

PREPARING FOR YOUR COVID-19 VACCINE: A GUIDE FOR CANADIAN MUSLIMS

COVID-19 infection has been shown to impact individuals of all ages and has demonstrated high risk of life-threatening disease. Nonetheless, older populations are at higher risk for the development of complications. It has also been identified that those at higher risk include individuals facing barriers including systemic racism, lower access to health care, or insecure employment. COVID-19 vaccines reduce illness prevalence and severity, and it is recommended for all individuals to get the first vaccine available to them.

THE CARD SYSTEM

The CARD system (Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract) was developed to help you prepare for your COVID-19 vaccine, as vaccination can often cause stress and anxiety.

Comfort



Review information fact sheets to know what to expect and ways you can make your COVID-19 vaccination more comfortable.

What would make you more comfortable? For example, wearing a short sleeve shirt under a loose top to minimize the exposure of the upper arm.

You can also choose to sit up or lie down during vaccination.



Ask Questions



Talk to someone you trust like your Imam, health care provider, or peer who has already taken the vaccine.

You can ask questions about the vaccine or about what CARDS (tips to comfort, and distract you) you can play.

For example, you can ask if a vaccination site has a privacy screen or if you can bring your own privacy cloth.



Relax



Think of ways that you normally keep yourself calm and relaxed.

For example, incorporating personal prayers (dhikr/duaa) or reciting verses of the Qur'an while you wait for your turn.

You can also take slow, deep breaths. This is like blowing up a balloon or blowing out candles. The belly should move out when breathing in and move in when breathing out.



Distract



If you like to be distracted, use an object like prayer beads or fingers to do dhikr to get your mind off the needle.

You can also bring reading materials that bring you comfort like Qur'anic verse, or talk to the person giving you the vaccine about a different topic such as the weather.

Some people do not want to be distracted. That's okay too.



SEE NEXT PAGE FOR VACCINATION DAY TIPS

TIPS FOR VACCINATION DAY

- ★ Use the CARD system to make needles more comfortable: Comfort, Ask, Relax, Distract
- ★ You will receive the vaccine in the upper arm. Wear short sleeves or something else to pull up so that the upper arm can be reached easily.
- ★ For those observing additional modesty practices, such as hijab or niqab, a short sleeve shirt under an easily removable top such as cardigan or sweater could minimize arm exposure. Some may choose to wear loose non-compression modesty arm sleeves.
- ★ If you have concerns about privacy, ask if a privacy screen is available. You could also ask if the vaccine can be administered by a health professional of the same gender.
- ★ Be calm and positive.
- ★ Do not tense your arm where the needle is going in - keep it loose or relaxed like cooked spaghetti.
- ★ If you feel faint or get dizzy during needles, you can squeeze your knees together or mention to the person giving you the vaccine that you would prefer to lie down.
- ★ Take over-the-counter medications like acetaminophen or ibuprofen for pain or discomfort after vaccination, if necessary. Let a healthcare provider know if you are experiencing any side effects that worry you.
- ★ Keep a record of the vaccine you received. You will receive a paper receipt showing proof of vaccination.
- ★ Do not attend your appointment if you are sick, under quarantine or isolation, or are waiting for a COVID-19 test result. Try to get vaccinated once you are feeling better.
- ★ You will be asked to continue to follow safety measures after vaccination and to follow the general advice of public health officials for when you are home or out in public.

VACCINATION DAY WHILE FASTING (RAMADAN)

- ★ Try eating a nourishing suhoor and staying hydrated during non-fasting hours. Response to vaccination may vary. Common side effects such as a sore arm usually occur within a week after vaccination.
- ★ Staying hydrated and taking acetaminophen or ibuprofen after vaccination during non-fasting hours can help reduce these common side effects, if necessary. Talk to a healthcare provider if you have questions on how to manage side effects while fasting.
- ★ If you experience side effects that make your fast difficult and could delay your recovery, it is permissible to break your fast and make it up after Ramadan. It is important that you keep yourself healthy.