



TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT SHOTS

You can help your child deal with fears about medical procedures such as shots.

- ◆ Don't talk about your own dislike of shots. Put your own fears and anxieties aside. Put your child first.
- ◆ Explain what will happen at the doctor's office. Before the appointment, play act with your child with cotton balls, band-aids and toy medical equipment.
- ◆ Explain that shots help keep kids from getting very sick.
- ◆ Doctors and nurses help us stay well. They are "good guys". Never threaten a child with a shot, such as, "If you don't behave, the nurse will give you a shot."
- ◆ Tell your child you will be there with him or her. Offer reassurances such as:
 - "I'll hold your hand the whole time."
 - "You can sit on my lap."
 - "Do you need a hug?"
 - "Should we bring your blankie or your teddy?"
- ◆ Try a little distraction just as the shot is given. For example, one nurse tells children to blow out pretend birthday candles.
- ◆ A crying child is not a sign of failure. Congratulate your child for being brave. Don't say the shot didn't hurt. It did hurt. Tell your child you are proud of him or her.
- ◆ Plan something pleasant afterward, as a reward. A little surprise or a fun activity. If possible, give your child a choice, so he or she feels some control.