R X E I L R H M O
H E E T D I V O C K A P P O G
P H E P A T I T I S C M I C N
H O R Q S V P F E R E I D O I
D Z L P P P I I T A I D H C N
X A M I S S J R S Z A L X C E
O U Z G O Z D L U M J J S A M
M S U N A T E T S S O O X L W
P E R T U S S I S E D R U J U

- COVID-19
- Chickenpox
- Diphtheria
- Hepatitis A
- Hepatitis B
- Hib
- HPV
- Measles
- Meningococcal
- Mumps
- Pertussis
- Polio
- Pneumococcal
- Rotavirus
- Rubella
- Tetanus



Sometimes you will need multiple doses of the same vaccine to get full protection. Fortunately, some vaccines were made to protect against multiple diseases at the same time.

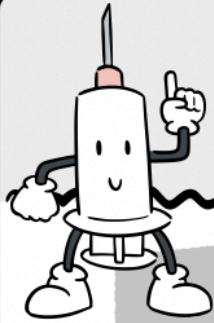
ACTIVITY: Draw a line from each disease to the vaccine vial that it belongs to. The answers are at the bottom of the page.



Diphtheria
Measles
Mumps
Pertussis
Rubella
Tetanus



MMR vaccine contains: measles, mumps, and rubella. DTaP vaccine contains: diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis.

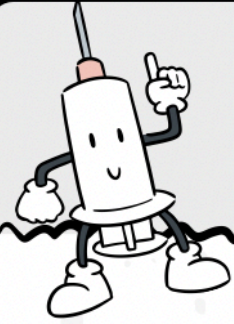


If you are nervous about getting shots, that's normal! Here are some tips that can help you to feel calm while getting your shots.

To-Do

- Bring your favorite toy
- Ask for a lollipop after your shot
- Sing your favorite song
- Hold your parent's hand
- Apply a cool towel on sore spots
- Remember that you are a vaccine **CHAMPION!!!**





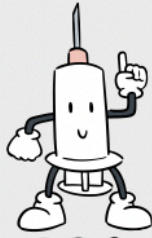
Getting your shots usually doesn't hurt much or for long and they are very important to help you stay healthy.



My arm feels a little sore after my shot, but it's ok because I know it means my immune system is getting ready to fight off bad germs that can cause me to get sick.

ACTIVITY: Now that you know more about vaccines, write down any questions you may have. Save these questions and ask an adult or your doctor about them.

A large rectangular area with a light gray background and horizontal lines, intended for writing questions. The left side of this area has a decorative, torn-edge effect.



As you get older, you will need more vaccines to maintain your protection and to protect against other diseases. The vaccines listed below are ones that you will need when you turn 11 years old.



Tdap vaccine

This vaccine protects you from tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (whooping cough). You will need one dose at 11-12 years old.



HPV vaccine

The HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccine protects against cancers caused by HPV infection. For full protection you will need multiple doses and you should get the first dose at 11-12 years.



MenACWY vaccine

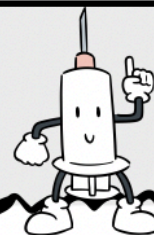
This vaccine protects you from the bacteria that causes meningococcal disease. You will need one shot at 11-12 years and a second shot at 16 years.



Influenza vaccine

The flu vaccine is needed each year to protect you from the flu virus. You should try to get this shot around October of each year.

It is important to have a copy of your immunization record to make sure you are up to date with all recommended vaccines.



