

# U-M Poke Program



## MEET POKE-A-DOT

**Poke-a-Dot the Comfort Dog** is the mascot for the University of Michigan Poke Program!

Poke-a-Dot is no ordinary dog. He recognizes children who experience a poke or procedure at U-M. Poke-a-Dot is just one part of a creative idea called the Poke Program. This program supports patients and families of children experiencing pain and anxiety with pokes or procedures. Although pain cannot be completely avoided, there are some things parents and others can do to make a poke or procedure a more positive experience.

## WHAT IS THE POKE PROGRAM?

The Poke Program is made up of six parts designed to reduce pain and anxiety that can come from pokes and procedures. Let's look at each one and talk about how we can work together to make your child's experience at U-M as good as possible.

### 1) The Poke and Procedure Plan

We'll ask you to fill out a Poke and Procedure Plan or tell us how you and your child respond to needlesticks and procedures. The Poke and Procedure Plan is made just for your child. The plan helps staff get to know more about you and your child. We want to make your child as comfortable as possible while undergoing procedures or pokes.

### 2) Distraction

Distraction is used to turn attention away from a painful procedure or poke. It can be as simple as counting, singing or taking a deep breath. Distraction is used before a procedure to help you and your child feel less anxious about getting a poke. Distraction can be used during a poke or procedure to lower stress. After a poke or procedure, distraction can help your child recover faster.



Your child will be given choices in determining what type of distraction they would like to use to help them cope with a poke or procedure.

### 3) Positions to Improve Comfort

Our staff have been trained in positioning your child to support safe procedures and pokes. A position with physical contact allows a child some control and is comforting. We'll work with you to keep your child comfortable and calm.

### 4) Parents or Caregivers as Coaches

Children do not know as many ways to cope with stressful situations as adults. They can benefit from an adult's help and encouraging words. Kids are also very good at picking up on the feelings of the people around them. As parents, it is important to be aware of your own voice tone, body posture and facial expressions. Because parents are often present during a poke or procedure, they can be a coach or helper. Children benefit from an adult's calm voice and a reminder to focus on the distraction. Of course, parents may also choose not to be involved in the poke or procedure.

When speaking to a child before, during or after a procedure:

- Speak in a calm, quiet manner. Sometimes during an explanation of the procedure, a child may begin to cry. Try saying, "I know this is hard for you. Thank you for holding still."
- Avoid saying "Be a big girl/boy now" or "No crying."
- Recognize bravery and name the things they did well, like holding still, not looking or counting, for example.

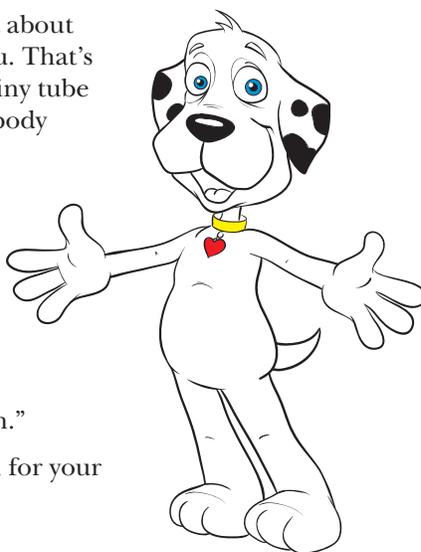
### 5) Best Words

Knowing how to prepare your child and what and how much to say can be hard. Less information is needed for short procedures that the child has had before. If a child is worried about having a needlestick, focus on things the child can do to help. Practicing counting 1, 2, 3, or deep breathing is one way a child can have some control. Remembering every child is unique, many parents find these tips helpful.



Use “kids’ speak” for medical words. When describing procedures or diagnoses, choose your words wisely so that your explanations are helpful and appropriate for your child. Thinking like your child will make things easier for everyone. Here are some examples of kids’ speak:

- An immunization: “An immunization provides a special shield to protect your body from getting sick.”
- A blood draw: “Your blood tells us a lot about your body and how it is working for you. That’s why medical people need to look at a tiny tube of your blood to see how to help your body get better.”
- You may describe a blood draw/poke as “A baby needle just under your skin so the doctor can look at your blood.”
- A child’s veins as “little tubes or tunnels that go all through your body.”
- A tourniquet: “A tight hug for your arm.”
- An alcohol prep pad: “A tiny washcloth for your arm.”



## 6) Drugs and Devices

Pain management using drugs and devices can be an important part of the Poke Program. Vibration, cold and other touch stimulation are helpful ways for reducing pain.