

# PREPARING FOR YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE: A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS OF 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 loved one's COVID-19 vaccine injection. Each letter of the word CARD is a different category of activities you can play to help your loved one 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 loved one more comfortable during their COVID-19 vaccination.

What would make your loved one more comfortable? For example, you can arrange for your loved one to wear a short-sleeved or loose-fitting top that is easy to pull up. You can also arrange for your loved one to 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, you can ask to be present during your loved one's vaccination. You can ask for medicine to dull the pain where the needle enters the skin. This medicine is available to everyone.

**A**

### RELAX

**R**

Think of ways that normally keep your loved one calm and relaxed.

For example, your loved one can listen to music they find soothing. They can also 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**

Does your loved one like to be distracted or do they prefer to look at the needle?

If your loved one likes to be distracted during procedures, you can use an object to get their mind off the needle like looking at pictures, reading a magazine or talking 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 have your loved one eat something before vaccination and afterwards.
- ◆ Your loved one will receive the vaccine in the upper arm. Wearing short sleeves or something easy to pull up will make it easier to reach the upper arm.
- ◆ Bring any supplies you need, such as something to distract your loved one.
- ◆ You will be asked to follow safety measures, including physical distancing, wearing a facemask, and washing your hands frequently.
- ◆ Be calm and positive.
- ◆ If your loved one feels faint or gets dizzy during needles, have them squeeze their legs together or lie down.
- ◆ Keep a record of the vaccine your loved one received. Your loved one's vaccination will be delayed if they are sick, self-isolating, or waiting for a COVID-19 test result. They will be given the vaccine as soon as they 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>