

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE COVID-19 VACCINE: HOW TO MAKE THE VISIT LESS STRESSFUL

Use this guide with the TASP video series

You decided to get the COVID-19 vaccine for your child. You have made the appointment.

WHAT NOW?



Children might be scared to get a shot.

You might feel scared or worried to take them.

How can you make the visit easier for your child?

How can you make the visit easier for yourself?

TALK TO YOUR CHILD A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE APPOINTMENT.

Keep it simple!

Tell them when it is happening.

Tell them why it is happening.

Tell them where you are going.

Tell them who is taking them.

Tell them what will happen.



SIMPLE INFORMATION HELPS KIDS UNDERSTAND AND FEEL SAFE. THAT WILL MAKE THE VISIT EASIER.

Thank you to Self Advocates Becoming Empowered for their support of the Vaccine Awareness and Outreach Project as well as Self Advocacy Resource and Technical Assistance Center, SARTAC Project.

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TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE THIS:

"In 2 days you are going to get the COVID-19 shot. It will keep you from getting sick. Mom, or dad, or caregiver will take you to your doctor's office. We will fill out paperwork. When it is our turn we will go in a special room. The nurse will talk to you. The nurse will give you the shot. It will feel like a little pinch. It will be quick. You can do it!"

The more kids know the less scary it is!

Tell older children more. Keep it simple and short for younger kids.

You can use simple pictures if that works for your child.

REMIND THEM AGAIN THE DAY OF THE APPOINTMENT

Keep it simple! You could say:

"We are going to get the COVID shot today. It will protect you from COVID and keep you safe and healthy. It will also protect our family and friends. The shot will just feel like a poke or a pinch. It will be quick!"

HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD CALM WHEN GETTING THE SHOT

For younger children:

- Take a favorite stuffed animal
- Take a toy to play with
- Listen to music on a phone
- Have child sit on parent's lap
- Read a book
- Tell a story
- Hold their hand
- Count numbers



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HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILD CALM WHEN GETTING THE SHOT

For older children:

- Bring a book to read
- Look at their phone, if they have one
- Talk to parent or caregiver
- Bring drawing supplies
- Practice deep breaths



Anything that takes their mind off the shot is a good idea.

CAN YOU THINK OF WHAT HELPS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD BUSY?

WHAT IF YOUR CHILD IS STILL SCARED?



That's okay! Children, and adults, are often scared of getting a shot.

Younger children might be more scared. They are worried about it hurting.

Even if you do all the right things, they might still cry, yell or get upset.

You can talk to them in a calm voice. Let them know it is okay. Let them know you are there. Hold them on your lap to support them.

The nurses who give shots are very good at their job. They will be quick.

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**HANG IN THERE! IT IS HARD FOR PARENTS TOO.
YOU GOT THIS!**

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD AFTER THE SHOT?

Tell your child how good they did! Give them a hug!
You could give a small treat or surprise when it is over.

In a week, remind them they will be going back for another shot. Keep the information simple. Remind them how good they did with the first shot. Remind them it was over quick.



WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS SPECIAL NEEDS OR SENSORY NEEDS?

You know your child best. You know how they react to different things. Bring things that help them stay calm. Ask for a quiet place to wait. Take them to their pediatrician for the shot.

Take a look at the [Vermont's Confident Care for Kids](#), full of information and ideas specifically for getting vaccines for children with special needs or sensory needs.

DO YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?
TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S DOCTOR OR ANOTHER MEDICAL
PROFESSIONAL.

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REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Vermont's Confident Care for Kids is full of information and ideas specifically for getting vaccines for children with special needs or sensory needs.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC is the nation's leading science-based, data-driven, service organization that protects the public's health. They have lots of information about COVID-19 vaccine and children and teenagers. Easy to read information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/easy-to-read/index.html>

Green Mountain Self-Advocates has information COVID-19, and other information, by and for people with disabilities: <https://gmsavt.org/>

The Association for Successful Parenting has compiled a list of websites and resources that have meaningful and helpful information about COVID-19: <https://achancetoparent.net>

AUCD's National Center on Disability in Public Health Video Vaccine Stories from the Disability Community: <https://nationalcenterdph.org/covid-19-vaccine-video-resources/>

Self Advocacy Resource & Technical Assistance Center is your one-stop resource for organizing and supporting self advocacy groups and has a Resources section about Health. https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org_

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