


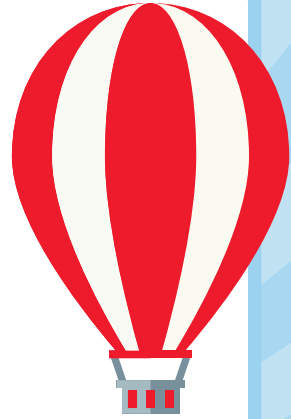
I'm worried about having a **MEDICAL PROCEDURE**



Sometimes, children can feel a bit worried about coming into hospital. You may be worried that your parents may not be able to be with you, or that it will be painful, and you may have questions about what will happen. It is important that you talk to someone about these worries. Talking can help you to prepare and remind you of some of the tools in your toolbox, which can help reduce your worries and help you to find out some of the answers to your questions.

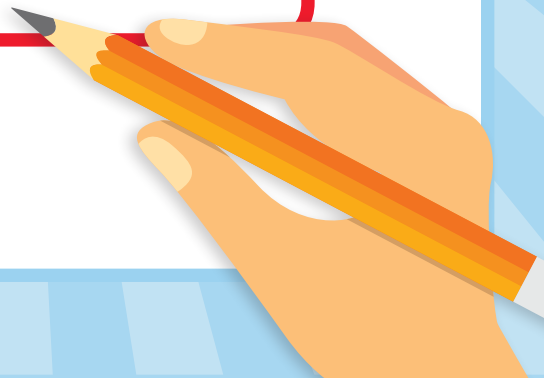
What is a medical procedure?

A procedure is something which you are asked to do at hospital to help the doctors and nurses understand more about your health. Examples are blood tests (taking blood from a vein in your arm using a needle or from your finger), a wee sample, measuring your height and weight, scans, X-Rays.



Why is this important?

Procedures help nurses and doctors understand more about how your body is working and what medicines you might need. It is normal to feel worried about things you may have never done before or that maybe painful. When we get worried, our bodies can become stiff and this can often make procedures more uncomfortable or take longer which can cause more upset. If you feel too worried and it is not possible to do the procedure, the nurses or doctors may ask you to come back on another day, meaning another trip to hospital. There are ways to help you when you feel worried about these things.

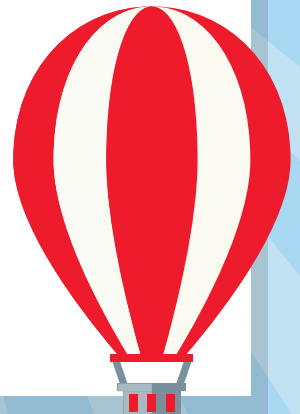


What can I do to help?

Finding ways to help with your feelings of nervousness and being worried can help you to relax and these feelings can be more manageable. It can be useful to think of managing worries as being like using a toolbox. Inside this toolbox there are ways to reduce worries, which may help when used on their own but if you can manage to use them together, they can help even more.

Below are some of the tools which you can add to your toolbox to help you manage if you are worried about a medical procedure.

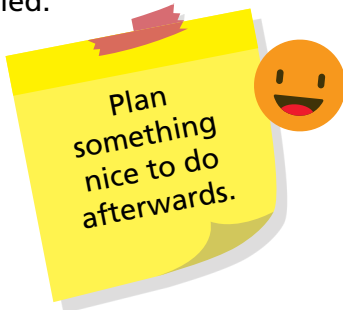
- 1 **Planning**
- 2 **Relaxation**
- 3 **Breathing**
- 4 **Distract yourself**
- 5 **Pain relief**



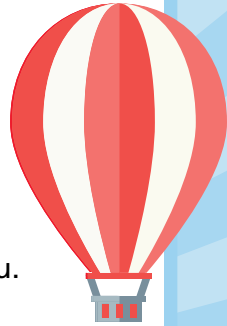
1

Planning

If you have any questions about the procedure, ask someone who may be able to help you or at least would know who to ask. Understanding more about what is going to happen can reduce feelings of being worried.



Decide on who you would like with you before/during/after the procedure and explain to them how you would like them to help you. Do you want them to help distract you by talking to you about something else, make you laugh or simply to be calm, quiet and reassure you.



