

ADDRESSING FLUORIDE HESITANCY USING IMMUNIZATION APPROACHES

Vaccination and fluoridation are both health choices that protect people and the community, yet meet some resistance. These two health fields can use similar communication skills to address those reluctant to vaccinate or use fluoride.

HESITANCY EXPLAINED

Four major reasons parents don't vaccinate:

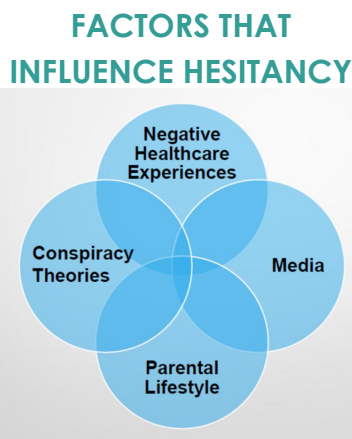
1. Complacency
2. Barriers
3. Fear
4. Uninformed

Hesitancy scale:

Acceptance (most) ... **Hesitant (some)** ... Refusal (<3%)

Lessons learned from vaccination to apply to fluoride conversations:

- Praise and reaffirm those who accept.
- For the hesitant, use tactics in the right column each time to help them understand and accept the health benefits of fluoridation.
- Continue to recommend to those who refuse, but understand they may be unswayable in their beliefs.



OTHER RESOURCES

Tools to Promote Fluoridation

- Fluoridation conversation guide: <https://iikemyteeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/SayThisNotThat.pdf>
- Fluoridation communications toolkit: www.naccho.org/programs/community-health/community-water-fluoridation
- Fluoride information, materials: www.cdc.gov/fluoridation

Articles and Research to Address Hesitancy

- Parent attitudes and beliefs breakdown: www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunizations/Pages/vaccine-hesitant-parents.aspx
- Increasing vaccination rates (presumptive approach): www.forbes.com/sites/robertglatter/2018/05/29/doctors-can-increase-vaccination-rates-in-kids-using-new-approach-study-finds/#5ae5c5177939
- How to respond to vocal vaccine deniers in public: www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/315761/Best-practice-guidance-respond-vocal-vaccine-deniers-public.pdf

HOW TO ADDRESS HESITANCY

1. **Understand.** Acknowledge parents want the best.
2. **Ask** the person what it is they're not sure about.
3. **Offer** information that addresses their concern.
4. **Share** stories that frame why you value fluoridation.
5. **Encourage** them to talk to a provider about fluoride.

View the talk as healthy skepticism. Most parents just want to know the best way to provide care for their children.

Here are 3 methods for these talks. Practice them and pick the one (or the combination) that works best for you.

1. **Ask > Acknowledge > Advise.** (Vax Northwest model) Find advice at <https://immunitycommunitywa.org/conversation-guide>
2. **Presumptive approach.** Good explanation at www.medpagetoday.com/primarycare/vaccines/42689
3. **Conversation Guide:** Develop keystone statements; use the HEART method (Hear, Empathize, Analyze, Resources, Tell); share effective messages; and if needed, exit. Walk through each step at <https://immunitycommunitywa.org/talking-about-vaccines>

DO'S

- Be positive
- Show you care
- Identify target audience
- Focus on community benefit
- Invest in core partners
- Recommend it every time
- Use personal stories



DON'TS

- Lead with the science
- Use complicated language
- Be afraid!
- Assume their opinion
- Be accusatory
- Abandon the topic
- Repeat incorrect theories



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