

Infant Reactions to Health Care Settings or Medical Procedures

Human contact provides infants (birth to 12 months) with trust, love and security and is an infant's most important need. In addition to human comfort, toys that promote play are an important source of stimulation and comfort. Infants use cues to signal fear, pain or discomfort and to let their caregivers know they need help. These cues may include irritability, decreased activity, sleeping more, loss of interest in familiar materials, and a decrease in appetite. When parents respond to an infant's cues, it builds trust between parent and child.

When preparing yourself and your infant for a medical procedure or hospitalization, ask the health care provider to explain what your child will undergo and to clarify your role (i.e., what you can do to comfort and console your infant). Ask about pain medicines that can be given before hospitalization and if you can be present during the procedure.

The following ideas will help your infant cope:

Sensory

Rapid rocking

Patting

Stroking

Sucking a pacifier

Cuddling

Holding child on your lap/shoulder

Playing music

Holding familiar blanket

Heat or ice pack

Thinking or Behavioral Distractions

Mobiles

Objects that change shape, color
or position

Bubbles

A familiar toy or stuffed animal

Mirrors

Games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake

Reading a book

Make An Appointment [651-290-8707](tel:651-290-8707) Refer a Patient [651-325-2200](tel:651-325-2200)

This information is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care providers. If you have any questions, talk with your doctor or others on your health care team.

If you are a Gillette patient with urgent questions or concerns, please contact Telehealth Nursing at [651-229-3890](tel:651-229-3890).