Take the sting out of needles.

Your doctors and nurses have ways to make inserting the IV for your infusions less painful.
Nobody likes to be poked with needles, but at some point, it becomes necessary for everyone. Whether it’s while giving blood or to receiving a vaccination, most of us wince a bit when we see a needle coming at us. But some people have a stronger reaction.
When getting an injection or infusion, some people:

> May have a rise or drop in their blood pressure or heart rate.
> May start sweating.
> May feel sick or start hearing ringing in their ears.
> May even faint.

Fear of needles is normal, and pretty common. About one out of every ten people has some fear of needles. But if it keeps you from getting the treatment you need for a medical condition, this fear can be a serious problem.

**Why do we fear needles?**
The answer is different for different people. Some people have had a bad experience with needles and fear their next injection will be painful. Some people have veins that are difficult to find so insertion of an IV may be slow and take repeated attempts. Others don’t know why they’re afraid of needles. The important point is that the fear is real and needs to be addressed, especially if you need regular infusions as part of your treatment.
What can you do about needle fear?
The first and most important thing you can do about needle fear is to TELL SOMEONE. Your doctors and nurses are there to help you. They can provide support, and will work to make your infusions less painful. Don’t be afraid to let them know how you feel. They'll appreciate it. Everyone wants the infusion to go as easily, smoothly, and painlessly as possible.

To make placing the IV less painful, your doctor or nurse may:

• Apply a topical medicine to numb the skin.
• Use a freeze spray so you don’t feel the needle.
To make finding the vein easier, they will make sure you are warm and comfortable before starting, and then may:

- Ask you to lay down and raise your feet above the level of your heart (Also called the Trandelenberg position).
- Lower your arm below the level of your heart (this makes the vein “stick out” more).
- Gently tap the skin over the vein so that it raises up a bit.
- Use an armband to make the vein easier to see.
- Have you make a fist to pump blood through the vein and make it stand out.
- Put a warm cloth over the vein for a couple of minutes.
- Put the blood pressure cuff on your arm to raise the vein for IV insertion.

What about a port?
Some people who have regular infusions have a port placed. A port is a small device placed under the skin to make it easier to find and access the vein. Ask your doctor if a port makes sense for you.

WHAT CAN I DO?
With a little preparation, you and your healthcare team can make the infusion

Before the infusion:

> Keep warm.
> Exercise.
> Drink plenty of fluids.
Support you can use. For the treatment you need.

When you have a medical condition that requires regular infusions, needles can certainly be a pain in the arm. But they don’t have to be. By letting your doctors and nurses know about your fears, they can help you. Over time, your fear may not be as strong, so that you can get the treatment you need.