



Rehearsal Guide

Getting a Shot

Preparing people with intellectual disability/autism (ID/A) to successfully receive an injection.

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 disabilities/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), your doctor wants you to get a shot on *(insert date here)* at *(insert name of location)*.

A shot is a different way to get medicine into your body.

The medicine can help protect you from getting sick and works to keep you healthy.

The doctor ordered this shot to keep you healthy.

(Name of caregiver) will stay with you when you get the shot.



If Shot is to be Given at Home

Note to Caregiver: *If the person will receive the injection at his/her home, please read this page and then skip the next 2 pages. If the person will receive the injection at the doctor's office do not read this page.*

The nurse will come to your house to give you a shot.

You won't have to go to the doctor's office.

The nurse who comes to give you your shot will take care of you.

Don't be afraid to ask any questions you may have.



In the Waiting Area

If you get the shot at the doctor's office or pharmacy, you will have to wait in the waiting area until someone calls your name.

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

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



Note to Caregiver: Some people are afraid of nurses or doctors who wear a white lab coat. This may cause the person to be anxious and possibly not want to get the shot. If this is an issue, tell the office personnel to ask the person giving the shot to please remove their white lab coat if worn.

Going to Another Room

When it is time to get your shot, the nurse will call your name and you will go into another room (or area of the pharmacy).

(Name of caregiver) can go with you if you would like.

You won't have to change into a patient gown. You can keep your own clothes on.



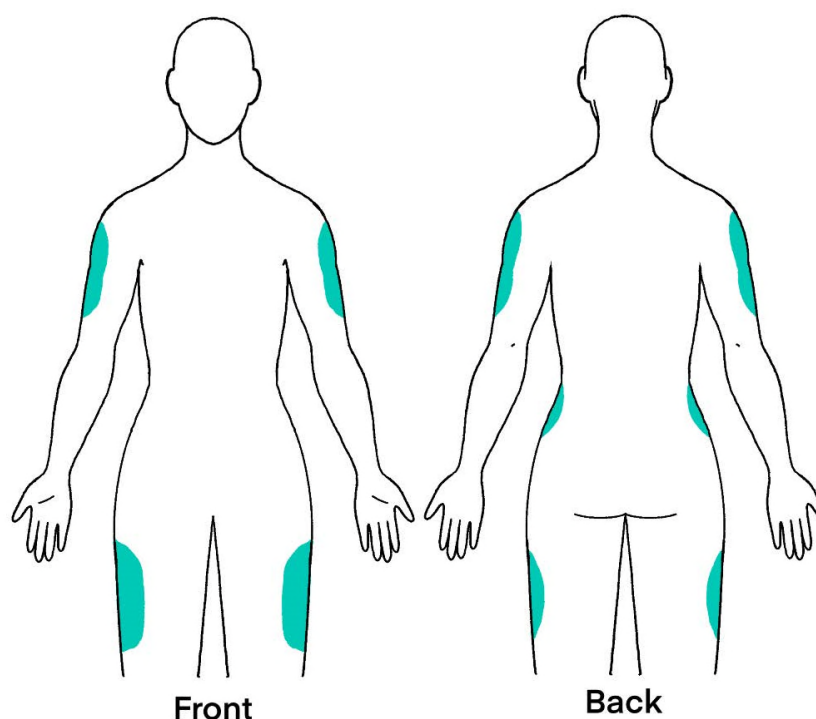
Where the Shot Will Be Given

A shot can be given in different places on your body.

It can be given in places like the arm, the hip, or the leg.

The nurse will talk to you about where on your body he or she will give you your shot.

You may be able to choose to sit, stand or lie down.



Where the Shot Will Be Given: The Arm

You may be given the shot in your arm.

If so, you will need to roll up the sleeve of your shirt.



