

Getting the COVID-19 Vaccine

A Guide for People with Autism and Related Conditions, and Their Support People

Try these tips to have a more comfortable COVID-19 vaccine experience. You can take these steps on your own, or have a family member or other trusted person help you.

BEFORE YOU GO:

Inform Yourself



Learn about the COVID-19 vaccine and why you are getting one. A medical professional, family member or other trusted person can help you with questions or concerns. Visual supports can be helpful to some autistics in learning new information. For the most essential information for people with disabilities, including information supports, visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).

Focus on Things You Like



If you're anxious, try to redirect your thoughts away from unpleasant, painful or unknown aspects of the upcoming visit. You can do this by doing an activity you like or something you find calming. You can also plan to do something you like after your vaccine so you have something pleasant to look forward to.

Think About What You'll Need



Plan ahead to have a tablet, toys, fidgets, headphones or visual supports to help you while waiting in lines or being in a new setting. You may want someone you trust to be with you during part or all of your vaccine experience. They can help you prepare, get to the vaccine location, communicate with site staff, do paperwork and be with you during the waiting period after your shot. They can also help you with choices to help you feel more organized and in control when you get to the appointment.

Consider ahead of time whether you wish to disclose that you are autistic or if you have another condition. Disclosing can help you get accommodations you may need. You might want to write or practice a script for asking for help or accommodations.

Bring Identification and Registration Information



You will be asked to validate your identity, and you might be asked to show medical insurance information. However, having insurance or proof of insurance is not required to get vaccinated. If you scheduled ahead of time, bring any information you have about your appointment, like a confirmation email. You also might need information about where to park, how to enter the site and other important details.

You will be asked to wear a mask at the vaccination site. If you need help practicing this skill, visit autismspeaks.org/coronavirus for a helpful video.

Contact the Vaccination Site



Consider calling or emailing the vaccination site before your visit to learn about or ask for available accommodations. These will vary depending on the site.

ON VACCINE DAY:

Check In



When you check in for your vaccination, you will be asked to wear a mask. The staff will take your temperature and may ask you to use hand sanitizer. The check-in staff will ask you to confirm your identity and may ask for insurance information. It's OK if you don't have insurance or proof of insurance. Also staff might ask for your appointment confirmation and have you fill out and sign paperwork.

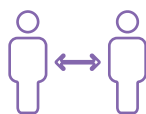
Check-in is a good time to ask about accommodations. You may wish to disclose that you are autistic or that you have another condition at check-in.

Wait for Your Turn



Expect to wait before you receive the vaccine. Depending on the location, you might be waiting in your car, a marked waiting area outside like a tent, a large building, or a room inside a building. This is a good time to do your planned activities or breathing exercises that help you feel calm when you have to wait.

Be Safe During Your Visit



Vaccine sites are all very different from each other. You should keep a safe distance from site staff and other people who are there to get their vaccine. Look for signs or other cues around you to help you, or ask the staff if you have any questions about what to do.

If a family member or trusted support person is with you, they may help you with choices so you feel more organized and in control during your visit.

Get Your Shot



Most COVID vaccines are given in your upper arm. The person who gives you the shot will give you more details. If a family member or support person is with you, they can help you through this part of your visit.

After Your Vaccination



For safety reasons, you will be asked to wait 15-30 minutes at the site after you get your shot and before you leave. This is another good time to use your planned activities, breathing exercises, a tablet, a toy or sensory item that helps you feel calm.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Getting the COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and others from getting sick from the coronavirus. Before you leave, ask the site staff whether you need a second dose and how to schedule it if you do. They may also give you information about what to do for the next few days.

Register with the [CDC's v-safe](#) system to complete online check-ins about how you feel after your vaccine. Call your healthcare provider if you need healthcare advice.



Tell us what you think!

Please visit surveymonkey.com/r/AS_HRC_COVID or scan this QR code to take a brief survey.