

## Numbing creams and patches for immunizations

Immunizations protect against serious diseases, but they may also cause discomfort. Topical anesthetics such as numbing creams or patches can help reduce this discomfort. You can use them on infants, toddlers and older children before their immunizations.

Talk to your health care provider before your visit if you have questions about where your child's immunizations will be given. For a full list of ways to reduce your child's discomfort during immunization, visit [HealthLinkBC File #50e A better immunization experience for your child](#).

### What are numbing creams and patches?

Numbing creams or patches ease the feeling of pain by blocking pain receptors in the skin. You can buy them at your local pharmacy without a prescription.

### How do I use numbing creams and patches?

Many different numbing creams and patches are available. Each product will have different instructions regarding its use. Use of a product depends on:

- Your child's age
- How the product is applied
- Amount of the product
- Time the product needs to be applied
- How long the product is effective after it is removed

Always read and follow the package instructions carefully before using these products on your child.

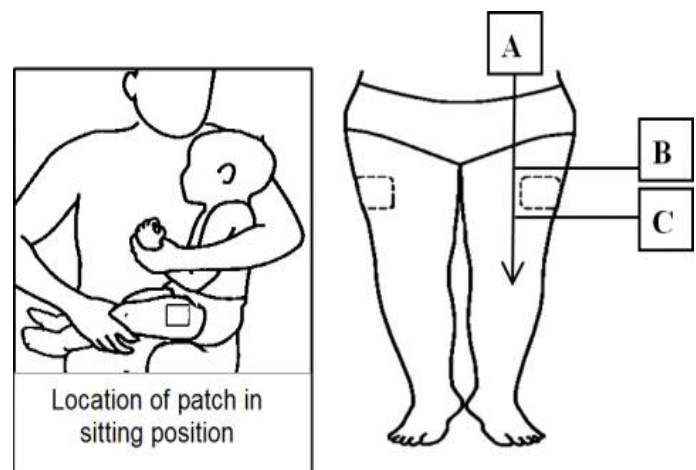
Apply creams or patches before the immunization visit so the product has time to numb the skin. The application time needed may vary from 30 to 60 minutes. If you remove the product before your child's appointment, use a pen to outline the area where the product was applied. Show the area to your health care provider.

These instructions are for children being immunized based on the routine childhood immunization schedule in B.C.

For more information, visit the [Immunization schedules for children](#).

### Where do I apply numbing products for the 2, 4 and 6-month immunization visits?

At these visits, immunizations are given in the upper leg (thigh). Apply numbing creams or patches to the positions shown below.



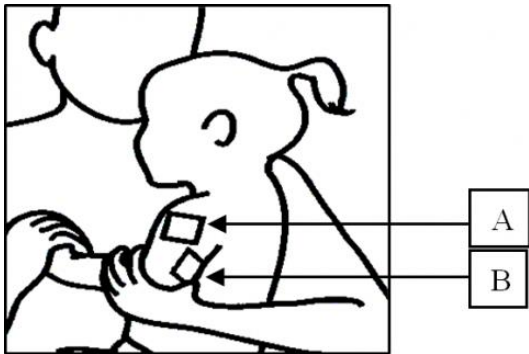
Follow these steps when applying the numbing cream or patch:

1. Lay your child down facing you
2. Draw an imaginary line down the middle of the front of 1 of your child's legs, from the hip to the knee (line A)
3. Divide the upper leg into 3 equal sections (lines B and C). Apply the product to the middle outer section of the leg. Repeat steps 2 and 3 on your baby's other leg for the 2 and 4 month visits

Age	Where to put cream or patch
2 months	Apply to both legs as shown
4 months	Apply to both legs as shown
6 months	Apply to 1 leg as shown

## Where do I apply numbing products for the 12 and 18 month immunization visits?

At these visits, immunizations are given in the upper arm to the positions shown below.



Follow these steps when applying the numbing cream or patch:

### Upper arm

1. Have your child sit with one sleeve rolled up and the exposed upper arm facing you
2. Place the patch or dose of cream in the top section on the side of the arm (A). For the 12-month visit, do this again on the other arm

### Back of the arm

1. Have your child sit with one sleeve rolled up and the exposed arm facing you
2. Put the patch or cream in the middle section on the back of your child's arm (B), halfway between their shoulder and elbow. For the 12-month visit, do this again on the other arm

Age	Where to put cream or patch
12 months	On both arms, apply to the side and back of the upper arms as shown (A & B to both arms)
18 months	On 1 arm only, apply to the side of the upper arm (A to 1 arm only)

## Where do I apply numbing products for the 4 to 6 year immunization visit?

At these visits, immunizations are given in the upper arm. Apply the numbing cream or patch to the same area of the upper arm shown for children at the 12-month immunization visit.

Older children and adults can also use numbing products.

Age	Where to put cream or patch
4 to 6 years	On 1 arm only, apply to the side and back of the upper arm (A & B to 1 arm only)

## How do I safely use numbing products, and are there side effects?

Read the instructions and be sure the numbing product is safe for your child and not expired. Do not use more than the recommended amount of product for your child's age.

Side effects are usually minor and limited to local skin reactions where the numbing cream or patch was applied. There may be mild swelling and changes to the color of your child's skin. For a short time, their skin may have a red or purple tone depending on their skin colour. Colour changes may be less noticeable on darker skin tones. Serious side effects are rare. If you notice signs of an allergic reaction, such as a rash, hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips, remove the product immediately and contact your health care provider for advice.

Watch your child closely after applying the cream or patch. Bandages and patches can be a choking hazard if your child pulls them off. Cover the area with clothing to prevent your child from removing the bandages or patches.