

Talking with Patients about COVID-19 Vaccinations

Start the Conversation

By simply listening and talking to your patients, you may be able to build trust and help them move from COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy to vaccination acceptance. This resource includes talking points to support your conversations with patients about COVID-19 vaccinations, including information to help patients make their decision. Practice empathy and use motivational interviewing skills to help guide these conversations.



Addressing Hesitancy

- Ask why the patient is hesitant: “It is okay for everyone – including you – to have questions about the vaccine. May I ask why you are hesitant? What have you heard in your community?”
- Counter misinformation: “Understandably, there is a lot of misinformation that exists; however, your care provider can discuss with you how the vaccines are extraordinarily effective at protecting you from the virus. What questions do you have?” [Address patient’s questions]. “Your provider can speak to you about any questions you have as well OR I would be happy to send you some trusted sources of information that may help address your concerns. Will that be okay? For example, I have information on [share selected information].”
- Explore patients’ fears about possible side effects: “How did you feel after your last vaccine (e.g., flu, shingles)? Have you ever had any side effects or other reactions after a vaccine? The COVID-19 vaccine is not much different. Possible side effects that you may experience include [share side effects].”
- If you’re comfortable, be transparent about your vaccination story: “I was hesitant early on, but vaccines are important to me and my family because [share personal vaccination story].”

Addressing Barriers

- Lack of awareness on location(s) of COVID-19 vaccination clinics: “Our office is currently offering COVID-19 vaccination clinics OR I can help you identify the closest COVID-19 vaccination clinic near your work or home and can help you schedule an appointment.”
- Transportation: “I understand limited access to transportation can be a major challenge for you trying to get vaccinated. Some insurance carriers offer help to those who need transportation to and from COVID-19 vaccination clinics. There are also free transportation services in your community. Would you like me to gather and send you information on how you can access free transportation to help you get to and from a local COVID-19 vaccination site AND/OR can I help you schedule a transportation service.”
- Concerns of associated costs: “No one is supposed to be charged for the COVID-19 vaccine according to the CARES Act. A COVID-19 vaccination should never cost you money – it is the law.”
- Lack of childcare: “I understand some vaccination clinics only allow the person with the vaccination appointment to enter the clinic OR I understand some parents might not be willing to take the risk of bringing their unvaccinated child(ren) around other unvaccinated individuals. Would you like me to send you information on mobile clinics AND/OR at-home vaccination services in our community AND/OR help you schedule an appointment where childcare will not be an issue?”

Resources: General

- [CMS Strategies to Increase Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccination](#)
- [CDC Clinician Outreach and Communication Activity: March 9, 2021: What Every Clinician Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety and Effectiveness and How to Address Patient Questions and Concerns](#)
- [Immunization Action Coalition](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit](#)
- [AD Council COVID-19 Vaccine Education Toolkit](#)
- [Social Media Toolkit: COVID-19 Vaccinations](#)



Resources: General

- [Vaccine Toolkit – COVID-19](#)
- [Vaccine Misinformation Management Field Guide](#)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know](#)
- [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine: What Healthcare Professionals Need to Know](#)
- [CMS COVID-19 Vaccines Policies & Guidance](#)
- [COVID-19 and Flu Public Education Campaign](#)
- [Myths and Facts about COVID-19](#)
- [Information about COVID-19 Vaccines for People who are Pregnant or Breastfeeding](#)
- [Helping People Get Rides to Vaccine Appointments – Lyft](#)

Resources: Local (space provided for additional local resources)

- [Maryland Department of Health](#)

