



IMPROVING THE VACCINATION EXPERIENCE:

Planning checklist for health-care providers

In Canada, 1 in 4 adults report they are afraid of needles, and 1 in 10 report that concerns about needle pain influence their decision to get vaccinated.

The **CARD system (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract)** was developed to reduce stress during vaccination. It provides four categories of science-based activities that health-care providers and patients can **play to have a better vaccination experience**. See the checklist below for things you can do when setting up a vaccination site to improve the vaccination experience.

You can also review and download [Improving the vaccination experience: A guide for health-care providers](#) to see how you can use the CARD system with patients when they come for their vaccinations to improve their experience. To learn more about CARD, go to CardSystem.ca.

VACCINATION CLINIC SET-UP

- Set up separate areas for waiting, vaccination and post-vaccination, and have chairs available. Make areas tidy and free of clutter.
- Control noise levels and room temperature. Minimize auditory fear cues using low-level, calming music or a white noise machine. Allow individuals to remove excess clothing such as coats to prevent over-heating.
- Ensure safety measures are in place to prevent transmission of infectious diseases (e.g., sanitization items).
- Provide distraction items before, during and after vaccination. Consider using items that can be given away without requiring sanitation (e.g., pipe cleaners, colouring pages, mazes) or visual activities (e.g., [CARD poster for kids](#), [CARD search and find poster](#)).
- Provide topical anesthetics for those who want it.
- Allow for privacy during vaccination (i.e., physical barriers).
- Provide comfortable seating during vaccination with the ability for patients to lie down (e.g., exam bed, reclining chair, gym mat).
- Provide seating for immunizer and support person.
- Obscure frightening equipment such as needles (e.g., cover them with a towel or table-top poster). Ensure processes, including dose preparation and injection do not make needles prominent. Arrange seating so that patients do not face equipment.
- Minimize interruptions during vaccination.

EDUCATION OF PATIENTS AND CAREGIVERS

- Disseminate information about CARD ahead of time and on the day of vaccination.
- Allow patients to select the CARDS (coping strategies) they are playing during vaccination and support them in their choices.

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