

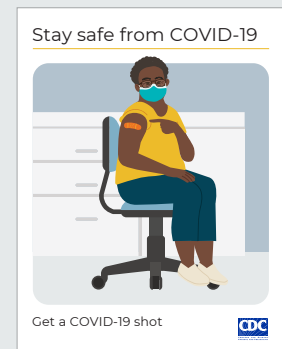
# Talking to Patients who have Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities about COVID-19

As a healthcare provider, you work hard to help your patients stay healthy and safe from COVID-19. When you're talking with patients who have intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), it's especially important to make sure your message is simple and clear. These tips can help you talk to patients with IDD about COVID-19.

## Helpful resources for patients and caregivers

CDC has created materials to help caregivers communicate with people with IDD about COVID-19.

The **Stay Safe from COVID-19** materials cover basic topics like getting the vaccine, wearing a mask, keeping a safe distance, washing your hands, and getting a COVID-19 test. To learn more or download the materials, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/people-with-disabilities.html](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/toolkits/people-with-disabilities.html).



## Keep it simple.

Stick to short words and sentences when you can. Many people with IDD process information in a literal way, so it's best to avoid metaphors and figures of speech.

## Show that you're listening.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard for everyone, but people with IDD may face additional challenges. Show your patient that you understand by listening to their concerns, then repeating what you've heard in your own words.

## Say it in pictures.

When you recommend protective behaviors like wearing a mask or keeping a safe distance, use literal, realistic images to help your patients visualize those behaviors. When possible, break behaviors down into a series of steps, using 1 image to illustrate each step. You can also use visual schedules with pictures to help patients understand what to expect in new situations.

## Include everyone in the conversation.

If your patient brings a caregiver or support person to their appointment, be sure to include everyone in the conversation. When you're asking questions or sharing information, always talk to your patient directly. Then, check in with their caregiver or support person to learn more and make sure everyone is on the same page.

## Repeat key takeaways.

For people with IDD, repetition is key. As you're wrapping up your visit, take time to repeat the main ideas you want your patient to take away from the conversation.