

Wallaby Parent Information

Tips to assist Medical Procedures in the home



- Take the time to explain what is going to happen. The less surprises the better! Try to use simple child friendly explanations.
- Demonstrate the procedure on a toy so that your child becomes comfortable with the steps (e.g. dressing change on a teddy). Encourage them to help where appropriate (taking off tape or putting on a bandaid).
- If your child is worried about the procedure;
 - Younger children should be told closer to the procedure time (a few hours).
 - Older children- 6 years + may require more time (a day or two).
- Avoid doing procedures in your child's bedroom- keep this space procedure free.
- Give your child choice and control where possible
 - sitting on mum or dad's lap or on the couch?
 - in the kitchen or the lounge?
 - choice of a game on a tablet for distraction or to watch the procedure?
- Have a preferred activity to do during the procedure (Read a favourite book, play a favourite app on a tablet).
- If the procedure was upsetting, try to promptly redirect your child to an alternative favourite activity once it's complete.
- Try to avoid using bribery (if you do X you can have X); instead try using positive reinforcement after the procedure.... ("You did so well at being still so we can go the park, have an icy pole, etc.).
- Even if your child had difficulty with some parts of the procedure, pick something they did well. This helps to reinforce improvements in this behaviour for next time
 - Well done! You took some big breaths when you were feeling worried
 - Great work! You tried your best to stay very still
- Be honest: Children need to trust what you say. If your child has questions try to answer honestly but be mindful of how much detail you provide. i.e. Will a dressing change hurt? You might feel some pulling on your skin but the nurse will try and go slowly.
- It's important to avoid using nurses or a return to hospital as a threat i.e. "if you don't stay still the nurse will give you a needle". This can make children very distrustful with future medical experiences.
- If your child requires a needle (or port access), ask about using AnGEL or EMLA cream to help numb the skin beforehand.