

Preparing For Your Child's First Acupuncture Visit

You've decided to bring your child in for acupuncture treatment and now you're wondering what you're going to tell them about their initial visit. In order to help explain to your child what is involved with an acupuncture treatment we've got a few pointers to help you out.

BE HONEST WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT WHAT THE VISIT IS FOR

If your child is old enough to understand what is going on with their body, explain to them why they are coming in for an acupuncture visit. Let them know you'll be discussing their problem with the acupuncturist.

TELL THEM ABOUT ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture helps the body heal itself. Our bodies are designed with great healing powers, but sometimes bodies need a little help to heal and that's what acupuncture does. It also helps the body heal faster. The acupuncturist is like a detective that is searching for the root cause of illness and then uses special spots called acupuncture points to begin the healing process. *Not even the greatest surgeon can heal a cut, only the body can.*

AVOID WORDS LIKE PINCH, PRICK, POKEY, POKE, PINS OR NEEDLES

These words sound scary and may cause your child to be afraid of acupuncture.

TELL THEM THE ACUPUNCTURIST DOES "TAPS"

At our clinic, we call acupuncture for kids "taps" because the acupuncturist will do a lot of gentle finger tapping and rubbing to prepare the acupuncture point. The needles are swiftly tapped in and, for kids under age 8, immediately removed.

DON'T LIE TO THEM IF THEY ASK IF IT HURTS.

When they are tapped in there is little to no discomfort during the procedure. They might feel a tiny amount of discomfort, but most don't. Hundreds of thousands of kids get acupuncture every year because it helps them feel better.

HELP THEM BE BRAVE!

Sometimes bringing a favorite toy, stuffed animal or blanket gives them comfort if they are feeling scared or apprehensive. Some kids dress up in costume on their first visit. We've seen pirates, Minnie Mouse, and cowboys to name a few.

IF THEY DON'T WANT TO DO NEEDLES, WE HAVE OTHER OPTIONS

Sometimes even the bravest kids don't want to try taps right away. That's alright, we have other non-needle techniques we can use that have a similar therapeutic effect as acupuncture. Your child will never be forced to do taps or anything else against their wishes, but it is our sincere hope that they will cooperate with us during their treatment.

DECIDE AHEAD OF TIME IF YOU'RE GOING TO OFFER A REWARD FOR TRYING TAPS

It's their choice if they want try taps, but sometimes a little motivation helps. Rewards have worked quite well for many parents to encourage their kids try it. If you plan to offer a reward, figure out what you'll offer ahead of time so you're not caught off guard, but be ready to follow through. You may want to keep it a secret and use it as a last resort or it may work better to tell them about it ahead of time. We have stickers at the office for kids who cooperate so they'll get a little reward no matter what.