

## Needle Fears – General Strategies

### Before the procedure:

- Explore what parts of the vaccination process you are most fearful of
- Understand your coping style – do you want to know step by step what will be involved vs “tell me when it’s done”  
Practice – mimic the steps involved in the procedure. Use an alcohol wipe (experience the cold, smell), practice if you plan to use a numbing cream
- Explore coping strategies to see what techniques work best for you as an individual (e.g. relaxation, distraction, cognitive strategies)
- Plan your outfit – something comfortable with easy access to your upper arm

### During the procedure:

- Tell the clinician your coping strategies and ask for their assistance with them (e.g. distracting you by talking, walking you through each step, keeping medical equipment out of view etc.). Have your strategies written down to use or show your clinician
- Use distraction techniques – individualize for each person – could be engaging in a conversation, listening to music, watching a video
- Deep breathing or blowing – helps to relax muscles and decrease anxiety
- Big exhale and relax shoulder/arm muscles
- Cognitive coping strategies – positive self-talk, imagery

### After:

- Plan what you’ll do for the 15 minute wait after the vaccination – fun distraction
- Reward yourself – you’ve done something that was hard for you – give yourself a treat

### Additional useful resources can be found:

[https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/FS\\_NeedlePain\\_EN\\_2020.pdf](https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/FS_NeedlePain_EN_2020.pdf)

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/7-Strategies-for-Dealing-with-Needle-Fear-and-Anxiety.pdf>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/566604882399a3d028922f9a/t/610d97f7781f731a47465d28/1628280832370/AdultsAllAboutMe.pdf>

<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2021/08/needle-fears-can-cause-covid-19-vaccine-hesitancy-but-these-strategies-can-help/>

### If you need more assistance:

<https://nl.bridgethegap.ca/>

<http://apnl.ca/find-a-psychologist>

Speak with your family physician, school Guidance Counsellor, workplace Employee Assistance Program, local community mental health clinic/Doorways