

## Evidence informed tips for how to address vaccine hesitancy with your patients:

Research by the NIH shows that there is a small window of time to address vaccine hesitancy in patients before it becomes an ingrained belief. The time to talk about it with your patients is now. Across all backgrounds, personal physicians are important influencers for vaccine uptake. You know your patients best, but consider including some of the messaging below.

1. **Meet people where they are**: First ask how folks are doing, then start with open-ended questions that do not assume vaccine acceptance or opposition. Acknowledging fears and doubts helps to build trust, and avoids bringing up emotions like shame and anger which may keep people from listening. Compassion and empathy go a long way.
2. In a poll of 1,400 (with demographics representative of the U.S.) **family** was the most powerful motivator for taking the vaccine, across all polled. Safety and effectiveness were also important in the decision.
3. **Bring racial equity directly into the conversation** with patients from communities of color. Don't assume folks from any background are opposed to vaccination.
  - a. Acknowledge distrust and confront the reality of where that distrust is coming from, both historically and in light of current disparities during the pandemic
  - b. In addition to family, Black people polled were motivated by language around saving Black lives and strengthening their communities.
  - c. Latinx people polled were the only group to be more motivated by language around the vaccine being the right thing to do
  - d. Talk about UC San Diego Health's wider commitment to equity and access to the vaccine as only one thing health systems need to do to address disparities. For example "The vaccine offers an important chance to help protect people, families and communities who have been, and could be most harmed by COVID-19. We know this is only part of the solution, we must also commit to addressing the social factors that affect our health."
4. **Clearly explain all the steps** of the COVID-19 immunization process. Remind people this vaccine is safe and effective. Be transparent about SEs, and what we don't know.
5. General tips for good communication around vaccines:
  - a. Have a clear goal, and keep motivators, such as family, front and center
  - b. Name a solution to any concerns brought up
  - c. Use the "truth sandwich" to avoid emphasizing misinformation: start with the truth, indicate but don't repeat the lie, repeat the truth. For example, "This vaccine has been proven safe and effective. Some people believe it is not and are trying to scare others. Please know this is an important way to help keep you and your family safe."
  - d. Talk about getting the vaccine at each opportunity. If people refuse now try again at next POC.
6. **Avoid**: jargon, shaming, arguments, trying to cover everything or persuade everyone

SOURCES/ LEARN MORE: <https://www.covidcollaborative.us/> <https://www.vitaltalk.org/guides/communication-skills-for-the-covid-vaccine/>

<https://www.phi.org/thought-leadership/communicating-about-the-covid-19-vaccines-guidance-and-sample-messages-for-public-health-practitioners/>

[https://obssr.od.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVIDReport\\_Final.pdf](https://obssr.od.nih.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/COVIDReport_Final.pdf) <https://publichealthcollaborative.org/>

<https://www.debeaumont.org/covid-vaccine-poll/>