HACK THE VAX

A PROJECT OF THE MEG FOUNDATION

STRATEGIES THAT WORK

For more details, resources, and next steps, visit www.hackthevax.org →

1 SPEAK UP

You know yourself best. It is OK to tell providers what they can do to make you comfortable. Think about what you will need and be ready to spell it out for them. Practice it out loud to boost your confidence.

2 BLOCK

Protect yourself from the pain. You can numb the area with an over-the-counter topical anesthetic like Lidocaine cream or use vibration to interrupt pain signals. Products like Buzzy Bee are very effective. Even quickly rubbing the spot where you'll get the vaccine for 30 seconds can be helpful.

3 DISTRACT

Choose to focus on something that makes you feel good. Before and during, do something like listen to music, watch a funny video, or scroll through social media. It's an incredibly powerful way to keep thoughts and feelings you don't want at bay.

4 BREATHE

It's the ultimate hack of your nervous system, and the best way to take control of your body and your brain. Take deep, slow breaths with a focus on the out-breath. Repeat as needed.

5 CONNECT

Having a supportive, trusted person with you—either in person or virtually—can do wonders. Have them talk to you about other things to take the focus off of what is bothering you. This is a great time to crack jokes, tell stories, or whatever works for you.

6 TOUCH

If it works for you, have a trusted person hold your hand, squeeze your shoulder, or do something else that feels comforting. Touch positively changes the way our bodies process pain and creates a flood of calming, positive brain chemicals.

7 FILTER

It can be stressful to watch others get their vaccination. You can look away, get an appointment to prevent wait times, or use your phone for distraction. You can ask to be seated away from the action or ask them to text you when it's your turn. Choosing whether you watch your own poke or look away is also a great way to take control.

8 REWARD

Doing hard things deserves a reward. Plan something to treat yourself with afterward, whether big or small. Having something to look forward to is a very powerful thing.

9 FEELING FAINT?

Passing out is a very common concern, and can be a natural (if annoying) response of the nervous system. You can use some simple techniques to prevent it from happening. Squeeze your leg and abdominal muscles, lie down, and/or drink plenty of water. The vibration from the Buzzy Bee product also helps prevent fainting.

Meg Foundation
EMPOWERING FAMILIES TO PREVENT AND RELIEVE PAIN

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MAKE A PLAN

Choose what works for you and check some boxes.
Remember, ACTION IS THE ENEMY OF ANXIETY. You've got this!

SPEAK UP

Write down (or at least think about) what you'd like to say to the provider about what helps you:

BLOCK

Let's stop things before they start.
What do you want to use?

- ☐ *Topical anesthetic/numbing cream*
- ☐ *Vibration*

How do you want to get it?

- ☐ *Drugstore*
- ☐ *order online*

DISTRACT

What do you want to focus on to help you be more calm and comfortable?

- ☐ *Listen to music*
- ☐ *Watch a video*
- ☐ *Talk to someone*
- ☐ *Scroll on my phone*
- ☐ *Read something*
- ☐ *Other:*

BREATHE

This is powerful technique, but many others work too.

Step 1: Breath in for 4 counts, in through your nose and into your belly.
Step 2: Hold for 4 counts.
Step 3: Breath out slowly through your mouth for 4 counts.
Step 4: Repeat

CONNECT

Write down the name of a person you would like to talk or text with and what you want to talk about.

TOUCH

If it feels like a good plan to you, what kind of touch would you like to help change your focus and provide comfort?

- ☐ *Hold my hand*
- ☐ *Touch my head*
- ☐ *Something else:*
- ☐ *Rub my back*
- ☐ *Stroke my other arm*

FILTER

What do you want to do to help avoid the things that make you feel more stressed?

- ☐ *Schedule an appointment time to minimize the wait*
- ☐ *Ask for a seat away from the action*
- ☐ *Wait outside & have them call/text me when it's my turn*
- ☐ *Don't watch the poke (or do, if that helps you feel more in control!)*

REWARD

Here's what I'm going to get or do when I'm finished, to celebrate getting it done!

FEELING FAINT?

If passing out is a concern, which things would you like to do to help prevent that?

- ☐ *Squeeze my leg and abdominal muscles*
- ☐ *Drink plenty of water beforehand*
- ☐ *Lie down for the poke*
- ☐ *Use Buzzy Bee/vibration*
- ☐ *Prop up my legs/sit cross legged*

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