

HEALTHY WAYS TO COPE WHILE RECOVERING FROM SURGERY

Think about which of these coping activities will work for you. Pack them in your Coping Kit and bring the Kit with you to CHOC Children's.

My kit will include:

- Deep breathing
- Guided imagery (relaxation CDs)
- Muscle relaxation
- Listening to music
- Listening to nature sounds
- Squeeze a stress ball
- Reading
- Watching a movie (one you've never seen before)
- Talking to someone
- Texting a friend
- Drawing a picture or Working on an art project
- Playing a game
- Watching sports
- Having someone help you to paint your nails
- Having a visitor over (friend/family)
- Positive Thinking and Self-Talk
- Prayer
- Writing (journaling, write a story, create cards)
- Make a recovery collage (ex. use magazine cutouts to describe experience)
- Taking pictures of your experiences
- Computer/video games
- Telling jokes
- You tube
- Playing or cuddling with a pet/pet therapy
- _____
- _____
- _____



INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS

GUIDED IMAGERY

What is it?

Guided Imagery is a tool that helps your body by letting your mind take you to healthy places that feel good. It uses your imagination to change your thoughts by focusing on your senses (sound, vision, smell, taste, touch, movement). It's like daydreaming - when your mind begins to wander and you imagine that you are doing something fun. You can decide what to think about and what to imagine, and the best part is that your brain will listen.

What do I need?

The main things you need are your brain and your imagination! Other things you may use:

- A favorite memory or pictures of things you like doing or places you wish you could be.
- A favorite smell or scent
- A CD with a visualization or imagery script

See the tips section to see how these can help.

When to use it?

- Do this anytime you are feeling nervous, stressed, and angry, worried, or are in pain.
- You can use it during times you wish you could go or be somewhere else because you are uncomfortable.

How do I do it?

- Close your eyes.
- Take 3-5 deep belly breaths.
- It's time to imagine you are going to your special place! Where would you like to go? If you could be anywhere in the world at this moment, where would you be? At the beach with family, out with friends, at a sports game, somewhere feeling healthy?
- When you have picked out a place, picture yourself there. Through your mind, you can be at this place as if this were really happening.
- Use all of your daydreaming skills and think about every little thing that makes this place and experience just as you like it.
- What do you see?

- What does it smell like?
- What does it taste like?
- What sounds do you hear?
- What do things that you can touch feel like?
- How does your body feel as it moves (or rests) just the way you want it to.
- Be aware of your comfortable your body feels when you are imagining yourself in this place. You may notice your breathing slow down and your muscles feel looser as your whole body starts to relax.

Tips:

- A favorite smell or scent can make your imagination activity more enjoyable and bring your special place to life. Using a special scent before or during the imagery activity can help you to feel even more comfortable and relaxed.
- Sometimes kids find it difficult to do this imagination activity on their own. If this is the case for you, you may be able to use a photograph or a picture from a book or the computer to help jump start your imagination. It may be helpful to have someone, like your mom or dad, lead you through this activity. Or maybe you already have a CD that describes a special, relaxing place to you. You can listen to this CD and use it to help your mind picture yourself there.

How can this help me?

Have you noticed that when you think about sad stuff you feel sad, or when you think about things you are worried about you feel nervous, or when you actually think about your pain, you hurt more? Fortunately, just like your body and brain listen to you when you are thinking about bad stuff, you can start to think about good stuff to feel better. Usually, when you think about good stuff, you start to feel better and more comfortable. It's like changing the channel on your TV to something you really want to watch, or turning the volume up or down in your body to a level that is more comfortable for you. If you're sad or afraid, your mind can bring you to places that feel happy and calm. If you have pain, for example, your mind can help you picture yourself comfortable and relaxed. You can find the places in your mind where you're in control of your body and where you feel happy and relaxed.



INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE FOR KIDS: STRESS MANAGEMENT

What is it?

Stress management is a special way of decreasing your stress by tensing and relaxing your muscles.

