



The **Sibling**
Collaborative

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Azieli Adult
Neurodevelopmental
Centre

Our Siblings with Disabilities and the COVID-19 Vaccine

During these past months of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us who have siblings with a disability have been feeling worried, stressed and guilt (visit our [infographic here](#)). Our siblings with disabilities have had their routines and activities disrupted, they haven't been able to visit family and friends, they are worried about getting sick; and we have been anxious that they have not been able to understand all of the current public health restrictions.

You can read our research article on the experiences of siblings of adults with intellectual/developmental disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic [here](#).

A vaccine offers some relief that our siblings with disabilities will be safe from becoming sick or worse. It also offers hope that our siblings can get back to their activities and their pre-COVID life.

As the vaccine rolls out across the country, many of us have questions about the vaccine and its rollout as it pertains to our siblings with disabilities.

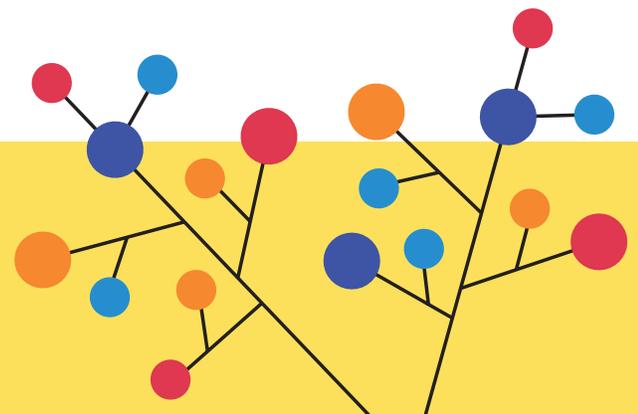
- What is the government's plan for the delivery of the vaccine?
- Are people with disabilities being prioritized?
- When will my sibling with a disability receive their vaccine?
- My sibling with a disability has complex needs and challenges, how will they be able to access the vaccine?
- Is the vaccine safe? Are there side effects to the vaccine?

Vaccine Distribution

The vaccine delivery plan is influenced by federal, provincial and territorial public health bodies. You can check the total number of COVID-19 vaccine distribution [here](#). (available in English and French)

Vaccine Prioritization

Our siblings with disabilities have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Various organizations and groups have been calling on all levels of government to include people with developmental disabilities, their families and support staff as a priority for the early vaccine rollout phases. See statements on this from Inclusion Canada [here](#) and the Royal Society of Canada [here](#).



Health Care Access Research and Developmental Disabilities (H-CARDD) wrote a report offering evidence of why people with developmental disabilities should be included as a priority group in Canada's COVID-19 vaccination program. Read it [here](#).

The federal guidelines for prioritizing the vaccine mention age, congregate care and other high risk conditions are outlined [here](#).

Vaccine distribution plans vary based on which province or territory you live in, and details are still unclear when it comes to our siblings with disabilities. Inclusion Canada has summarized what these plans say about developmental disabilities [here](#).

One important step, while this is figured out is to have a conversation with your sibling's family doctor. You can also speak with someone at your local public health unit if you have questions about how things might work where you live. H-CARDD is collating information about vaccines [here](#).

Vaccine Safety

You can read about vaccine safety, concerns or side effects [here](#) (available in English and French).

You can help your sibling to understand the vaccine, including safety with this guide "[Things to know about the COVID vaccine](#)" (available in English and French).

[In this video](#), Dr. Bill Sullivan speaks with sibling advocate and researcher, Dr. Yona Lunsky about the COVID vaccine and tries to answer questions from family caregivers, as well as provide a way of thinking through these complex decisions.

[In this video](#), Dr. Lunsky speaks with family physician Dr. Ullanda Neil about COVID-19, people with disabilities and the vaccine.

Receiving the vaccine

This complex and unprecedented experience of the pandemic is upsetting and difficult to understand for everyone, but in particular our siblings with disabilities.

To help our siblings understand the pandemic and the vaccine, here are some easy-to-read guides and resources.

- [What happens when I get the COVID vaccine.](#)
- [Coronavirus vaccine: easy read](#)
- For strategies on how to support someone who might have difficulties with getting a vaccine or needles of any kind, [check out this resource from the Challenging Behaviour Foundation in the UK.](#)
- To support your sibling in making a decision about getting the vaccine, you can find a guide [here](#).

Join the conversation



Let us know in our sibling-only closed Facebook group, when your sibling has received their vaccine. Visit our Facebook page [here](#).

This resource was made possible by:

