

Best distractions

Ideas for every age

Distraction can reduce anxiety in pediatric patients and their parents. To be helpful, distractions need to be 1) age appropriate and 2) appealing to the child. Here are some you can try based on a child's age.

Infant

- Holding or swaddling
- Patting or rubbing
- Music or singing
- Pacifier
- SweetEase, if appropriate
- Rattles, toys that make sounds



Toddler

- Music, singing, nursery rhymes
- Cartoon videos
- Holding
- Bubbles
- Pinwheels
- Stuffed toys or blankets
- Light-up or motion toys
- Pop-up or sound books



Preschool

- Holding or having parents hold
- Music
- Cartoons
- Bubbles
- Pinwheels
- Pop-up or sound books
- Puppets
- Light-up or motion toys
- Saying the alphabet or counting
- Talking about favorite things (TV shows, pets, family, toys)



School age

- Music
- Video games
- Cartoons
- Guided imagery
- Focusing on breathing
- *I Spy* or *Where's Waldo* search games
- Puzzles
- Talking about favorite things (TV shows, movies, hobbies, family, pets)
- Brain teasers



Teens

- Music
- Video games
- Guided imagery
- Puzzles, Sudoku, crosswords
- Deep breathing

