

Sucrose Drops for Painful Procedures

Sucrose drops reduce your baby's perception of pain during minor procedures such as heel sticks and needles. The solution is a 24% mixture of sugar and water. It is a food product, not a medication, and is very safe.

How Does Sucrose Work?

Sucrose works by stimulating your baby's natural pain relief chemicals to ease pain. Your baby does not drink the sucrose. A drop or two is placed on a gloved finger and given to the baby to suck on two minutes before and throughout the procedure. The sucrose will not stop all of the pain, but will calm your baby down and help them experience less pain.

Who Can Use Sucrose? Is It Safe?

Most babies, under 18 months of age, having a painful procedure done can use sucrose. There are some exceptions to this, such as babies with intestinal problems or trouble swallowing, or very premature babies. Your nurse or lab technologist will tell you if your baby cannot use sucrose. Sucrose is very safe to use for most babies. It will not affect their teeth or their blood sugar when used in small amounts.

Should I Give My Baby Sucrose at Home When They Are Fussy?

Sucrose has been proven to help with short-term pain in medical settings. It is not recommended to use for a restless or fussy baby at home. Sucrose does not help colic.

How Can I Help?

Ask your nurse or lab technologist if it is appropriate for you to hold your baby skin-to-skin or breastfeed during the procedure. If you can, your nurse or lab technologist can give the baby a drop or two of sucrose directly on the tip of the tongue prior to breastfeeding. If not, you can help by holding a clean, gloved finger coated in sucrose in your baby's mouth to suck during the procedure. Your nurse or lab technologist will show you how. You can also talk to, swaddle, cuddle or soothe your baby throughout the procedure to help keep them calm. You may want to let your baby breastfeed or hold your baby skin-to-skin right after the procedure if they are medically allowed to do so.

Ask your nurse or lab technologist to use sucrose for painful procedures every time.