

Overcoming a Fear of Needles

Having T1D often requires frequent needle pricks, but that does not make them any easier or more enjoyable. Even with experience, ***you are not alone in feeling anxious or stressed before blood work, an injection, or a site insertion.*** Many individuals with T1D experience hesitation or discomfort, regardless of how routine these procedures become. These physical and emotional reactions can make the process feel overwhelming, but recognizing these symptoms is the first step toward managing them. While T1D management is never fun, there are many ways to make it less stressful. You know yourself best, so choose the strategies that help you feel the most comfortable and in control!

1. START SMALL

- Practice with a capped needle or device to get comfortable holding and handling it.
- Use a stress ball or an orange to practice proper technique before attempting it on yourself.

2. USE DISTRACTION TECHNIQUES

- Listen to music, watch a video, or engage in deep breathing exercises while preparing for a needle injection, finger prick, pump site/CGM insertion.
- Squeeze a stress ball or focus on something comforting nearby.

3. NUMB THE AREA

- Use a numbing cream or ice to desensitize the skin before an injection or site insertion and check with the lab if there is anything you can use ahead of bloodwork.
- Some devices, like Buzzy, use vibration and cold to distract from the sensation of the needle.

4. ASK FOR SUPPORT

- Talk to a trusted friend, family member, or healthcare provider about your fear. They can offer encouragement and help you through the process.
- Consider joining a support group for people with type 1 diabetes to learn how others manage their fears.

5. FOCUS ON THE OUTCOME

- Remind yourself of the benefits: maintaining good blood sugar levels helps prevent complications and supports overall well-being.

6. PRACTICE RELAXATION

- Use relaxation techniques, such as progressive muscle relaxation or mindfulness meditation, to reduce anxiety.
- Practice visualizing a calm and successful experience with the needle.



If you are experiencing symptoms of **NEEDLE AND INSERTION PHOBIA** that make it difficult to manage your diabetes, talk with your healthcare provider at your next appointment about available supports. **Common symptoms of needle and insertion phobia include:** heart palpitations, feeling panicky, nausea, dizziness, or even insomnia leading up to your bloodwork, injection or insertion.

Source: [How to Overcome the Fear of Giving Yourself a Needle Injection](#)