



## **COVID-19** **VACCINATION**

# Information for adults with a needle phobia

### Background

Many people may find the experience of having a needle an unpleasant one. However, for some people the experience is much more difficult and presents as a phobia characterised by severe and persistent anxiety and fear.

People with a phobia often avoid needle-related experiences. This needle avoidance extends to immunisation, resulting in you being more vulnerable to diseases vaccines can help prevent. This can sometimes result in further procedures involving needles if they become unwell.

If you are an adult with anxiety, an intellectual disability, or a needle phobia, you may find it easier to avoid attending large scale vaccination sites for your immunisations as they can be loud and busy which can increase your distress. You may prefer smaller settings such as a GP clinic or pharmacy in a more controlled environment.

It is important that you - or a family member or care provider - discuss what you will experience before your vaccination appointment.

### Strategies to manage needle phobia and immunisation – people with autism or an intellectual disability

The following strategies may help you to manage your needle phobia:

- contact the vaccine provider before you make an appointment to discuss your communication style and capabilities – or ask a family member or care provider to help you do this
- you may want to consider contacting a specialist immunisation provider who can provide you with additional options, for example, sedation.

### Specialist phobia treatments

Specialist trained psychologists and more recently hypnotherapists have had significant success working with individuals to overcome their needle phobia. They can provide mechanisms and strategies to help overcome or manage their needle phobia. You may wish to consider this as a long-term strategy to overcome your needle phobia.

### Disability vaccination clinics

There are many ways that people with disability, their family members and carers, and disability workers can get vaccinated, including through Commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination services.

[Find out where to access COVID-19 vaccines. This includes vaccination hubs for people with disability who need low sensory spaces.](#)

### **Accessible state and territory**

Some states and territories are offering services that make getting a vaccine easier for people with disability.

You can use the [Vaccine Clinic Finder](#) to find suitable services near you.

### **In-reach services**

We continue to support [in-reach services for National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#) participants living in disability and aged care residential accommodation settings of 2 or more people.

### **Sedation**

You may wish to consider a referral to have your immunisation provided under sedation.

### **More information**

Australian Government: <https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/disability-sector/vaccination-clinics>

WA: <https://rollup.wa.gov.au/articles/vaccine-information-for-people-with-a-disability-or-require-additional-support>

<https://www.health.gov.au/news/top-3-covid-19-vaccine-questions-receiving-the-vaccine-if-have-a-phobia-of-needles-need-for-boosters-vaccination-for-pregnant-women>

ACT: <https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/stay-safe-and-healthy?a=1760515>

[https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Vaccination\\_and\\_needle\\_phobia/](https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Vaccination_and_needle_phobia/)

Vic: <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/vaccination-information-people-disability>

NSW: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/vaccination/get-vaccinated/accessible-vaccination-services>

Tas: <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/vaccination-information/covid-19-vaccination/about-COVID-19-vaccines/information-for-people-with-disability-or-special-requirement>

QLD: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/news-events/news/needle-anxiety-and-proven-tips-to-help>

SA: <https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid-19/community/covid-19+advice+for+people+with+disability>