# COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION

## NEEDLE PHOBIA ALGORITHM

*HOW TO guide for youth (ages 5+) on how to proceed with their COVID-19 vaccinations*

Begin by **BOOKING YOUR CHILD'S COVID-19 VACCINE**:

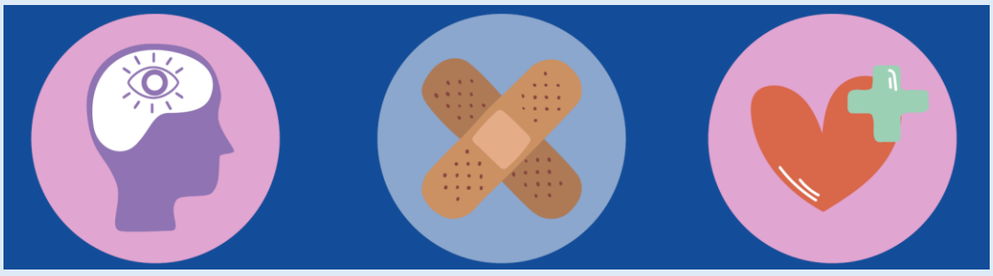
- Book your appointment or
- call **1-877-797-7772**

## WHERE TO START:

### How to PREPARE FOR YOUR CHILD'S COVID-19 VACCINE:

# IWK HEALTH COVID-19 VACCINE TOOLKIT

The **IWK HEALTH CENTER** has created a **COVID-19 VACCINE TOOLKIT** intended to help your child before, during, and after their appointment. Using this toolkit will provide you with ways to reduce your child's needle-associated fears and pain.



*What's included:*

- Parent & Caregiver Guides on why pain management strategies for vaccines are important.
- Information on topical anesthetics including where to buy and how to apply.
- Language, positioning, and distraction guides for children aged 5-11 years old.
- Links to electronic sources on pain management for immunizations. Intended for HCPs, patients/families, and educators.
- Links for information about the COVID-19 vaccine from the Public Health Agency of Canada and Immunize Canada.

# WHAT IS NEEDLE PHOBIA?

Affects ~2-3% of the youth population

Needle phobia is a very severe fear of needles that extends beyond the anxiety many people describe in relation to needles. The phobia often results in extreme avoidance of needles, and sometimes fear and avoidance of medical settings more broadly. Individuals with needle phobia can often explain why needles are important for their health and express wanting to receive a vaccine. However, when it comes time to have a needle administered, the extreme fear takes over and interferes with getting the needle.

## HAS YOUR CHILD ATTEMPTED THEIR VACCINE WITHOUT SUCCESS?

### 1. Please reach out to the NS Health Hotline: 1-877-334-3032

*NS Public Libraries are a great way to access computers and the internet for booking vaccine appointments or when checking out the listed resources

*Resources that may be of help:*

- IWK Health Centre - Nervous about needles? (nshealth.ca) *(IWK/NS Health)*
- Vaccine Pain & Needle Fear Resources *(SKIP – Solutions for Kids in Pain)*
- Improving Children's Pain Management *(SKIP – Solutions for Kids in Pain)*
- How to talk to your children about COVID-19 vaccines *(UNICEF)*
- Managing Needle Anxiety *(IWK Child Psychology)*

### 2. Public Health will screen and provide follow-up:

**An individualized approached will be applied to all those accessing this resource.**

**We know that what works best for one, might not be the best for another.**

The goal will be to provide you with the most appropriate resources for moving forward with strategies for a successful COVID-19 vaccination.

### 3. CHILD LIFE SPECIALISTS may be consulted to assess and provide follow-up:

*Supports might include:*

ONLINE/VIRTUAL

BY TELEPHONE

*Based on assessment and on a case-by-case basis, in-person supports may be offered.

### 4. CHILD PSYCHOLOGY is looped in:

Foundational work is provided to lay the groundwork for moving forward and coping with Needle Phobias with a lifelong approach. An evidence-based treatment, involving gradual exposure to needles + the stimuli associated with them (e.g., alcohol wipes), is used.