



COVID-19 VACCINATION

Information for family and carers supporting a person with 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, presenting 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 the area of immunisation, resulting in them being more vulnerable to diseases vaccines can help prevent. This can sometimes result in further procedures involving needles should they become unwell.

Some children with anxiety, intellectual disabilities and needle phobias may find it easier to avoid attending large scale vaccination sites for immunisation that can be loud and busy and can increase distress. They may prefer smaller settings such as a GP clinic or pharmacy.

There are options to make it easier for your child to get a vaccine. It is important that you discuss what your child will experience before their vaccination appointment.

Strategies to help manage needle phobia and immunisation – Autistic children and children with intellectual disability

For people with severe fears, there are options that provide additional support.

The following strategies may help in managing needle phobia in autistic children, children with intellectual disability, and others who have a needle phobia:

- contact the vaccine provider before you make an appointment, to discuss your child's needs and to ask about what additional support the vaccine provider can give
- when you arrive to your child's appointment, explain again the needs of your child and what will help them to have the vaccine.

Specialist phobia treatments

Specialist trained psychologists and more recently hypnotherapists have had significant success working with children to help overcome their needle phobia. They give the child and family members, mechanisms and strategies to help overcome or manage the needle phobia. You may find it helpful to considering accessing this kind of support.

Disability vaccination clinics

There are many ways that children with disability can get vaccinated, including through Commonwealth COVID-19 vaccination services. [Find out where to access COVID-19 vaccines. This includes vaccination hubs for children 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

If immunisation attempts are unsuccessful, you may need to consider an immunisation administered 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/

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>