Comfort holds can be offered to the ill, newborns, infants, and children, and can also be useful during pregnancy and labor. Comfort holds are safe and good for anyone. These holds can move your child into deep relaxation by calming the nervous system. They can be very helpful before medical exams or procedures. Parents or caregivers can learn these holds as a calming tool for their child during procedures.

You need to relax and be present in the moment. Think about what is going on right now. Your breath should be full and deep, your movements slow and your hands warm. You want to offer calming touch.

Touch is not recommended for these specific areas:

- The site of tumors or lumps
- Deep vein thrombosis or phlebitis
- Burns
- Open sores or injuries
- Any area painful to touch
- Site(s) of recent surgery
- Fractures
- Rashes, or undiagnosed or contagious skin conditions
- Areas of infection or inflammation
- Areas of acute pain

Comfort holds can be done anywhere. No special equipment is needed. The child can be fully clothed in a chair or recliner, or on a bed or an exam table. If on a bed, your child will usually lie on his back or side for comfort and easy breathing. On the exam table, he can be sitting up or lying back.

The direction of a comfort hold is into the center of the part of the body you are touching. If using pressure, use the entire surface of your hand, especially the palm. The pressure should be firm and evenly distributed. Let your touch surround your child. Be aware of the energy field between your 2 hands and hold the child in this space.

**Comfort Holds with Child Lying on his Back**

A comfort hold is just that, a hold. It is not squeezing between your hands. It is also not a light touch. Just hold the body part and relax.

1. To begin, center yourself with a few slow, deep breaths. Warm your hands by rubbing them together. Use full, open palms with fingers together. Place one hand at the base of the neck (7th cervical vertebra, the bump on the back of the neck.) Rest the other hand on the forehead. *Hold and breathe.*

2. Place 1 hand at the bump on the back of the neck. Place the other hand on the top of the shoulder and down the arm. Use the side closest to you. This holds the neck and shoulder area with your hand and forearm. Let your hands be full and soft. *Hold and breathe.*

3. Move down the shoulder to the arm. With the palms of both hands, gently press into the upper arm. *Hold and breathe.* Move your hands to the lower arm. Press palms together. *Hold and breathe.* Hold the hand between your open palms and press gently into it. *Hold and breathe.*
4. Place 1 hand on the upper chest and the other hand on the abdomen. Hold for 10-12 seconds. *Hold and breathe.* Place 1 hand under your child's low back below the waist. Allow the weight to sink into your hand. Rest the upper hand on the abdomen. Allow your hand to rise and fall with each of your child's breath. *Hold and breathe.*

5. Work down to a press of the hip and upper thigh. *Hold and breathe.* Cover the knee with both hands on top of the knee. (You could also have 1 hand on top and the other hand slipped under the knee.) *Hold and breathe.* Move to the lower leg. *Hold and breathe.*

6. Move to the ankle. Hold the ankle with soft, open palms on either side. *Hold and breathe.* Move your open palms down the length of the foot to the toes. *Hold and breathe.* Place 1 hand at the top of the ankle and the other hand at the sole of the foot. *Hold and breathe.*

Positions #1 and #2 are the most helpful during medical examination. Each of these holds can be used alone or in combination, depending on your child's response. Customize your touch for each situation. These holds can be used in whatever position is necessary.