

Tips to Ease Needle Fear

Here are some ways that have worked for others to train your body not to react to the fear:



Shift More Blood to Your Head

If possible, lie flat or tilt the chair so your legs are above your head when you get a needle stick.



Tense Your Muscles

At the first sign of a problem, tighten your non-access arm, leg, and torso muscles for 10 or 20 seconds, until your face feels warm. Then slowly relax them, but not all the way, until the needle stick is done. Talk to your doctor before you try this. With his or her okay, practice this at home before you need to do it in the clinic.



Seek Therapy

Ask your doctor or social worker to refer you to a psychologist who can do desensitization treatments. These slowly expose you to your fears in a safe setting until they lose their power to scare you.



Choose Peritoneal Dialysis (PD)

Ask your care team about PD and if it is an option for your dialysis care. No needles are involved in PD.



Numb the Pain

Use a pain numbing cream or gel to numb the site. Be sure to follow the directions for use of the cream or gel. Injected lidocaine uses needles, and some say the extra sticks cause scars around the access.



Take Charge of Your Needles

Ask for training on how to put your dialysis needs in yourself. Knowledge fights fear. Sticking yourself puts you in the driver's seat. It distracts you from the pain, so you feel it less, and helps your access last much longer.

Find out more about your options by talking with your care team.

Reference: Dialysis Needle Fear - Easing the Sting. (2005). Retrieved October 19, 2016, from <http://www.homedialysis.org/life-at-home/articles/dialysis-needle-fear>

For more information or to file a grievance, please contact:

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