Conversations about the COVID-19 vaccines with your community members and clients may take many different forms and may happen in many different settings. Below you will find a proposed flow for those conversations.

**Start the Conversation**

Have you thought about whether or not you will get an updated 2023-2024 COVID-19 vaccine?

- **Yes, I will get it.**
  - Sounds like you’re not quite sure. Tell me more about what you’ve been hearing about the vaccine.
  - Conversation Tips:
    ✓ See the back page for common concerns and FAQs.
    ✓ If you’ve decided to get vaccinated, you can share how you made that decision with them.
    ✓ Acknowledge their feelings.
    ✓ You are a trusted source of information. Acknowledge where there is still uncertainty.
    ✓ Ask if they want family or other community members to be part of the decision-making process.

- **I don’t think I want to get it.**
  - Can I ask you a question: What concerns are keeping you from getting the vaccine?
  - Conversation Tips:
    ✓ See the back page for common concerns and FAQs.
    ✓ If you had similar questions or concerns, share your decision-making process.
    ✓ Acknowledge their feelings and experiences.
    ✓ You are a trusted source of information. Acknowledge where there is uncertainty.

**Follow-up**

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

- **I want to get vaccinated.**
  - I’m glad we had this discussion and I appreciate that you shared your concerns with me today. Making an informed decision is important.
  - Encourage an Action Step:
    ✓ If possible, assist them in scheduling a vaccine appointment or give them information about an upcoming vaccine event.
    ✓ 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.

- **I don’t want to talk about it anymore.**
  - Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me, I appreciate it. It’s your right to say no. If you have any more thoughts after our conversation, I’m happy to talk to you more about it.
  - Conversation Tips:
    ✓ Provide opportunity to revisit discussion and offer additional resources from trusted sources.
    ✓ Provide a phone number to call or where to find you with any questions if they want to talk later.
    ✓ Offer to call them or reach them another way to continue the conversation later.

The best way to get up-to-date information about when and how to get vaccinated is by visiting the Washington State Department of Health website CovidVaccineWA.org or by calling the Department of Health phone line 1-800-525-0127, then press #. (For interpretive services, say your language when the call is answered.)
They've experienced racism or faced another form of discrimination when receiving medical care. “I’m sorry that happened to you. It was horrible and wrong. Your experience sounds frustrating and hurtful.” After listening and further exploring their concerns, consider saying: “The vaccine will help prevent you from getting really sick from COVID-19. It is strongly recommended, but completely voluntary. I only want to make sure that you get the protection/care you need.”

They mention harmful medical practices or experiments on Black and indigenous people in the past. “You’re absolutely right. The history of medical harm should not be ignored. Scientists have engaged in many harmful and racist practices in the name of medicine. The COVID-19 vaccine is being handled very differently. Can I tell you what I know about the vaccine and the vaccine trials? I want to make sure this feels like the right decision for you.”

They shared that they believe there is no point in getting vaccinated if they can still get infected. “I understand. Although there is still a chance of getting COVID-19 after vaccination, the vaccines were designed to prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19 and are still effective at doing so. If you do get sick after your up to date on your vaccinations, you will still have some benefit from the vaccine because you are more likely to only get a mild case instead of a serious case.”

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.”

Frequently Asked Questions & Example Responses

What are the side effects? (If possible, share your experience with side effects.) “Like other vaccines, the most common side effects are a sore arm, tiredness, headache/muscle pain, and fever, all of which are usually mild and go away within a few days. Side effects can be annoying, but they are also a sign that the vaccine is working. The risks of getting COVID-19 are higher than the risk of vaccine side effects.”

Are the vaccines safe? Were they tested on people like me? “Yes, they are safe. The FDA authorized or granted full approval for these vaccines after reviewing a lot of evidence carefully. Independent experts confirmed that it met high safety standards. When the original vaccines were introduced, about 30% of the U.S. participants in the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines trials were Black, Indigenous, or other people of color. Getting your child vaccinated helps lower the risk of them getting infected with COVID-19, reduces their chance of getting seriously ill, and if they do become infected with COVID-19 it reduces their chances of needing hospitalization and lowers their risk of dying from COVID-19. For more information refer to the Vaccinating Youth link in the resources below.”

Is it safe to get my child vaccinated? “Yes. Vaccinations are available to children over the age of 6 months. In ongoing clinical trials for vaccinating children no serious side effects have been detected. Children receive lower doses of the vaccine than adults. Getting your child vaccinated helps lower the risk of them getting infected with COVID-19, reduces their chance of getting seriously ill, and if they do become infected with COVID-19 it reduces their chances of needing hospitalization and lowers their risk of dying from COVID-19.”

Can I get the vaccine if I am pregnant or want to have a baby one day? “No. The vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. The vaccines contain the active ingredient, messenger RNA (mRNA), along with 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 the vaccines cause me to get COVID-19? “No. The vaccines will not also give you COVID-19. The vaccines teach our body’s cells how recognize and fight the coronavirus.”

Resources

» Vaccine Central (National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants and Migrants, University of Minnesota)
» COVID-19 Vaccine Know Your Rights (Washington Solidarity Immigrant Network)
» Health Care Provider Discussion Guide: Building Confidence in mRNA vaccines (Washington State Department of Health (DOH))
» Vaccinating Youth (DOH)
» COVID-19 Vaccine Equity and Engagement Community Resources (DOH)
» Therapeutics Information for Health Care Providers (DOH)
» Building Confidence and Busting Myths (DOH)

» COVID-19 Vaccine Transportation Resources (DOH)

Adapted from: