COVID-19 testing: How to prepare and comfort your child

All children are different and will react differently to a COVID-19 test. Please follow these tips to help make the experience as comfortable as possible for your child.

Preparing your child

- Everyone working in the testing centre wears funny looking clothing called PPE (personal protective equipment).
- Let your child know these are like superhero outfits and protect health-care workers from getting and spreading germs to everyone.
- Masks, visors, gowns and gloves shield us from germs – remember everyone is smiling underneath.

Talking to your child

- Your doctor or nurse will use a long and skinny cotton swab to rub the inside of your child's nose for five seconds.
- Tell them to think of their nose as a deep cave and that the cotton swab can find the teeny-tiny germs hidden inside.
- Reassure your child they haven't done anything wrong and the test is to help the doctor take care of them.

Comforting your child

- Hold your child in a way that lets them feel safe.
  - Sit your child on your lap with their back to your chest.
  - Give your child a hug from behind, with your arms crisscrossed on their chest.
- Let your child choose what they would like to do during the test, for example:
  - Sing a song or count together.
  - Close eyes and picture something that makes them happy.
  - Watch a favourite video on your mobile phone or tablet.
- It is important for your child to keep their head, arms and legs as still as possible. You can say things like:
  "Try to hold still like a statue."
  "Let's pretend we've been frozen like Elsa."

What to bring

- A favourite stuffed animal, blanket or other comforting item.
- Electronic device such as a tablet or mobile phone for distraction.
- Pacifier for an infant.

Check out these child-friendly resources and activities (ages 5+)

- Click here for a video about the test (https://bit.ly/3l1QjPL).
- Click here for a video that explains PPE to children (https://bit.ly/3l0Hea0).
- Click here for a fun colouring page about PPE.
- Click here for the COVID-19 learning hub for parents.

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