

Family Education Sheet

Numbing Cream to Prepare for a Needle Procedure (Boston & Waltham)



Boston Children's Hospital
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Many children are afraid of needles. Using numbing cream before your child has a blood test or an immunization shot can help with the pain. This might also help your child become less afraid of needles over time.

How does numbing cream work?

- The numbing cream we recommend is called LMX-4. It has a medicine called lidocaine in it that numbs the skin and the tissue around where it is put on the skin.
- It takes 30 minutes to work.
- The cream may stay on for 1 hour and will keep working for another hour after it comes off.
- You can keep the tube of numbing cream to use again. Each tube has enough for about 2-3 uses.

Is it for all needle procedures or just certain ones?

- You can use it when coming in for blood work or in between clinic visits when your child needs to get blood drawn.
- Please **do not** use it before your child gets an IV placed or gets an immunization shot. You can bring it with you to these appointments. But your child's care team needs to decide where the needle will go first. The nurse will put the cream on after they decide. If you do not have any numbing cream with you and your child is getting an IV or immunization, please ask for it.
- Distractions like blowing bubbles, toys, and music are a good way to help your child through needle procedures. This is good to do, along with using numbing cream.

Where do I get numbing cream?

You need to plan to get the numbing cream before your visit. In most cases, you'll need to put it on your child 30 minutes to 1 hour before the procedure.

There are 3 ways you can get LMX-4 numbing cream:

- **Talk to your care team about applying LMX-4.** Nurses may apply LMX-4 numbing cream during your clinic visit, before you go to the lab, or before a needle procedure in the clinic. Please keep in mind that you will be billed for the application of this cream.
- **Purchase LMX-4 at your local pharmacy.** You may want to call your pharmacy ahead of time to make sure they have it in stock.

- **Purchase LMX-4 from a reputable online retailer,** such as from Walgreens.com, Walmart.com, or CVS.com.

How can I keep my child safe?

Do not use numbing cream if your child has an allergy to lidocaine. Check with your child's doctor if you do not know if your child is allergic to it.

Use the numbing cream **as directed:**

- Do not use it on large areas of your child's body.
- Only use it for its medical use.
- Do not use it again within 2 hours.
- Do not put the numbing cream on open areas of the skin, like cuts.
- Do not let your child eat or lick the cream.
- Store the cream out of reach of children.
- **If you use too much by accident or if someone eats it:** Call the Drug and Poison Information Center at 1-800-222-1222 right away. Also, call your child's doctor.

What are possible reactions to this numbing cream?

- Redness and rash
- Swelling or unusual feeling in the area around the numbing cream

How long does it take to work?

- Apply it to the skin and leave it on for at least 30 minutes but no longer than 1 hour. The medicine will start to numb the area after 30 minutes.
- If you have to wait longer than you expected for the needle procedure, take the cream off no later than 1 hour after you put it on.
- The skin will stay numb for 1 hour after the cream is removed.

How much do I use?

- If your child is 3 or older: Put a square of about 1 x 1 inch of cream on the skin 20-30 minutes before the needle procedure. Do not use more than 5 grams in 24 hours.
- If your child is 3 or younger: Put a square of about 1 x 1 inch of cream on the skin 20-30 minutes before the needle procedure. Do not use more than 2 grams in 24 hours.

Age	Max Amount Each Day	When to Apply	Amount
3 years and older	Do not use more than half (½) of a 5-gram tube per body part in 1 day.	30 minutes before the needle procedure	1x1 inch square in a thick layer
Younger than 3 years	Do not use more than one-fourth (¼) of a 5-gram tube per body part in 1 day. This means most of the cream should be left in the tube after its first use.		

How do I take it off?

- 1 Gently wipe rubbing alcohol or adhesive removal around the outside edges of the plastic dressing to loosen them. Pull up the corners on opposite edges. Peel and lift off the plastic dressing.
- 2 Wipe off all of the cream with a tissue.
- 3 Throw away the plastic dressing in a place where children cannot reach it.
- 4 Wash your hands.
- 5 The skin may look pale or white after you wipe off the cream. It should be back to normal within 2 hours.

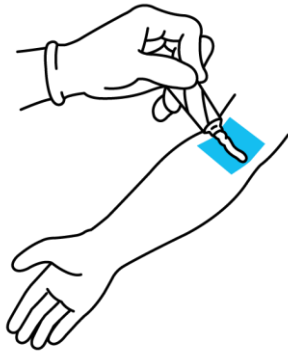
Call your child’s prescriber if you have questions or concerns.

This Family Education Sheet is available in [Arabic](#) and [Spanish](#).

How do I put on the numbing cream before a blood draw?

A parent or a nurse can put the numbing cream on your child. *Talk with a doctor or nurse before using the cream if your child’s skin has open cuts or wounds.*

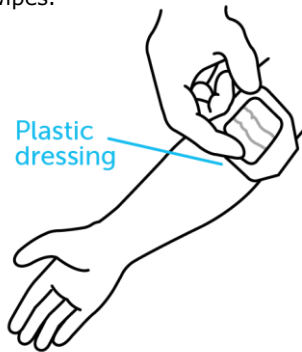
- 1 Do not wash the skin before putting on the cream unless the skin is visibly dirty. This is because the skin’s natural oils help the cream to soak in better. If you were told to wash your child’s skin before putting on the cream then only use mild soap and water to clean the area. Do not use alcohol wipes.



- 2 Put the numbing cream in a thick layer over the vein at the inner part of the elbow (or as told by a doctor or nurse).



- 3 Do not rub the cream into your child’s skin.



- 4 Cover the cream with plastic dressing. The plastic dressing is included in the box with the cream. You can also use plastic wrap from a grocery store.



- 5 Wash your hands after putting on the cream.