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ASHEVILLE CITIZEN-TIMES

Family & Relationships

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LIVING

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LIVING

The Wand helps take the sting out

To dentist Kani Nicolls, "shot" is a four-letter word.

"I say, 'I'm going to get you numb now,' or, 'I'm going to put the tooth to sleep,'" Nicolls said. But never, ever does she say shot or needle. "If I have to say anything, I might say injection."

Trying to change the perception many children — and their parents — have about injections, Nicolls about four years ago switched from the traditional syringe and began anesthetizing with a wand device at her East Chestnut Street practice.

The Wand still uses a needle for injections, but the device looks more like a pen, the needle is thinner than most and anesthesia is administered slowly and by a computer rather than by hand.

The injection bypasses a surge of Novocaine and the pain that can accompany it. Leonard Osser of Milestone Sci-

entific of Livingston, N.J., introduced the Wand in 2001 after a visit to China, where he was inspired by acupuncture

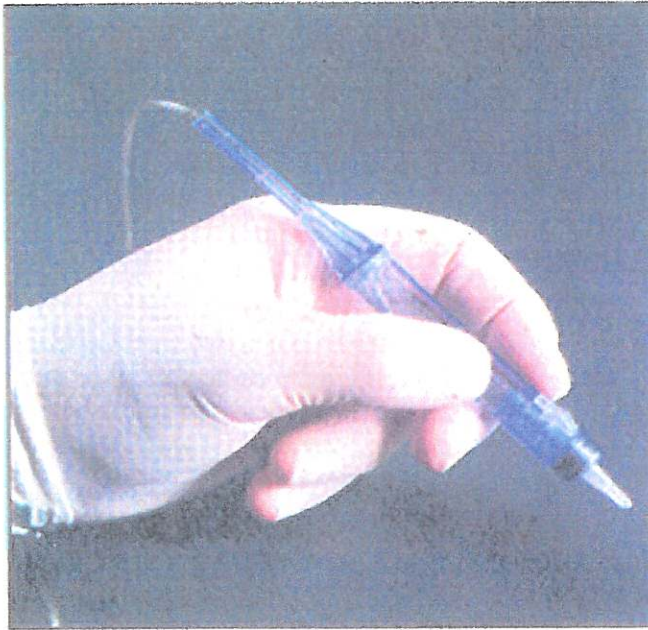
used to lessen the pain and trauma of dental and medical visits.

For many, a shot isn't just a matter of discomfort. The Washington Post reported in April that between 7 percent and 22 percent, and perhaps more, of the general population "will tolerate needles only under extreme emotional duress."

With another semester of school about to begin, this is a busy time for Nicolls (whose first name is pronounced "Con-

nie"). Children are fine with the Wand, she said.

"They might feel a little pinch," she said. "It's just a lot more comfortable."



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The Wand was inspired by acupuncture used to lessen the pain and trauma of dental and medical visits.

JILL INGRAM