

Additional Tips for Reducing Needle Fear

- 1. Share your fear.** Instead of keeping your fear of needles secret, let the facility staff who will be cannulating you know about your fear. Just expressing your fear and the social connection that telling someone brings can often help you calm down. Your dialysis staff member will talk to you about your options and take special precautions to make the process less painful and anxiety-producing for you.
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- 2. If you have 'em, take 'em.** Taking a prescribed anti-anxiety medication before a treatment may help to reduce fear-related stress. This is particularly helpful when used together with correct body positioning and a topical anesthetic. *Be sure to consult your doctor before taking any medication.*
 - 3. Think about something else.** Distract yourself! Talk and joke with facility staff. Think about something special that's coming up, or that special somebody you are fond of. Try bringing an iPod or your phone with you and listen to music to take your mind off the needles.
 - 4. Just a touch makes a difference.** Ask someone (a staff member, friend, or partner) to hold and squeeze your hand during the procedure. This physical stimulus will help ease the pain of the needle and distract your body from the procedure.
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- 5. Try not to look.** Look away and focus on something else in the area.
 - 6. Remember to breathe slowly and deeply.** Focus on maintaining your breathing. A slow, steady breath will calm your nerves and give your mind a focus.
 - 7. Try to relax!** Do whatever works for you. Count from 1 to 10, or backwards from 10. Think of the lyrics to your favorite song. When you are distracted, you are not thinking about the needles.
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- 8. Remind yourself that this needle is a means to preserving your life.**