

Discussion Guide for Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines

Conversations about the COVID-19 vaccines with your colleagues, patients, friends, family, and neighbors can take many different forms and happen in many different settings. Below you can see a proposed flow for how these conversations might go.

Start the Conversation

Have you thought about getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, I want to get it
(or have already gotten it).



I don't know.



I don't think I want to get it. !

Sounds like you're not quite sure. Tell me more about what you've been hearing about the vaccine. Perhaps I can help clear some things up.

Conversation Tips:

- Ask open-ended questions.
- Focus on understanding their feelings.
- Ask if you can share information with them.
 - If you've gotten vaccinated, you can share how you made that decision with them.
 - You are a trusted source of information. It's okay to admit where there is still uncertainty.
- See the back page for common concerns and FAQs.

It sounds like you've already put some thought into this. If you're willing to share, what concerns do you have about the vaccines? Maybe I can help answer some questions.

Conversation Tips:

- See the back page for common concerns and FAQs.
- If you had similar questions or concerns, share your decision-making process.
- Focus on understanding their feelings and experiences.
- You are a trusted source of information. It's okay to admit where there is uncertainty.

Thank them for sharing their concerns with you.
Ask again about their willingness to get vaccinated.

I'm glad that we had this discussion, and I appreciate that you shared your concerns with me today. Making an informed decision is important. Would you like me to help you schedule a time to get your COVID-19 vaccine?

Yes, I want to get vaccinated
(or I've already been vaccinated).



No, I don't want to talk about it anymore !

Thank you so much for taking this step to protect yourself, your family, and your community from COVID-19.

Encourage an Action Step:

- If possible, vaccinate same day, assist them in scheduling a vaccine appointment, or give them information about an upcoming vaccine event.
 - If your clinic is a vaccination site: Offer to walk them to the vaccination site within your clinic.
 - If your clinic is not a vaccination site: Offer to help them search for a vaccination site using [vaccines.gov/search](https://www.vaccines.gov/search)
- If they feel comfortable doing so, encourage them to share the information they learned to support their friends and community members in making the same decision.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me, I appreciate it. If you have any more thoughts or questions after our conversation, I'm happy to talk to you more about it.

Conversation Tips:

- Offer to connect them with trusted resources
- Acknowledge the consideration that they are putting into this decision
- Thank them for taking the time to speak with you.
- Keep the door open. Let them know that you are available to continue the conversation.

Common Concerns & Example Responses

They share concerns about politics or the government's involvement.

"You are right, it has gotten political. Ultimately though, this is about your health and the health of your community. The vaccines are very effective at preventing people from getting sick."

They share concerns about the vaccine causing infertility.

"I can see that this is an important issue for you. No data shows that COVID-19 vaccines make it harder for you to get pregnant or to get someone else pregnant now or in the future. The same goes for both adults and teens. Many experts— even fertility experts— strongly urge people who are trying to have a baby one day to get a COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine will help protect you and your future family."

They share concerns that the vaccine was developed too quickly.

"The process to authorize a vaccine is pretty fascinating. But, like most things, it relies on a lot of paperwork. COVID-19 vaccines were developed in record time because scientists built from decades of research, they were given a lot of resources, and regulators at the FDA brought COVID-19 vaccine applications straight to the top of their to-do list. Since these vaccines have been authorized for some time now, their safety and effectiveness can now be seen in real world data."

They mention blood clots or heart inflammation from COVID-19 vaccines.

"It sounds like you've done some research. Yes, the CDC and FDA have noted a connection between these things. But remember that serious side effects are very rare following any vaccination, including COVID-19 vaccination. The odds of experiencing a serious side effect are extremely low. Any time that we hear about blood clots or heart problems, it can make us worried. Even though we call these very rare side effects "serious," it doesn't mean that they're fatal. In most cases, these blood clots or heart problems can actually be quite easy to treat."

They share that they don't really think they need to get it.

"The vaccine will help prevent you from getting really sick from COVID-19. COVID-19 is still spreading. There are new strains of the virus that spread more easily. The vaccines protect against these variants. We see this in who is getting sick. More than 97% of people who go to the hospital for COVID-19 have not taken a vaccine. And 99% of people who die from COVID-19 are NOT vaccinated. Being healthy or young doesn't make you immune to getting very sick from COVID-19."

They share a concern that fetal tissue was used to create the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.

"The Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine was created using the same technology as many other vaccines. It does not contain parts of fetuses or fetal cells. One piece of the vaccine is made in lab-grown copies of cells that originally came from elective abortions that took place over 35 years ago. Since then, the cell lines for these vaccines have been maintained in the lab and no further sources of fetal cells are used to make these vaccines. This might be new information for some people. However, vaccines for chickenpox, rubella and hepatitis A are made in the same way."

Frequently Asked Questions & Example Responses

How many doses do I need?

Manufacturer	Number of doses	Age you can get the vaccine
Pfizer-BioNTech (Comirnaty)	2 doses, 21 days apart	12 and older
Moderna	2 doses, 28 days apart	18 and older
Johnson & Johnson	1 dose	18 and older

Do I need to get vaccinated if I already had COVID-19?

"Yes, it is recommended that you get vaccinated even if you already had COVID-19. While some studies have shown that getting COVID-19 can offer some defense against future COVID-19 infections, getting vaccinated is a safer and more reliable way to build up protection."

Is it true that the side effects are bad?

"It is understandable to be worried about the side effects. (If possible, share your experience with side effects.) "Side effects can be annoying, but they are also a sign that the vaccine is working. The vaccines still work even if you don't experience any side effects."

What ingredients are in the vaccine?

"Like other vaccines, the vaccines contain fat, salts, and sugars to help them work better in the body. The ingredients are all safe and needed for the vaccine to do its job. It does not contain human cells (including fetal cells), the virus that causes COVID-19, any animal by-products including pork products, latex, metals, tracking devices, or preservatives. It was not grown in eggs and contains no egg products."

Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant?

"Yes. In fact, medical experts in pregnancy and birth recommend the COVID-19 vaccine for people who are pregnant, lactating, or planning to get pregnant. Data show the COVID-19 vaccines are safe during pregnancy. Some studies show that a vaccinated parent can pass antibodies against COVID-19 along to their baby through pregnancy and their milk. Pregnant people are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19, including death. The vaccines are the best protection."

Is it safe to get my child vaccinated?

"I'm happy to see that you're considering getting your child vaccinated against COVID-19. Yes. COVID-19 vaccines provide a safe and strong defense against COVID-19 for people over the age of 12. COVID-19 vaccines have gone through the most in-depth safety review in U.S. history, which includes studies in teens and pre-teens. If your child is over the age of 12, then they can only get the Pfizer vaccine as of right now, which is a two-dose series."

Do I have to show proof of citizenship to get the vaccine?

"No. You do not need to show proof of citizenship to get the vaccine. You also do not need to give your social security number to receive the vaccine. You may be asked for it, but you do not need to provide it."

Can the vaccines cause me to get COVID-19 or alter my DNA?

"No. The vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. The vaccines will also not give you COVID-19. The vaccines teach our body's cells how recognize and fight the coronavirus."

Can I get vaccinated if I have other medical conditions?

"Yes. COVID-19 vaccination is especially important for people with health conditions like heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, or obesity. People with these conditions are more likely to get very sick from COVID-19."