



Welcoming People with Autism and Related Conditions to COVID-19 Vaccination Sites

Your Site Guide to Establishing Accessible and Inclusive Best Practices

Autism and the COVID-19 vaccine

Autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), is a condition that causes social-communication, behavioral and sensory differences. Because of this, some autistics may find COVID-19 vaccination settings challenging. Some people with related conditions, such as intellectual and neurological disabilities, also may experience challenges.

4-step environmental scan of the vaccination site

You can help create an accessible and inclusive vaccination experience by performing a 4-step environmental scan of the vaccination site to identify existing accommodations, as well as adjustments your location can make, to welcome autistic participants.

This environmental scan was developed by autism experts, people with autism and those who care for and support them. Indicate which best practices your site already implements (if applicable). Then determine whether there are additional best practices the site will choose to implement.

STEP 1: Arrival		How do participants arrive at the vaccination site?					
		<i>Already implementing?</i>		<i>Will implement?</i>		<i>Implementation considerations</i>	
Fast-track/shorter lines to reduce wait time when arriving		Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words for those with communication differences?	
Alternate arrival lines for those with sensory related challenges, such as sensitivity to noisy traffic or bright sun		Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words for those with communication differences?	
Accessible parking		Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words for those with communication differences?	
Staff or volunteers to direct participants or answer questions		Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can arrival staff provide participants with the "Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine" flyer?	

Step 2: Check in/registration

How and where do participants check in/register?

	<i>Already implementing?</i>		<i>Will implement?</i>		<i>Implementation considerations</i>
Expedited experience or other alternative for those with sensory or behavioral differences during wait at check in	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Alternate, quiet registration area for those with communication differences, anxiety or sensory related challenges, such as sensitivity to lighting, loud or echoing spaces, and smells (such as people using hand sanitizer)	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Dedicated staff or volunteers to guide a participant who discloses autism or another condition to the accommodations available to them	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can staff provide participants with the "Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine" flyer?
Signage that illustrates the registration process, including temperature monitoring, paperwork and required documentation	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Signage that indicates the estimated time it will take to complete the vaccination process, including before and after the shot	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Can participants wear hats or headphones to block sensory stimuli?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Are there arrangements available for participants who have sensory issues regarding masks?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Is it clearly communicated that a family member or other support person can escort the patient through the vaccine visit?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, address the person with autism or related conditions and not the escort.
Can a person walk, pace or stim to regulate their anxiety or sensory needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Are fidgets or stim toys that the person brings in with them allowed in the area?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Once registered, does the participant understand how they will be called to the next step?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
If public address systems are used to call a participant, are there alternative communication sources for those with sensory processing issues?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Is someone designated at check-in to inform participants that they will have a 15- to 30-minute wait time following their vaccine?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Do participants understand they will be asked to wait on site for 15- to 30-minutes following the vaccination?	Yes	No	Yes	No	

Step 3: Getting the Vaccination

How do participants receive the vaccination?

	<i>Already implementing?</i>		<i>Will implement?</i>		<i>Implementation considerations</i>
Expedited experience or other alternative for those with sensory or behavioral differences during wait at check in	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Alternate, quiet vaccination area for those with communication differences, anxiety or sensory-related challenges, such as sensitivity to lighting, loud or echoing spaces, and smells (such as people using hand sanitizer)	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Dedicated staff or volunteers to guide a participant who discloses autism or another condition to the accommodations available to them	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can staff provide participants with the "Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine" flyer?
Signage that illustrates the vaccination process	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Can participants wear hats or headphones to block sensory stimuli?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Are there arrangements available for participants who have sensory issues regarding masks?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Is it clearly communicated that a family member or other support person may escort the patient through the vaccine visit?	Yes	No	Yes	No	Address the person with autism or related conditions and not the escort.
Can a person walk, pace or stim to regulate their anxiety or sensory needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Are fidgets or stim toys that the person brings in with them allowed in the area?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can staff provide participants with the "Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine" flyer?
Does the participant understand how they will be called to the vaccination when it is their turn?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
If public address systems are used to call a participant, are there alternative communication sources for those with sensory processing issues?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Once the vaccination completed, do participants understand they will be asked to wait on site for 15-30 minutes following the vaccination?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can staff provide participants with the "Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine" flyer?
Will someone inform participants when they can leave the site following their 15-30-minute wait time?	Yes	No	Yes	No	

Step 4: Check-out/Exit**How do participants check out and exit the vaccination site?**

	<i>Already implementing?</i>		<i>Will implement?</i>		<i>Implementation considerations</i>
Alternate, quiet waiting area for those with communication differences, anxiety or sensory-related challenges, such as sensitivity to lighting, loud or echoing spaces, and smells (such as people using hand sanitizer)	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?
Dedicated staff or volunteers to guide a participant who discloses autism or another condition to the accommodations available to them	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Can participants wear hats or headphones to block sensory stimuli?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Are there arrangements available for participants who have sensory issues regarding masks?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Is it clearly communicated that a family member or other support person can escort the patient through the vaccine visit?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, address the person with autism or related conditions and not the escort.
Can a person walk, pace or stim to regulate their anxiety or sensory needs?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide all relevant staff with the "Four Things You Can Do" flyer?
Are fidgets or stim toys that the person brings in with them allowed in the area?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can staff provide participants with the "Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine" flyer?
If a participant must complete steps to schedule a second vaccination before exiting, is there a fast-track/shorter line to reduce wait time?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Will someone inform participants when they can leave the site following their 15- to 30-minute wait time?	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Is there signage clearly marking how a participant exits the vaccination site?	Yes	No	Yes	No	If implemented, can you provide signage using both icons and words?