



# 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](http://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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