



CARD VACCINATION DAY CHECKLIST:

For health-care providers

Use the **CARD system (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract)** to improve the vaccination experience for vaccine clients and health-care providers. You can also review the [CARD vaccination planning checklist](#). To learn more about CARD, go to CardSystem.ca.

Education of vaccine clients and caregivers

- Provide information about what will happen and how to cope (i.e., CARD).
- Invite participation in the vaccination process. Allow vaccine clients to ask questions and select preferred coping strategies using the [CARD checklist](#).

Assessment of clients

- Review medical history, including level of needle fear and history of fainting.
- Vaccinate the most fearful first as fear escalates over time.
- If clients identify a history of fainting, counsel them regarding the prevention of fainting using [muscle tension](#) (and supine positioning).
- Review preferred coping strategies and answer questions.
- Provide [topical anesthetics](#) for those who want it.

During vaccination

- Provide age-appropriate distraction items and activities for vaccine clients (e.g., [search and find posters](#), [mazes](#), [colouring pages](#), [connect the dots](#), pipe cleaners, treats/rewards). Have these items at check-in, in the injection area and aftercare area, to allow for client use at any time during the appointment. Contain items in bins and moveable trolleys/carts to facilitate access. Include clipboards for easy use of writing activities (e.g., colouring pages) as many areas do not have tables.
- Have comfortable seating available for vaccine clients and a support person in all clinic areas.
- Perform vaccine injections in a private room with the door closed. Avoid interruptions during the injection. If a private room is not available, simulate one by using a privacy screen coupled with a sound machine (white noise or music).
- Ensure vaccine clients face away from equipment and supplies in vaccine injection areas. Provide vaccine clients with the ability to lie down if they are feeling dizzy or unwell (e.g., exam bed, gym/exercise mat, reclining chair, camping pad). Provide seating for a support person and vaccinator beside the vaccine recipient.
- Use the [comfort position](#) resource for tips on positioning children. Avoid restraining children as this increases distress.
- Allow clients to remove extra clothing before entry into the injection area (coats and sweaters) to prevent over-heating and to expedite the procedure by allowing easy access to the vaccination site (anxiety builds with time and having to disrobe in the injection area).
- If multiple children and/or individuals are being vaccinated, vaccinate each independently and privately unless they specify their preference to be vaccinated with others present. Note that anxiety typically increases if witnessing others getting vaccinated, particularly for children. Vaccinating children independently is easier to achieve when there are two parents/caregivers present.

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- Use the completed CARD checklist to guide vaccination interactions with clients. Confirm selected coping strategies.
- Use [what to say](#) resource for communication tips.
 - Foster a calm environment and be positive. Focus your attention on the vaccine client and sit down near them. Sitting down places the vaccinator at eye level with the client and this relaxes them. Do not appear rushed and avoid interruptions during vaccination.
- Determine which arm to vaccinate based on the preference specified in the CARD checklist (pick the non-dominant arm if the client does not have a preference). Encourage clients to relax their arm and to keep it still during the injection.
- Consider not using alcohol to cleanse the skin as this step is unnecessary (World Health Organization; 2010), it adds time and can increase distress.
- Inject the vaccine quickly, without prior aspiration. Do not press on or rub the injection site, as this increases pain.
- Cover the injection site as the sight of blood will scare some individuals. Use child-friendly bandages for children, if available. Note that some people do not want to have a bandage.

After vaccination

- Ask clients to report on immunization stress-related responses, including fear, pain and dizziness. Suggest clients use muscle tension or lie down if they feel dizzy.
- Obtain feedback about experiences to inform future practice.
- Foster positive memories and build confidence in vaccination. Congratulate clients, even if the vaccination experience is difficult. Focus on positive aspects of the appointment, such as client use of coping strategies. Consider providing rewards (e.g., sticker, photo, certificate, treat).
- Review feedback from clients and self-reflections with pharmacy staff to inform future practice.