

COVID-19 VACCINE EXPLANATION SAMPLE SCRIPT

This is an example of the types of information to cover and examples of honest, accurate, and age-appropriate language to use. But remember - you are the expert on your child! Adapt this so it works for your child and be sure to find out about specifics of the process at your location.

WHAT IS A VACCINE?

A vaccine is a special kind of medicine that teaches your body what certain kinds of viruses are like and how to protect you from the sickness those viruses can cause. You've already had some vaccines when you were very little and they have helped you stay healthy.

The COVID-19 vaccine is new. The special medicine will teach your body what the coronavirus is like. Getting this new vaccine will help keep you from getting sick and it can even help protect the people you love!

Some people feel extra tired, a little achy, or have a small fever after getting a vaccine - this is normal and gets better in a day or two. Can you be sure to tell me if feel a little sick after your vaccine?

LOCATION AND PROCESS

We're going to go to (doctor office, pharmacy, community center, school, etc).

When we get there, we may have to wait our turn in line and stay 6 feet apart from everyone else. While we wait I might need to answer some questions. You can (look at a book, play a game on a phone, listen to your favorite song with headphones, etc) while we wait.

Someone might check your temperature. When it's time, your job is to stand as still as a statue while they hold the thermometer close to your head. It will not touch you and only takes a few seconds. After it's done you can get your wiggles out by (hopping in place, dancing in place, stretching in place, etc).

GETTING THE VACCINE

When it's your turn, we'll go together to see the doctor or nurse. They might ask me some questions about you and your health. When they are ready to give you the vaccine, first they will clean a spot on your arm. This will feel cold and wet and the skin cleaner might have a funny smell. Next, they will use a very tiny needle to put the vaccine in your arm. This is called an injection. Some people think injections feel like a poke but others think it feels like a pinch. Can you tell me what it feels like for you? The injection only takes a few seconds and then the needle comes out, gets thrown away, and you get a bandaid. After that we will wait for 15 minutes and then we can go!

OFFERING REASONABLE CHOICES

Some kids like having parts of the experience they can control. Offering reasonable choices (ones that you can truly accept either outcome) can help. Some examples of choices include:

- Do you want the injection in your left arm or right arm?
- Should we sing a song or should I tell you a story while you get your injection?
- While we wait in line, do you want to listen to music or look at a book?

You are the expert on your child. If your child gets overwhelmed if they are asked to make decisions while stressed, that's ok! You can make a plan based on what has worked best for your child in the past.

Child Life specialists are first responders for emotional support. They are trained professionals who provide in-the-moment evidence-based emotional support to children in a medical environment. Their role is to help children and families cope with stressful experiences in hospitals and other healthcare settings, and ultimately prevent or mitigate the harmful impacts of trauma in a medical environment.

Learn more about child life specialists at www.childlife.org/the-child-life-profession