

PREPARING FOR YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE: A GUIDE FOR OLDER ADULTS



THE CARD SYSTEM

COVID-19 is a very infectious disease that can cause life-threatening illness. COVID-19 disease can affect anyone. However, it is more dangerous for older adults. Because of this, older adults are one of the first groups of people being offered the COVID-19 vaccine.

Vaccinations are recurring health-related procedures. For most people, these procedures can cause unnecessary pain, stress and anxiety. The CARD system (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract) can prepare you for your COVID-19 injection. Each letter of the word CARD is a different category of activities you can play to help you have a better experience. Use this factsheet to learn how to play your CARDS and talk with a health care provider if you have questions or if you use CARDS that require planning.

PLAY YOUR CARDS

COMFORT **C**

Review information factsheets like this one to know what to expect and ways you can make your COVID-19 vaccination more comfortable.

What would make you more comfortable? For example, you can wear a short-sleeved or loose-fitting top that is easy to pull up. You can ask a loved one to be with you. You can also sit up or lie down during vaccination.

ASK QUESTIONS **A**

Talk to someone you trust. You can ask questions about the vaccine or about what CARDS you can play.

For example, you can ask for medicine to dull the pain where the needle enters the skin. This medicine is available to everyone.

RELAX **R**

Think of ways that you normally keep yourself calm and relaxed.

For example, you can take slow deep breaths. This is like blowing up a balloon or blowing out candles. The belly should move out when breathing in and move in when breathing out.

DISTRACT **D**

Do you like to be distracted or do you like to look at the needle?

If you like to be distracted, you can use an object to get your mind off the needle like reading a magazine or talk to the nurse about something else.

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR VACCINATION DAY TIPS

TIPS FOR VACCINATION DAY

- ◆ Use the CARD system to make needles more comfortable: **C**omfort, **A**sk, **R**elax, **D**istract.
- ◆ Try to eat something before vaccination and afterwards.
- ◆ You will receive the vaccine in the upper arm. Wear short sleeves or something easy to pull up so that the upper arm can be reached easily.
- ◆ Bring any supplies you need, such as something to distract you.
- ◆ You will be asked to follow safety measures, including physical distancing, wearing a facemask, and washing your hands frequently.
- ◆ Be calm and positive.
- ◆ Do not tense your arm where the needle is going in – keep it loose or jiggly like cooked spaghetti.
- ◆ If you feel faint or get dizzy during needles, you can squeeze your knees together or lie down.
- ◆ Have acetaminophen available to treat common side effects. Let your health care provider know if you are experiencing any side effects that worry you.
- ◆ Keep a record of the vaccine you received. Do not attend your appointment if you are sick, self-isolating, or waiting for a COVID-19 test result. Try to get vaccinated as soon as you can after you feel better.
- ◆ You will also be asked to continue to follow safety measures after the procedure and to follow the general advice of public health officials for when you are at home or out and about.

See other related material at <https://immunize.ca/card-adults>