Strategy for Needle Related Fainting

**Why do I faint?**

Fainting is caused by a sudden drop in blood pressure. This occurs when the brain (your control center) does not receive enough fuel (oxygen), and you lose control and awareness for a short period of time.

This drop in blood pressure is called the *vasovagal response*.

**Vasovagal syncope:** an overreaction to a trigger (like a needle or blood). It is one of the most common causes of fainting.

**Warning Signs**

- Light headedness (dizziness)
- Changes in vision
- Sweating
- Nausea
- Weakness
- Headache
- Pins and needles

**Does fainting mean that I’m afraid of needles?**

*Not everyone who faints due to needles is afraid of them. Not everyone who is afraid of needles will faint.*

**Why do I feel dizzy when I get a needle?**

- Presented
  - blood pressure & heart rate
  - blood pressure & heart rate
  - feelings of faintness & dizziness
Muscle tension: A technique to help prevent fainting during needles

**Muscle tension:** alternating between tensing and releasing muscle(s) in the body (e.g., arms, legs, stomach).

**Muscle tension** increases your blood pressure prior to and during the needle. When the needle is presented, your blood pressure does not drop to a low level, preventing you from fainting.

**Helpful Tip:** Laying down while getting a needle may also help prevent fainting.

**Important:** You should **not fully relax** your muscles after tensing. You are simply returning to baseline.

**Remember** not to clench or tense the arm receiving the needle.

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**Who can use this technique?**

Muscle tension is a safe technique that **children 7 and older** and adults with a history of fainting can use.

Muscle tension can help anyone who gets dizzy and faints during needles.

**Steps**

1. Sit comfortably in a chair.
2. Tense or squeeze the muscles in your arms, legs, and torso.
3. Hold until your face feels flushed or you feel a warm sensation in your head (10-15 seconds).
4. Release the tension in your body for 20-30 seconds.
5. Repeat until the procedure is over, or until the feeling of faintness passes.