

Preparing a child to get vaccinated for COVID-19

Children who are informed and well prepared have a better vaccination experience.

Here are some tips and advice.

1

Answer the child's questions

Bring a toy to distract or comfort the child

2

Announce the vaccination and answer questions:

- Watch a video explaining the COVID-19 vaccine:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mnflc_BT1A;
- Use the example in the annex for guidance;
- Watch a vaccination session of the CISSS des Laurentides:
At school: <https://youtu.be/yTKg39ALjUU>;
At a vaccination centre: https://youtu.be/RnpfnkC1_Y0.

Explain to the child that they will feel a pinch or a push for a few seconds.

Tell or read a story about a child who is getting his vaccination (see the annex for references).

Help your child to choose an interesting and comforting object that they can bring with them:

- Examples: stuffed animal, fidget toy, book, mobile device (confirm with the school if vaccination will be at school).

Stay calm, cheerful and speak in your normal voice.

Practise relaxation techniques with the child, for example:

- Taking slow, deep breaths while puffing up the belly, like blowing up a balloon or blowing out candles.

Language to avoid to reduce fear:

- Don't apologize;
- Don't present vaccination as punishment;
- Don't use words that cause fear, such as "the needle stings";
- Don't use words that refer to pain, such as "It's going to hurt";
- Don't reassure the child constantly "It won't hurt", "Don't be worried", "It'll soon be over", "Nothing will happen to you".

After the injection, cuddle, congratulate or reward the child.

3

Adopt a calm and reassuring attitude

On vaccination day, bring:

- ✓ **Consent form completed by the parent or legal guardian, if they are not present. For vaccination in schools, return the form on the prescribed date:**

- <http://msssa4.msss.gouv.qc.ca/intra/formres.nsf/a9b0958ceee59c7685256e2a0052d887/b8387482f04c58ea852586e000621199?OpenDocument>.

- ✓ **A short sleeve top;**

- ✓ **A toy to distract or comfort the child;**

- ✓ **An anaesthetic gel if needed;**

- Reduces pain but does not relieve discomfort;
- Available in pharmacies without a prescription;
- Read and follow the instructions;
- Apply to the arm 30 to 45 minutes before vaccination (times vary depending on the product);
- Cover with plastic wrap;
- Ask a pharmacist for help if needed.

- ✓ **Two snacks (at least 15 minutes before and after vaccination);**

Children with special needs:

- Shells, corks, ear buds to reduce noise;
- Sun glasses for those for whom the lighting can be a disturbing sensory irritant;
- Service dog (identity card required).

ANNEX : Examples of simple explanations

1. Why it's important to get vaccinated: "Vaccines teach the body to recognize germs that cause diseases. If the body comes into contact with these germs later on, it will be able to stop them."
2. What is going to happen: "You are going to get some medicine to help you stay healthy. This medicine is called a vaccine and it goes into your arm with a needle."
3. What it will feel like: "You might feel a pinch or a push for a few seconds."
4. What you are going to do to reduce their discomfort: "It bothers some children, but not others. We can do something so that it doesn't bother you as much."

Then discuss what you are going to do: Choose a toy to distract the child, talk, take deep breaths, watch the injection or don't, etc.

References:

www.autismemonteregie.org/images/Se_pr%C3%A9parer_pour_la_vaccination.pdf

<https://immunize.ca/fr/systeme-card>

<https://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/professionnels/vaccination/piq-administration-des-produits-immunisants/techniques-d-attenuation-de-la-douleur-et-de-l-anxiete/>

<https://www.quebec.ca/sante/conseils-et-prevention/vaccination/diminuer-douleur-et-anxiete-liees-a-la-vaccination-chez-enfants/>

https://naitreetgrandir.com/fr/sante/bg-naitre-grandir-vaccination-vaccin-enfant/#_Toc10537339

Children's books on immunization:

RASTOIN-FAUGERON, Françoise. *Les maladies. À quoi servent les piqûres?* Éditions Nathan, 2002.

DE PETIGNY, Aline. *Une piqûre pour Corentin*. Chanteclerc, 2003.

LEDU, Stéphanie. *Chez le docteur*. Milan jeunesse, 2006.

BENCHETRIT, André. *Mon corps, comment se défend-il?* Belin, 2006.

DE PETIGNY, Aline. *Une piqûre pour Corentin*. Chanteclerc, 2003.