

**Guided Imagery** is a skill that you can use to help relax your mind and your body. In Guided Imagery, you use your imagination and your five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste and hearing) to take your mind to a place that you would rather be.

## Benefits of Guided Imagery

- Decrease stress
- Give a sense of control
- Decrease anxiety
- Improve your sleep
- Help concentration
- Help decrease pain

## How to Relax with Guided Imagery

1. Get into a comfortable position. You may sit or lie down. You may also want to close your eyes.
2. Think of a place that you would rather be (such as the beach, mountains, or with family).
3. Think about what you would see, smell, feel, taste and hear if you were in that place. The more that you can make yourself see, smell, feel, taste and hear the place where you want to be, the easier it is to relax.
4. Keep using your senses to think about this place until you feel very relaxed.

To take your mind to another place in Guided Imagery, think about a place and ask yourself:



What do you **See** when you are there? Look at objects, people and colors. Is it bright? Dark?



What can you **Hear** when you are there? Think about the background.



What can you **Feel** with your hands and feet? Is your body hot or cold?



Can you **Taste** anything? Is it salty, bitter, sour or sweet? Even the air around you can have a taste.



What do you **Smell**? Does it smell good? Is it strong or faint?

## Helpful Hints

- Use long deep breaths to help you relax.
- The more you practice, the easier it will become.
- There is no time limit with Guided Imagery. Do it for as little or as long as you need.
- Stop Guided Imagery if you start to have uncomfortable feelings and/or thoughts. Guided Imagery should not make you feel sad.
- You can get CDs that use words to help with Guided Imagery. Sound Machines or music can also help.

Call your UNC Recreational Therapy and Child Life team member if you have any questions.

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