What do I need?

You really don't need any tools but yourself to make this work, but some things that may help are a stress ball to help you tense and relax your muscles and a stressometer card to measure your stress level. It is like a mood ring that tells you how you are feeling

When to use it?

Do this anytime you are feeling stressed, frustrated or, angry. You can use it when you first notice these feelings, while you have these feelings, or after the feelings to help keep them away. You can use it to help you feel more relaxed with many things. Try to practice 2-3 times per day. In order for this to work at stressful times, you must practice these techniques frequently when you are calm. By becoming aware of your tensed and relaxed muscles it will become more natural and automatic.

How do I do it?

1. Use your Stressometer Card to measure you stress level. What is stressing you out? Is it a teacher? Are you worried about your surgery? Do you have too much homework to do?
2. Tense your muscles and hold them for 4-5 seconds. Hold the stress ball and use it to help you tense your muscles.
3. Now, relax your muscles. Stop squeezing the stress ball. Let your frustration and anger go as you relax your muscles. Notice how it feels to relax your body and your muscles.
4. Check in and see how you are feeling. Use your Stressometer card to measure your stress. Are you more relaxed?

How does it work?

In stress management, your child life specialist or psychologist can help you replace skills that don't work with skills that do. You can learn how to breathe deeply and relax instead of tightening up. You can learn how to use hypnosis, meditation and guided imagery to replace stressed thoughts with calm ones. You can even learn how to distract yourself or use the stress ball in your coping kit to help you relax.

BELLY BREATHING

What is it?

Belly breathing is a special way of controlling your breathing that can help you relax, feel better, and help your body to work its best.

What do I need?

You really don't need any tools but yourself to make this work, but some things that may help are:

- A comfortable place
- Your hand
- Items such as a book, a pinwheel, bubbles, a harmonica

When to use it?

- Do this anytime you are feeling nervous, stressed, angry, or are in pain. You can use it when you first notice these feelings, while you have these feelings, or after the feelings to help keep them away.
- You can use it to help you feel more comfortable with many things.
- Try to practice 2-3 times per day. In order for this to work at stressful times, you must practice breathing techniques frequently when you are calm. By becoming aware of your breathing and learning to use belly breathing it will become more natural and automatic.

How do I do it?

1. Get into a comfortable position and let all of your muscles be soft and loose.
2. Imagine that your belly is a balloon and that right now it's deflated.
3. Put your hand on top of your belly.
4. Breathe in slowly through your nose while you count to 3. Feel the balloon fill with air as it raises the hand on your belly.
5. Breathe out slowly through your mouth, while you count to 5. Feel the balloon get flat as the hand on your belly lowers.
6. Try to breathe out for longer (5-6 seconds) than you breathe in (3-4 seconds).

7. Imagine that the uncomfortable feelings leave your body as you breathe out

Tips:

- To check whether you are doing belly breathing or chest breathing, you may find it helpful to place one hand on your belly, and the other on your chest. The hand on your belly should be moving up and down while the hand on your chest shouldn't move at all.
- Some kids might want to lie down on the floor with a small toy, book, or paper cup on their belly. With each breath, the object should move up and down.
- While you are exhaling slowly, you can:
 - Keep a pinwheel spinning for 3 -4 seconds
 - Blow out through the straw part of a pinwheel (take the top off) to help slow down your breathing
 - Blow long, slow streams of bubbles from a bubble wand
 - Hold a note while blowing on a harmonica for 3- 4 seconds.

How can this help me?

Breathing calms the mind and produces a state of relaxation in your body. This is because when you breathe deeply, the message "calm down and relax" gets sent your brain. Then, your brain sends this message to your body. Those things that happen when you are stressed, such as a fast heart rate and quick breathing, all decrease as you breathe deeply. For example, Belly Breathing relaxes your muscles, calms your nerves, and helps release chemicals (called *endorphins*) in your body that helps to decrease pain.

