



Rehearsal Guide

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Test

Preparing people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to successfully complete a coronavirus test.

Introduction for Caregivers

A rehearsal guide contains realistic pictures, concrete ideas, and clear, brief instructions for guiding a person through what can be expected in a specific situation. It includes helpful suggestions for caregivers to follow to make the experience meaningful for the person and increase the likelihood of a successful outcome. This approach is beneficial when supporting people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) who are anxious about situations such as doctors' appointments, hospitalizations, and medical testing.

A rehearsal guide provides opportunities for the caregiver to assist the person to learn about a specific situation. It contains information on what is needed and why and explains exactly what can be expected. Such a guide is most effective when it is person-centered and used in conjunction with discussion to allow exploration of specific areas of concern. It can be a powerful tool when used as intended.

The expected result is that the person will then experience the situation in a way that supports health and well-being by being prepared and knowing what to expect. The guide can be used at all stages of the situation to facilitate a positive end result.

Thank you for taking the time to use this tool to work with self-advocates to improve their health outcomes.

How to Use This Rehearsal Guide

For best results, begin to review this rehearsal guide with the person prior to the day of the appointment. Sometimes it will help to review this material with an individual several days or weeks before an appointment; other times, it may be better to wait to review this material until just before the procedure is to take place, perhaps the day before or the morning of the procedure. Together with the individual, determine which will best suit the individual's needs and abilities in understanding the information provided; however, it is important not to wait until 5 minutes before a procedure to introduce this guide to an individual. Give the individual enough time in advance to become familiar with the procedure based on the pictures and information contained on each page and with the individual's abilities in mind.

It is best to review this guide slowly and to focus on one idea/page at a time, allowing the person to talk and/or ask questions after each idea/page is presented. A caregiver may want to share personal experiences related to having this procedure done but be sure to do so in a positive manner, depicting a positive outcome.

For Best Practices

- ✓ Allot time to review this material when the individual is alert and interested in doing so.
- ✓ Ensure that the setting is free from distraction. Based on the individual's attention span, it may be best to review one page at a time, rather than reviewing an entire guide in one sitting.
- ✓ Explain each picture and practice the suggested exercises with the individual, such as deep breathing, as they appear throughout the guide.
- ✓ On the day of the procedure, take this guide along to continue rehearsing the various steps involved in the procedure. Review each page step by step.
- ✓ Remain positive, calm, and upbeat.
- ✓ Remember to offer positive reinforcement throughout the procedure. If the procedure is not able to be completed, focus on positive aspects. If the individual seems upset, talk about it later when they are calm to find out how they felt and what could be changed or improved to have a better outcome the next time.

Introducing the Process

(Name of individual), you are going to visit a doctor or medical professional to be tested for the coronavirus (COVID-19) on (insert date here).

(Name of caregiver) will go with you and stay with you while you have the test done.

The test will take place at (name of location).

Some tests are done in a building; some are done in a tent; and some are done while you sit in the vehicle.



Note to Caregiver: *if possible, prepare the individual for the setting in which he or she will experience the test – office, tent, or vehicle. Make sure you are also aware of testing site expectations. It is very common to have drive up sites use self-testing platforms. Staff at these sites are not trained to administer the test and expect the individual or caregiver to perform test. Call the location before making appointment to verify expectations.*

If You Are Nervous

Remember, ([Name of caregiver](#)) will be with you the whole time.

Deep breaths can help you relax, so let's practice deep breathing.



Note to Caregiver: Practice deep breathing with the individual. Encourage the individual to take slow, deep breaths with you now and as needed before the test.

What the Doctor or Nurse Will Wear

The doctor and others might be wearing a special uniform. They might look scary, but these uniforms help stop the spread of the virus. They will be wearing a mask and gloves and maybe goggles and a covering over their clothes.

(Name of caregiver) will be with you the whole time and will help you. Think about what will help you feel calm and relaxed.



Note to Caregiver: Talk to the individual about the isolation suit. Talk about how the suit protects a person's clothes, the glasses/face shield protects the eyes, the mask protects the mouth and nose, and the gloves protect the hands. Talk about what you can do to help the individual be calm and relaxed.

In the Doctor's Office Waiting Room (If test will be done in a vehicle, go to page 8)

When you first get to your appointment, you might have to wait until someone calls your name.

(Name of caregiver) will stay in the waiting room with you.

Would you like to take a favorite book along to read or some of your favorite music to listen to on your headphones while you wait?



When Your Name is Called

When your name is called, a nurse will take you to the room where you will have the test done. ([*Name of caregiver*](#)) will be with you the whole time.

Remember, the nurse is dressed in a special uniform to help protect the nurse and you from the virus. Try not to be afraid.



Having Test Done in a Vehicle

When you drive up to the testing center, a nurse will come to the vehicle and stand near the window where you are sitting.

(Name of caregiver) will roll down the window.

Remember, the nurse will be dressed in a special uniform to help protect the nurse and you from the virus.

Try not to be afraid.



Note to Caregiver: Practice sitting with the individual in the vehicle that you will use. Roll the window down and have the individual practice placing his or her face by the open window and answering the questions listed on the next page (page 9)

Talking with the Nurse

The nurse will ask you questions about your health.

Are you having any trouble breathing?

Are you coughing?

Have you been feeling really hot or really cold?

Have you been feeling extra tired?

The nurse may ask if you are having any other problems.

Your answers help the nurse and doctor know how to care for you. Tell what you are feeling.



Note to Caregiver: Help the individual prepare for the visit by writing down any symptoms and concerns ahead of time to take to the exam. Help the individual practice answering the questions listed above

Completing the Test

The doctor or nurse may ask you to cough into your elbow, and then tilt your head backwards a bit.

[*\(Name of caregiver\)*](#) will be with you the whole time and will help you understand what to do.

The doctor or nurse will use a special test that looks like a long cotton swab.



(Avera, 2020)

Note to Caregiver: Practice having the individual cough into an elbow, tilt his or her head back, and stay still. Contact testing site to verify which test is being used. Nasal testing is most common, but some sites swab the mouth instead of the nose or use a saliva method for testing which may require spitting in a small container or cup.

Completing the Test - continued

The doctor or nurse will put the long cotton swab in your nose. This might tickle or feel uncomfortable but will only take one or two seconds.

You must stay very still until the test is done.



Note to Caregiver: You may want to have a tissue available due to the common occurrence of sneezing or watery eye(s) after the nasal test is completed. Great Job! I Know You Can Do It!

I know you can do it! You always do a great job!



Note to Caregiver: Offer the individual praise and encouragement to celebrate success!

References

- Avera. (2020, July 28). *What's the Difference Between COVID-19 Diagnostic and Antibodies Test*. Retrieved September 12, 2022, from <https://www.avera.org/balance/wellness-and-preventive-care/difference-between-covid-19-diagnostic-and-antibody-tests/>
- Medline Plus. (2021, December 6). *Nasopharyngeal culture*. Retrieved September 12, 2022, from <https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003747.htm>

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For additional information regarding this guide or any of our physical or behavioral health trainings, contact:

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