2

Relaxation

Practising relaxation regularly can help when you really need to use it. It is a good skill to have, and takes time to practise. Learning to relax can help you sleep when you're worried about things and can help you to cope better with stressful situations.

There are many ways to relax. It can involve reading a book quietly or colouring, but there are also many other ways. Mindfulness is a way of bringing yourself more into the present moment rather than becoming too focussed on your thoughts. There are some links below which you may find useful.



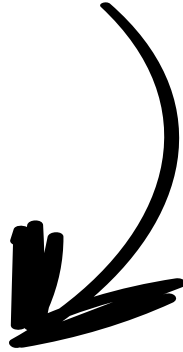
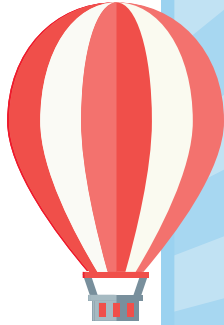
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Breathing correctly

When we're nervous, our breathing can change; we can begin to breathe very fast breaths from our chest. This can cause feelings of dizziness which can also cause you to worry about what is happening to your body.

A calming way to breathe is from the tummy, not the chest. When you breathe in your tummy should move out a little, when you breathe out, your tummy should fall in slightly. Your upper chest should stay still at all times.

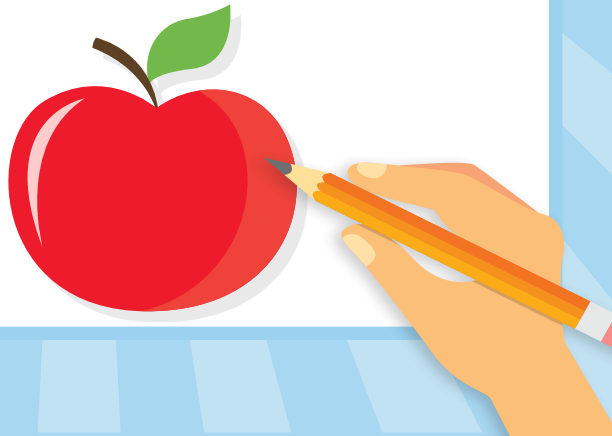
Relaxed, slow breathing from the tummy, helps you stay calm and relaxed. A lot of people say that this is the most helpful thing when trying to manage feelings of being worried.



4

Distract yourself

This can be hard on your own, you may like to ask a parent or friend to try and help you to focus on things other than your worries about the medical procedure, so that this is not the only thing on your mind. Get stuck into an activity that you enjoy, a film, music, reading, colouring, talking to those around you etc.



Pain relief

For things such as blood tests, it may be possible for the nurses to use a cold spray or a cream, so you will feel it less. This is one of the many tools in the toolbox and it is most helpful if you use it alongside all of the other tools. You or your parents will need to ask the nurses looking after you what pain relief is available.



It can take time, effort and practise to learn about all of the tools which could be in your toolbox but they can often help give you the confidence to make procedures more manageable. It is difficult to do this on your own. It is likely that you will need help from your parents/ carer to practise and also to remind you and help you to prepare on the day.

There is a play department at UH Bristol who can help you prepare for procedures or anaesthetic. You can contact them and find out more information here:

<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/your-hospitals/bristol-royal-hospital-for-children/childrens-website/being-in-hospital/play/>

There may also be a psychologists working with the medical team looking after you. You could ask your doctors or nurses whether this is the case and discuss a referral with them.



WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

www.pain toolkit.org - This Pain Toolkit website provides handy tips and skills to support people along the way to managing their pain.

www.calm.com - This is a link to an app which can help you with relaxation and mindfulness.

www.mindfulnessforteens.com

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/podcasts-and-videos/podcasts-for-your-wellbeing



These toolkits have been written by NHS clinical psychologists and neuropsychologists working for University Hospitals Bristol. They have been co-designed with service users and healthcare staff. These toolkits are only intended to provide general advice and information. Please discuss your individual needs with your doctor or specialist nurse. If you would like more information about psychology services please go to:

<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/support-for-patients/psychological-health-services/>

We would like to thank patients and other healthcare staff for their contributions to this toolkit.

For access to other patient toolkits please go to the following address:

<http://www.uhbristol.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/support-for-patients/psychological-health-services/resources/>

For this leaflet in large print, audio or PDF format, please email patientleaflets@uhbristol.nhs.uk

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