

The why & language

If this is going to be a routine occurrence decide upon what your family will call getting labs drawn and normalize this term, such as a "poke"
Can use very simple language to explain the "why" such as: checking your body or helping your body

Practice

Rehearse steps of a lab draw on a doll or teddy bear at home when child is in a calm state, this supports in normalizing and opportunity for repetitive play to understand the steps

- modeling for them the steps: now this, then medicine, then this and all done

Verbalize for them - talk through what is happening "taking medicine"

- Reiterating what the job of the play patient is - "I see the bear holding their arm so still and watching the show"

COPING PLAN

Providing Warning

Let them know 1 day prior that it is going to be their turn to get a lab draw
Before procedure give a verbal prompt when it is time to begin and provide choices to support child in feeling sense of control (*see choices below)
The goal is to allow child to come freely to avoid needing to forcing or hold the child down, but if it does appear the child needs help transitioning then verbalizing for them that they are going to get a big hug to help them get on the bed

Appropriate Choices

Provide opportunity for control but not an overwhelming amount

- Which bandaid do they want after?
- Which comfort item do they want to hold?
- what distraction do they want to participate in?

Positions for Comfort

Sitting on parents lap, explaining it that parent/caregiver is giving a big hug (if staff is ok with this positioning)

- Chest to chest (hugging) with arm stationary on table to the side
- Back to chest with arm stationary on table to the side

Distraction

Blowing bubbles
Interactive book
iPad game/song/video
Light scratching above injection site to confuse block the message of pain being sent to the brain (or the use of Buzzy Bee)

Language to use during procedure

Explain what is happening (verbalizing for them),
Remind them of their jobs and reaffirm what they are doing well

- holding body so still, engaging in distraction, taking deep breaths

Remind of cues for done - sticker/bandaid being put on, mask coming off, being turned around for a big hug

Routine for procedure

Consistency with routine allows for your child to understand the stressor is over through cues and conditioning

- Concrete cues - counting 1, 2, 3 for the poke
- Changing position (picking up child, turning around for hug, sitting them up) when all done to really show all done and allow for feelings of stress to decrease and return to calm state

Activities for After Lab Draw

Physical soothing touch - Primary caregiver important
Specific positive reinforcement following the completion of the procedure

- “You did a good job of holding on to mom/dad.”

This is a very distractible age group - Return to play with child

- change activity right after and they quickly forget
- Bring new activity or favorite toy to transition to play
- Favorite snack (in moderation)
- Favorite song on YouTube

Remember

Crying or struggling does NOT mean the child is not coping - this is a natural response to negative stimuli
Focus on the recovery and positive praise
Talk about the experience after it is over in a positive light - allow for medical play after the experience to help the child process the experience