

Help Build Trust in COVID-19 Vaccines

You can **build confidence in COVID-19 vaccines** and shift thinking away from "vaccine hesitancy"...especially as demand slows.

Some people worry about safety of vaccines they consider "rushed"...have ethical or religious concerns...or have heard misinformation.

Listen in order to understand. People want to be heard.

Ask open-ended questions, such as "What keeps you from getting a COVID-19 vaccine?" Or say, "Tell me more."

Recap what you've heard to validate feelings and show empathy. For instance, say, "It sounds like you're nervous about side effects."

Build common ground. For example, say, "I had those same concerns."

Don't make assumptions that patients won't be vaccinated...they may just want more information before making a decision.

Ask to provide facts. Start by saying, "I have some information that other patients have found helpful. May I share it with you?"

Tailor info to address specific concerns...and be transparent.

For instance, acknowledge that COVID-19 vaccines were developed quickly...but the technology had been in the works for over a decade. Advise that safety steps occurred simultaneously...they weren't skipped.

Keep our FAQ, *Communicating About COVID-19 Vaccination*, handy...so you can be prepared with answers to common immunization questions.

Make a clear, strong recommendation. Explain that each vaccinated person puts us one step closer to getting through this pandemic.

Highlight the benefits...such as preventing COVID-19 deaths, gathering with friends and family, or being able to travel.

Leverage the trusted relationship you have with patients...and personalize your recommendations. For example, say, "This vaccine is important for you to safely care for your aging relatives."

And share the reasons why you were vaccinated.

Stay positive and don't give up. Keep the dialogue going...since many patients are taking a "wait-and-see" approach.

Also encourage discussions with others who've been vaccinated...and remind patients you're available for future conversations.

Key References:

- www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/vaccinate-with-confidence.html (5-21-21)
- N Engl J Med 2021;384(14):1367-71
- Mayo Clin Proc 2021;96(3):699-707
- www.immunize.org/covid-19/#confidence (5-21-21)

Cite this document as follows: Article, Help Build Trust in COVID-19 Vaccines, Pharmacist's Letter, June 2021

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