

It is important to strategize as a parent about how you will handle the daily insulin injections with your young child. Insulin is the key to the health and well-being of your child. Giving your child insulin injections and checking their blood sugars must become the new norm.

For those of us not in the medical field, giving injections is not a normal part of our daily lives. You may feel stress about giving the injections and your child may feel stress about getting injections. First, practice on yourself with an insulin needle and saline solution. Consult with your diabetes team on best sites for injections for yourself and your child. The insulin needle is smaller than you think and you will discover that it does not hurt. It is important that you build confidence when giving injections. As you remain calm and confident your child will remain calm and confident. Don't forget that they pick up on your stress level. Don't feel bad either. Children also sense when parents are feeling bad and may capitalize on this. This process has to become a matter-of-fact daily routine.

Children learn through play so allow your child to give injections (using old pens) to a stuffed animal or doll. There are stuffed bears that support children with diabetes. There is the [JDRF's Rufus the Bear](#) and there is also [Jerry the Bear](#). American Girl has a [Diabetes Care Kit for Dolls](#) that includes pretend doll-sized tools to help children care for their dolls with diabetes. There is also a non-invasive clinically proven pain relief product called [Buzzy Bee](#) for children who take any shots, injections and/or finger sticks.

Allow your child some control and ask for their help as you administer the insulin injections. Ask them where they would like to do this? Ask for their help by: having them hand you the alcohol pad; then taking the lid off of the insulin pen (when safe & developmentally appropriate); and, finally, handing you the insulin pen (when safe & developmentally appropriate). Rewards may work for your child also. You can set up a reward system (non-food related) such as stickers on a sticker chart.

There are alternative insulin delivery methods so this doesn't have to be a constant battle. Talk to your diabetes team about getting an insulin pump for your child if they have consistent pain or high stress levels with injections. Be insistent because there are some untruths about when a child can begin on an insulin pump.

Remember to connect with other families that have children with type 1 diabetes. A supportive community can help you through much of the stress and fears you are experiencing. If, despite all of our recommendations, you are still experiencing stress, please do not hesitate to seek support (and there is nothing wrong with that!).

**References:**

[American Girl Diabetes Care Kit for Dolls](#)

[Buzzy Bee for Shots](#)

[JDRF & Rufus the Bear](#)

[Jerry the Bear](#)

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*This document is not intended to take the place of the care and attention of your personal physician or other professional medical services. Our aim is to promote active participation in your care and treatment by providing information and education. Questions about individual health concerns or specific treatment options should be discussed with your physician.*