

# PREPARING FOR YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE: A GUIDE FOR PERSONAL SUPPORT WORKERS



## THE CARD SYSTEM

COVID-19 is a very infectious disease that can cause life-threatening illness. Healthcare workers and personal support workers working in social care, particularly in care homes, are more likely to be exposed to COVID-19 at work. They can pass it on to family, friends and residents, who may be at increased risk of complications, including death. Being healthy does not reduce the risk of catching or passing on the disease. Because of this, personal support workers working in social care 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 help you prepare for the COVID-19 vaccine injection and have a better vaccination experience. Each letter of the word CARD is a different category of activities you can do. 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 also sit up or lie down during vaccination.

**C**

### ASK QUESTIONS **A**

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

For example, *Can I use numbing creams?* These are medicines that dull the pain where the needle enters the skin. They take 20-60 minutes to work, depending on the product, so plan ahead.

**A**

### 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.

**R**

### 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.

**D**

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.
- ◆ 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 be asked to continue to follow safety measures at your workplace after vaccination, such as wearing personal protective equipment. You will also be asked to continue to follow the general advice of officials for when you are at home or out and about.

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