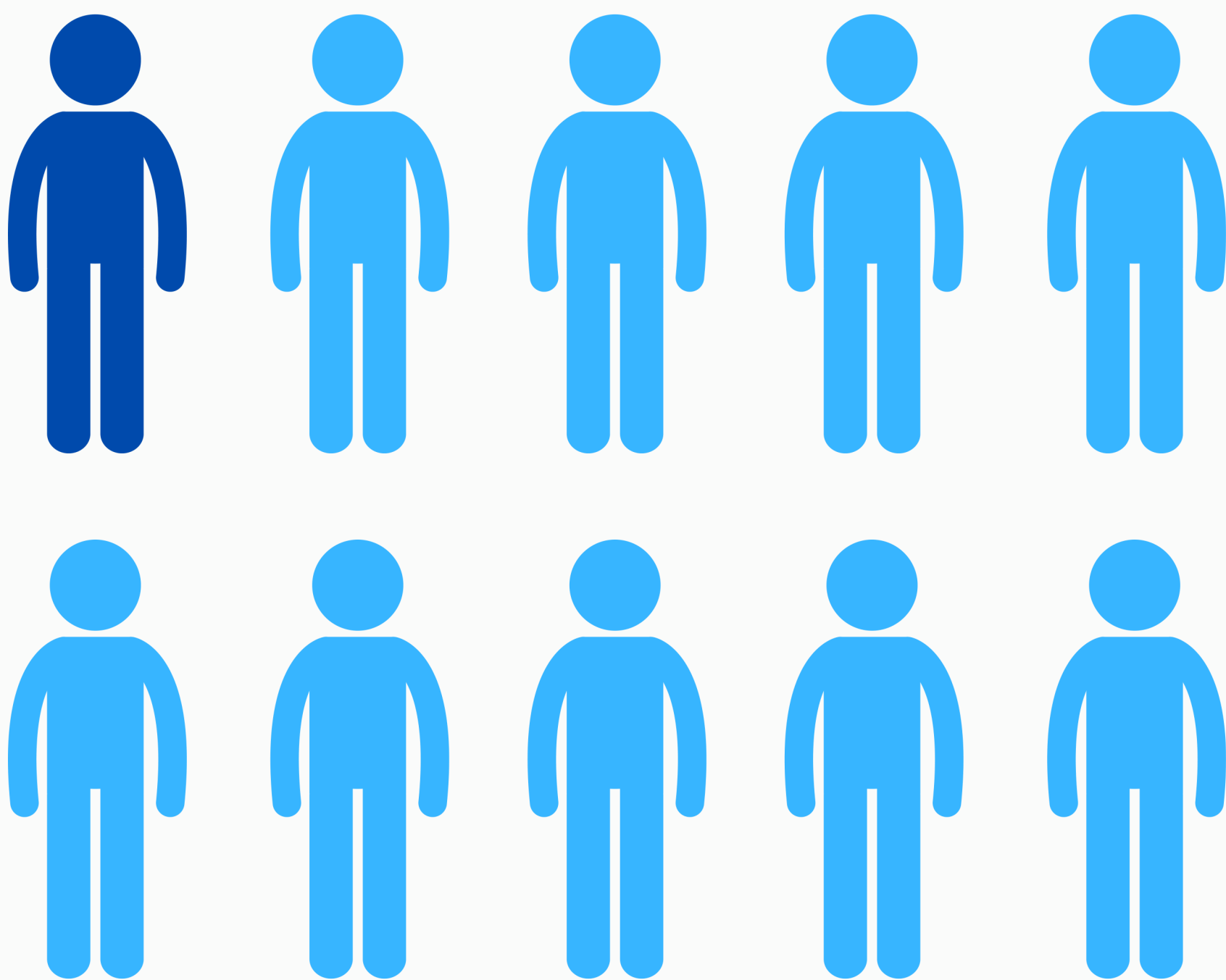


Needle Phobia



1 in 10

people have a fear of needles



What is needle phobia?

Needle phobia is a very common fear of medical procedures with needles or injections.

**About 1 in 10 people
have this fear**

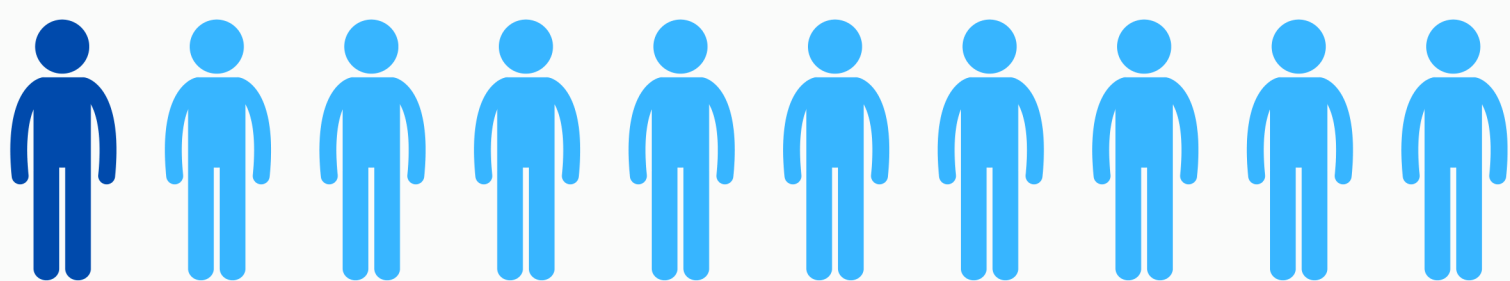
It is nothing to be ashamed of – lots of people get this fear from bad experiences with needles, often as a child.

