

## What is it?

Commitment to Comfort® is a program intended to promote patient comfort by helping to lessen pain and distress that may be experienced during medical procedures.

The Alberta Precision Laboratories program was developed in partnership with Child Life Specialists at the Alberta Children's Hospital.

While many strategies are aimed at pediatric patients, there are elements that anyone can use!



**ALBERTA PRECISION  
LABORATORIES**

**Leaders in Laboratory Medicine**

**Commitment to Comfort®**

*Promoting Comfort. Partnering Together. Every Time.*

## Being Positive!

Your positive and calming presence makes a huge difference! If you or your child are nervous, try activities you can do together. Things like deep breaths, playing a game or finding another distraction can go a long way. Positive language also plays a big part to keep your child calm. Try not to imply an outcome. Saying “it will only hurt a little bit” or “you have nothing to worry about” still means it is going to hurt or there is something to be worried about.

Instead of saying “I promise you’ll be fine”, it is better to say “Sometimes it helps me to take deep breaths when I feel nervous”. Instead of saying “I’m sorry...” it is better to say “You’re being so brave. Let’s keep reading this book”.

Memory matters! Using positive language after the procedure is important too.

## Is it going to hurt?

Empower your child’s experience to be positive and don’t predict pain. For example, say “I don’t know how this is going to feel for you, but I do know that when we use the [planned distraction, numbing cream, etc.], it will not bother you so much.”

## What are we going to the lab for?

Use plain language when explaining what will happen, including things they will see and hear and why they are getting the test, as best you can.

## Evidence Based

The key themes of Commitment to Comfort® pain management are based on science. They include:

- Distraction
- Numbing products (topical anesthetic)
- Positive Language
- Comfort Positions

Why is this important? Research shows that children who have negative medical-related experiences become adults who avoid medical intervention.

## Resources

- Alberta Health Services Commitment to Comfort®:  
<https://www.commitmenttocomfort.com/>
- Learning How to Manage Pain During Medical Procedures  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbK9FFoAcvs>

## Numbing Products

Numbing products can be a helpful tool to reduce discomfort during laboratory collections. These products can be purchased at most pharmacies or may be available by prescription. Brand names include Ametop, Emla and Maxilene.

Numbing products may not be right for everyone and may require special application instructions; be sure to consult with your physician or pharmacist.

## Parents or Guardians Can....

Purchase and apply numbing products. Use positive language before, during and after the blood collection to educate your child about what to expect.

Talk to your child and laboratory staff to make a plan to help your child cope with their blood collection.

Use a calm voice and relaxed body language to help your child feel less distressed. Help laboratory staff ensure your child is in a comfortable and safe position during the bloodwork.

Plan to do something special after your visit.

## Patients Can....

Talk to your parent, guardian and staff members and ask questions. Let us know how we can help.

Do things to make the collection easier; if possible drink plenty of water and wear short sleeves.

Make a comfort plan and share it with the laboratory staff member helping you.

Use the distractions and tools you have identified in your comfort plan

Ask any questions you may have before the collection.