



IMPROVING THE VACCINATION EXPERIENCE:

Using numbing cream to reduce pain

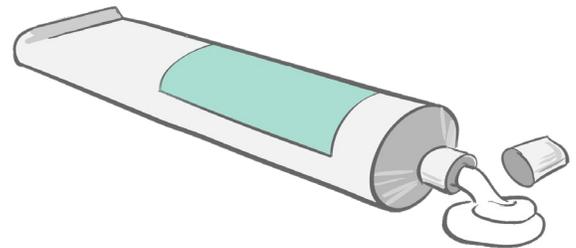
Numbing creams contain medicines called topical anesthetics. They are used to temporarily numb the skin and can be used to reduce the pain of vaccination.

You can buy numbing cream at your local pharmacy without a prescription. Talk to your pharmacist if you have any questions.

WHERE TO APPLY NUMBING CREAM

Vaccinations are usually given in the deltoid muscle (upper arm below the shoulder). Before you apply the cream, make sure you confirm the correct area(s) for vaccination with a health-care provider.

For babies under one year of age vaccinations are given in a different area on the body. Please discuss this with your health-care provider.



HOW TO APPLY NUMBING CREAM

1. Check the label and expiration date of the cream before using it.
2. Decide which arm to apply the cream to. Avoid your dominant arm if you have no preference. If having more than one vaccination on the same day, then you may have to apply the cream to both arms.
3. Do not apply the cream on an open wound such as a cut or scratch.
4. If opening a new tube of cream, use the point on the top of the cap to break the seal over the tube.
5. Locate the area on the upper arm below the shoulder (center of the triangle shown in the image) where you will apply the cream.
6. Apply between a nickel and a quarter size amount of cream to the skin (do not touch the cream or rub it in).
7. Cover the site by wrapping the upper arm with plastic wrap or use a clear bandage (such as Tegaderm®) to keep the cream in place.



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8. If cream oozes out from under the covering, wipe it away with a tissue. Avoid contact with the mouth, eyes or nose. Rinse your hands with water after applying the cream.
9. Mark the time of application. Make sure the cream is kept in place for the recommended wait time (30 to 60 minutes). See the table below for the wait times for some commercially available creams.
10. Just before vaccination, remove the covering and wipe away the cream with a tissue. Make sure the vaccination is given in the pre-treated area.

Numbing cream	Brand names	Minimum time to take effect
Lidocaine	Maxilene™ 4% or 5% Zensa™ 5%	30 minutes
Tetracaine	Ametop™ 4%	45 minutes
Lidocaine-prilocaine	EMLA™ 5% (also comes as a patch)	60 minutes

DOES NUMBING CREAM HAVE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

When used as directed, numbing cream has few side effects.

- Your skin may be whiter or redder for a short time. This is normal.

Call your health-care provider if:

- You get the cream in your mouth or eyes.
- If you show signs of an allergic reaction to the cream. This includes rash, hives, swelling, wheezing or shortness of breath.

STORING NUMBING CREAM

Store numbing cream in its original container out of children's reach and away from direct sunlight, heat and humid places such as the bathroom. Make sure the cap is closed tightly and, if possible, lock the cream away with other medicines.