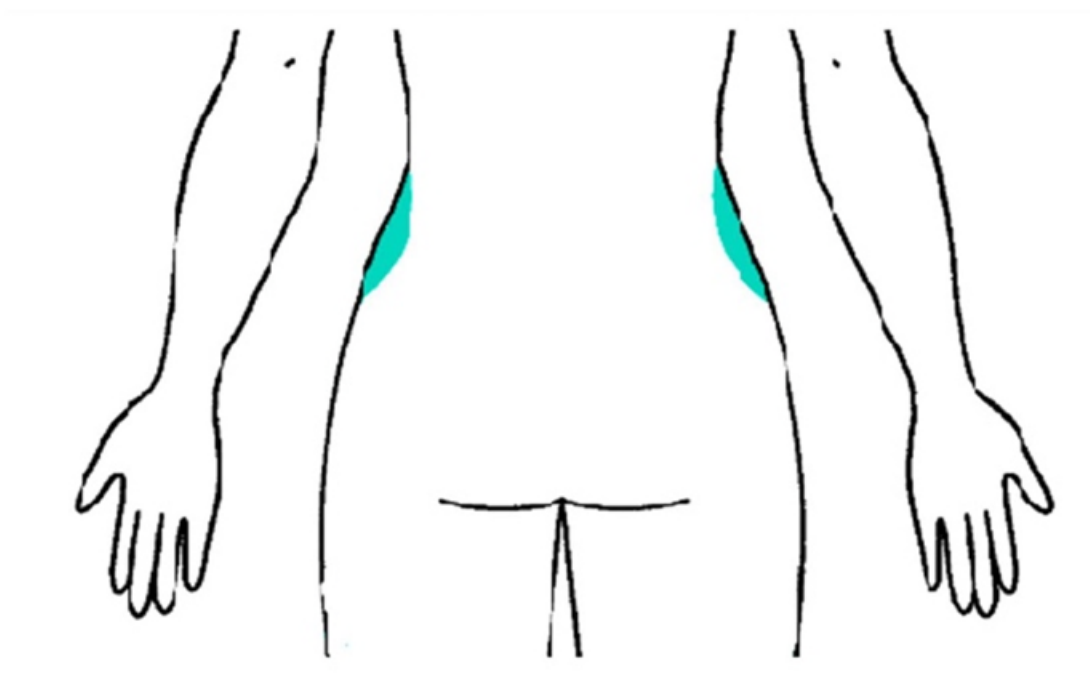
Note to Caregiver: Show the individual on his/her upper arm where the shot may be given.

Where the Shot Will Be Given: The Hip

You may need to get your shot in one of your hips.

You will have to pull your pants and underwear down for this.

The nurse will help you if you need it.



Note to Caregiver: Point to the person's hip to show where a shot might be given.

Where the Shot Will Be Given: The Thigh

You might need to get your shot in the upper part of your leg.

You will have to pull your pants down for this shot.

If you are wearing shorts, you can pull the shorts up higher on your leg, like this.



Note to Caregiver: Point to this area of the person's upper outer area of the leg to show where the injection may be given.

Cleaning the Area

The nurse will put on gloves and use a little piece of cotton to clean a small area where the shot will be given.

This might feel a little wet or cold, but it won't hurt.



Note to Caregiver: *If the person is sensitive to different types of touch, textures, or temperatures, ask if he/she would allow you to wipe his/her arm or hand with a small square of paper towel that has been wet with water, or ask if he/she would like to do this to themselves. Explain that this will be similar to what the nurse/doctor will use, and that it might feel cold and wet, but that it will not hurt.*

How the Shot Will Be Given

After the nurse cleans your arm (hip, thigh), he or she will give you the shot.

The shot will feel like a pinch, but it will be very quick. It might hurt a little.

Remember to hold still when you get the shot. Try not to move.



Take Some Deep Breaths

If you don't want to, you don't have to look when you get the shot. You can even close your eyes and take some deep breaths.

Let's practice taking some deep breaths now.



Note to Caregiver: Tell the person that they may pinch themselves to see how a shot might feel. Encourage them to practice taking deep breaths, which they can also do at the time the shot is given.

After the Shot is Given

After you get the shot, the nurse will put a bandage on your arm (or whatever area the shot is given).

The area may feel sore later or the next day, but the soreness will go away.

There—you are all done!

It's that quick!



Great Job! I Know You Can Do It!

See? It's that simple!

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



Note to Caregiver: Offer the individual encouragement and positive reinforcement. Celebrate positive aspects and accomplishments!

Additional Resources

- Colorado Children's Immunization Coalition. (n.d.). *Immunize for Good—Resource Center*. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <http://www.immunizeforgood.com/resource-center/just-for-kids>
- The Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities. (2021, October). *Getting a Flu Shot: A Social Story for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://boggscenter.rwjms.rutgers.edu/documents/BOGGS/Publications/HealthWellbeing/GettingaFluShotSocialStoryPWIDD-ENG.pdf>
- Great Ormond Street Hospital. (2020, May). *Nervous about needles?* Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/procedures-and-treatments/nervous-about-needles>

References

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- Gutierrez, Javier J Polania & Munakomi, Sunil. (2022, August 9). *Intermuscular Injection*. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from NCBI <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK556121/>
- Unsplash Photos for everyone. (n.d.). *Unsplash*. Retrieved November 7, 2022, from <https://unsplash.com/>



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

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