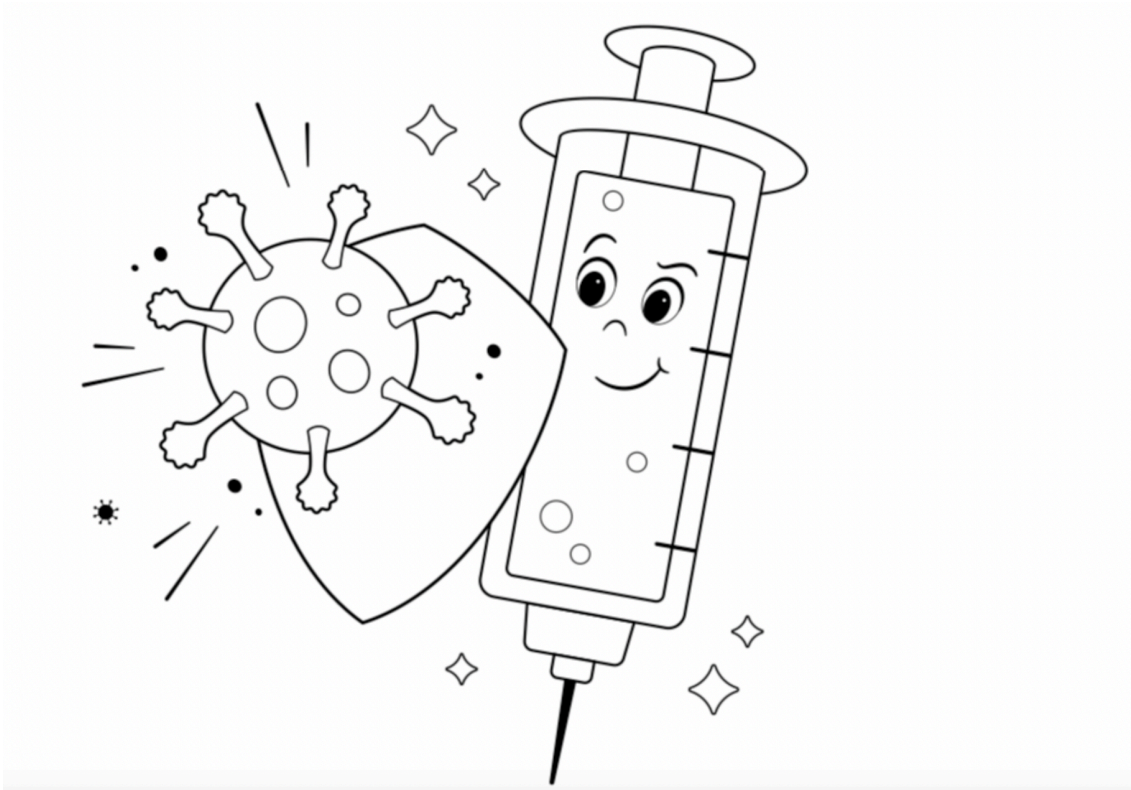
ACTIVITY: Ask an adult to help you identify which of the vaccines below you have already received and mark them in the table.

Vaccine	Received	Date(s) Received
Hep B (hepatitis B)		
DTaP (diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis)		
IPV (polio)		
Hib (Haemophilus influenzae type b)		
PCV (pneumococcal disease)		
RV (rotavirus)		
Influenza		
MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella)		
Varicella (chickenpox)		
Hep A (hepatitis A)		



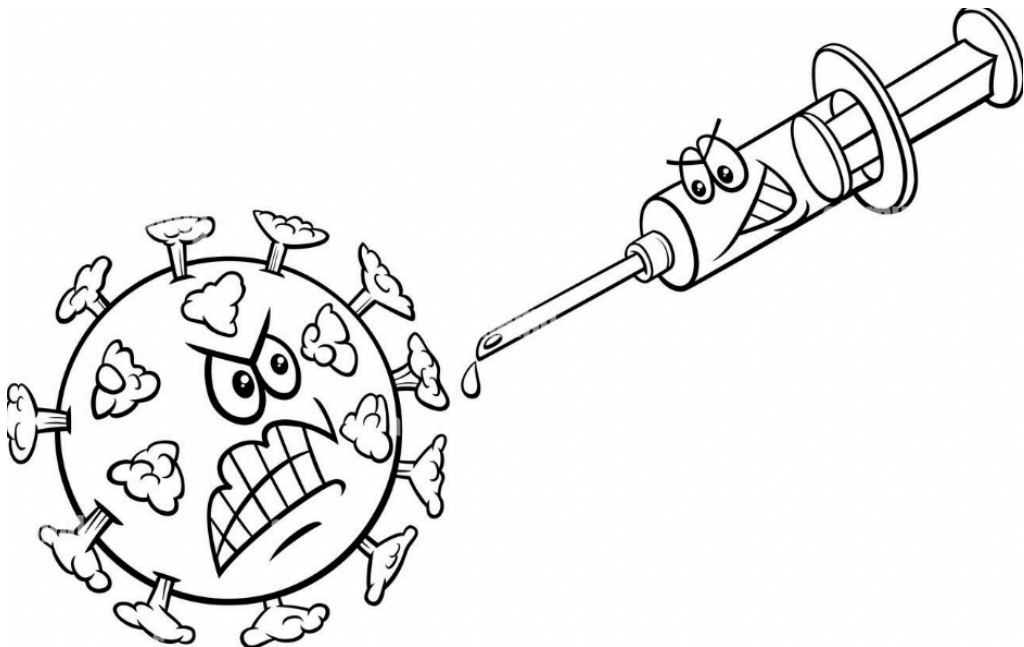
Some people may need other vaccines for reasons such as travel, or having a particular illness. Your doctor can tell you which other vaccines you may need.

Coloring Materials





with the world
SUPER
COLORING





Resources

ImaginAction - Be in Control of How You Feel

<https://imaginaction.stanford.edu/>

Staying Calm During Procedures and Pokes

<https://imaginaction.stanford.edu/calm-during-procedures-and-pokes/>

Learning How To Manage Pain During Medical Procedures

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbK9FFoAcvs>

“*The Little Ouch*” by Katerine Picarde (read-aloud)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=36ElsUDn2wY&ab_channel=Annie%27sworkshop-BooksReadAloudforKids

“*Conquer Needle Phobia: Simple Ways to Reduce your Anxiety and Fear*”
by Marty Martin, MD