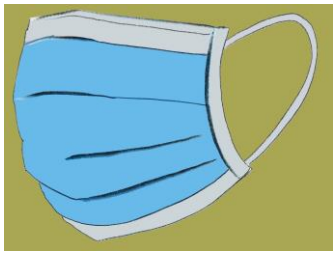
autism
wellbeing

Information for professionals administering the Covid vaccination:

It is likely that you will be administering the vaccination to autistic people. Sometimes you will be aware that the autistic person has specific communication and sensory needs, but at other times you may not be aware. Here are some ideas you may like to consider.

Each of us experiences the world through our senses – and our brains process this sensory information so that we can respond adaptively. Many autistic people experience a broader range of sensory experiences than non-autistic people. This may mean that some people experience sensations like a noisy, brightly lit clinic or the pain of an injection, more intensely than you may have expected. Alternatively, some people may experience muted sensory experiences, or a mixture of both – perhaps they won't notice an injection; but will flinch at the gentle sensation of being wiped with a tissue.

It is important to remember that when an autistic person responds to a sensation that is genuinely traumatic for them, they are responding proportionately. Visit our website and Facebook pages for more information about sensory processing and Sensory Trauma. (www.autismwellbeing.org.uk https://www.facebook.com/AutWellbeing)



- Ask the patient (and their carer) if there is anything you can do to make the experience of having a vaccination more comfortable for them.
- Be aware that in busy environments, some autistic people may find communication more difficult, so ask specific questions that can be answered with a yes or no type answer.
- Use language that can be taken literally.
- Some autistic people may need time to process information – give time for this, and remember that rephrasing or asking an additional question may actually *increase* the amount of processing the autistic person needs to do.
- Each autistic person has different sensory experiences, look to them (and their carer) for feedback and advice.
- Adapt and be responsive – there may be tasks that the autistic person would prefer to do for themselves e.g. they may prefer to roll their own sleeve up; or put a plaster on themselves.

Thank you for doing this important work.

Autism Wellbeing CIC
www.autismwellbeing.org.uk
Company number 11387288