

# Having Respectful Discussions about the COVID-19 Vaccines: A Conversation Guide

This document provides tips and questions you can use to guide your conversations with people about COVID-19 vaccines. These approaches are grounded in a set of techniques called motivational interviewing. The purpose of motivational interviewing is to help people make their own best decisions, understand where they have questions or uncertainty and what information would matter to them. It is grounded in a deep sense of respect for the autonomy and decision-making of each person about their health and well-being.

Be sure to bring your authentic self to the conversation. The goal is to be curious, listen, help people feel heard, and provide information for people to make the best decision for themselves. There may be people who will want and need to have multiple conversations before they decide about vaccination.



## **Introduce yourself and open conversation. Sample questions you can ask to start the conversation:**

- ✓ What have you heard about the COVID-19 vaccines?
- ✓ What impacts your feelings about the COVID-19 vaccines?
- ✓ Do you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccines?



## **Engage the person by listening to their concerns and questions with empathy.**

- ✓ Acknowledge their emotions and know you are hearing them.
- ✓ Let them know that having questions and concerns are normal; there is a lot of information.
- ✓ Listen without judgement and try to identify the root cause of their concern.



## **Ask open ended questions to focus the conversation.**

- ✓ Try to avoid yes or no questions. Open ended questions allow people to share more.
- ✓ Tell me more about...
- ✓ How does that make you feel...
- ✓ I hear you saying...repeat what you have heard.



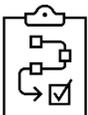
## **Share information to respond to questions and concerns.**

- ✓ Provide handouts if they are willing to take information.
- ✓ Provide factual responses to the questions you know the answers to. Try not to repeat misinformation. Instead repeat the facts that you know.
- ✓ It's ok if you can't answer all their questions. Let them know you can follow-up.
- ✓ Ask if they have heard that information before.



## **Help them find their own reason "why" to get vaccinated.**

- ✓ Everyone has a personal reason about deciding whether or not to get vaccinated.
- ✓ If you are comfortable, share the reason why you got vaccinated or are considering getting vaccinated. This is a time to share a personal story or reason that is true to you.
- ✓ Follow-up your personal story with a question. Is there a reason why you would consider getting vaccinated?



## **End the conversation with a plan.**

- ✓ If a person is ready to be vaccinated, help them make a plan for getting vaccinated.
- ✓ Let them know if there will be an opportunity to be vaccinated at the setting or ways to get more information.
- ✓ Make a plan on how they might get more information or have a follow-up conversation.

## Resources to Share about COVID-19 Vaccines

### General/Overview:

- [COVID-19 Basics](#) (MDH 2-page overview handout about vaccines, additional languages [available here](#))
- [What You Should Know about COVID-19 Vaccines](#) (MDH 2-page handout about common questions)
- [Getting Vaccinated for COVID-19](#) (MDH 3-pager on what to expect before, during and after getting the COVID-19 vaccine)
- [THE CONVERSATION / LA CONVERSACIÓN](#), (Black and Latinx health care workers answer questions in a series of short videos. Part of #BetweenUsAboutUs campaign out of Kaiser Family Foundation and Black Coalition Against COVID)
- [Get the Facts](#) (Series of posters with COVID-19 facts by National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM))
- [How COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#) (Ramsey County Infographic, [available in multiple languages](#))
- The web pages [Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines](#) (CDC) and [About COVID-19 Vaccines](#) (CDC) have been updated to include the recommendation that adolescents aged 12 and older get vaccinated.
- Two [new FAQs](#) (CDC) have been posted to address questions about the safety and benefits of COVID-19 vaccination for adolescents aged 12 and older.

### Vaccine Development and Safety

- [How mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#) (MDH 1-page handout on how these vaccines work, Moderna and Pfizer, additional languages [available here](#))
- [How Viral Vector COVID-19 Vaccines Work](#) (CDC 1-page handout on viral vector vaccines, J&J)
- [How COVID-19 Vaccines are Made](#) (MDH 2-page handout on the vaccine development process, also [available in multiple languages](#))
- [Demographics of the COVID-19 Vaccine Trials](#) (Johns Hopkins, 3 minute video)

### Specific Responses to Questions

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Information for Specific Groups](#) (CDC website with links to job types, medical conditions, age groups)
- [COVID-19 Vaccines and Pregnancy](#) (1-page MDH Handout, additional languages [available here](#))
- **Myth-buster about menstrual cycles:** Your menstrual cycle *cannot* be affected by being near someone who received a COVID-19 vaccine. This [question and answer](#) (CDC) explains why.
- **Myth-buster about infertility:** It is safe for people who would like to have a baby one day to get a COVID-19 vaccine. This [question and answer](#) (CDC) explains why.

For more resources visit the Vaccine Information Resource Toolkit (resources compiled by Minnesota Interagency Council on Homelessness) - <https://headinghomealliance.com/covid-19-vaccine-information/>