In the hospital your child will face many events that may make him or you feel stressed. Some of these include having a lumbar puncture or bone marrow aspirate, having an IV placed, having a blood pressure reading taken, or even having a nurse look at an ID armband.

Sometimes stressful events can cause patients to feel a lack of control. Some patients may struggle or become aggressive during these events. They might need help staying still. The large number of staff members needed to help can be overwhelming to a child. The use of comfort positions can help decrease the number of people needed to do a procedure. Using comfort positions can help your child feel more in control and successful. It can lead to a more positive experience and can create a positive routine for future stressful events.

The following are some comfort positions that can be used during stressful events:

The patient sits up on the bed with parent behind her providing comfort. This position allows the patient to feel more in control. The patient needs little help staying still and can easily focus on the procedure or another activity with parent.

The patient sits with her back against the parent’s chest. This position provides a sense of control, where the patient can see what is happening or look away. The parent is securing the child’s right arm with a hug and the left arm is exposed. This can also be adapted where the patient’s legs (at the ankles) are in between the parent’s crossed legs.
Do you know... continued

Using comfort positions during stressful events

The patient is sitting chest to chest toward the parent with legs off to each side. The parent provides a nurturing hug. Legs can only kick from knee down and the other arm is secure. The patient can easily watch or look away to focus on distraction such as a book, breathing, or guided imagery.

The patient is sitting on the parent’s lap with legs off to one side. The parent is holding her hand and providing comfort (or she can secure the arm like the picture on page 1 if the patient needs more help holding still). This position can be adapted where most of the patient’s weight is on the parent’s back leg and the patient’s legs are in between the parent’s crossed legs.

Questions?

For more ways to help your child cope during stressful events, see the “Do you know… Preparing for surgery and other procedures” handout.

If you have questions about comfort positions or about other ways to help your child cope, talk to your child life specialist. If you are away from the hospital, please call the Child Life department at 595-3020. If you are outside the Memphis area, dial toll-free 1-866-2STJUDE (1-866-278-5833), extension 3020.