The signs of needle phobia can include:

- Feeling faint or fainting when faced with a needle.
- Feeling very panicked, with a fast heart, tight chest, and upset stomach.

Some people avoid getting medical care because they are so afraid of needles.

But there are ways to overcome this phobia and reasonable adjustments that we can work with you to put in place to support your experience.



Talk to Your Healthcare Team

Tell your doctor, nurse, or Healthcare professional about your fears.

By telling the your healthcare team your worries or fears, they can support you, answer your questions, and suggest ways to cope during the procedure, like distracting you.

What has helped you before?

Think about what has helped you cope with needles in the past, and let the staff know, so they can try similar things.

See the CARD technique on the next page for some ideas and tips on how to make your experience a more positive one.

Comfort

Find ways to get comfortable.



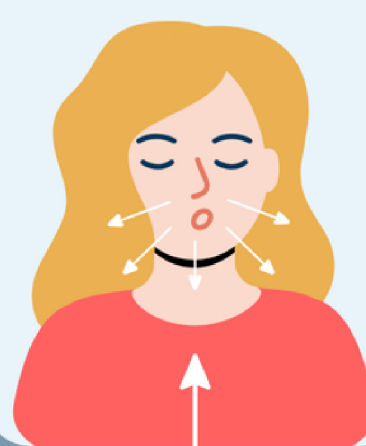
Ask

Ask questions to be prepared.



Relax

Keep yourself calm and BREATHE.



Distract

Shift your attention to something else.



Things You Can Do



Comfort

Wear something comfortable, where the sleeves can be easily pulled up or taken off.

Ask

Ask questions about what will happen at the appointment.

Relax

Take deep breaths and using the relaxation techniques covered on the next page.

Distract

Listen to music, watch your favourite show, play your favourite game, use a fidget toy, look away or talk to the health care professional.

Things You Can Do

Learn Relaxation Techniques:

Applied Tension:

Prevents fainting by boosting blood pressure.

Here is how:

1. Sit comfortably and tense your arm, upper body, and leg muscles for 10-15 seconds until your face feels warm
2. Relax and repeat five times, gradually increasing your tolerance.

Breathing for Relaxation:

Helps manage panic without fainting.

Here is how:

1. Sit comfortably and take slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
2. Focus on belly breathing for five breaths.

Try to practice these techniques for a week before your appointment, three times a day.

Things You Can Do

Watch the Needle Phobia Video:

Taking small steps:

Desensitisation means gradually getting used to things that scare you.

It helps you feel less afraid over time.

One way to do this is by watching our film at home, where you can feel relaxed and in control.

This helps you get used to the idea of needles slowly.

You can watch the film at your own pace, making it easier to cope with.



Things You Can Do

Facing Your Fears Step by Step:

Create a "fear ladder" listing needle-related situations from easiest to hardest.

Start with simple tasks like thinking about needles and work upwards.

Use relaxation techniques and stay in each situation until anxiety lessens, then move up the ladder.

Remember, overcoming needle phobia takes time, but each step forward reduces stress.

You can watch our needle phobia film here:

The film guides you through stages, allowing you to watch at your own pace.

Remember You're Not Alone:

- A lot of people experience needle phobia, and support is available.
- Speak up and take it slow to address your fears gradually.

ELMA Cream

A Tool for Overcoming Needle Phobia

What is EMLA Cream?

EMLA cream is a special medicine that numbs the skin before needle procedures. It is safe for adults and children over three months old.

How Does It Work?

- EMLA cream has anaesthetic to reduce pain during procedures.
- Applied at least 60 minutes before, it numbs the area, making the needle less painful.

Who Can Use It?

- Suitable for adults and children over three months old.
- Helpful for blood tests, vaccinations, and other needle procedures, especially if you fear needles.

Overcoming needle phobia takes time and practice, but you can do it. Be proud of taking steps towards better healthcare.

We Value Your Feedback On The Quality Of Your Care

This leaflet has been made by
Wirral University Teaching Hospital through the
Patient Experience Strategy.



If you have any questions or suggestions, please
contact us:

<https://www.wuth.nhs.uk/about-us/patient-experience-strategy/contact-us/>

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