



## Talking to Friends and Family about the COVID-19 Vaccine

You can be a **trusted messenger and helper** to your friends and family about the COVID-19 vaccine, and share information to help them on their journey to getting vaccinated. You don't have to be a medical expert to make an impact. In fact, it's been shown that **people who know someone who has already been vaccinated are 40% more likely to say they'll get vaccinated themselves.**<sup>1</sup>

### Tips for an Active Listening Conversation about the COVID-19 Vaccine

**Listen to understand, not to respond:** Effective conversations about the vaccine are rooted in active listening and empathy. Some things you can do to let your friends and family know you are listening are: repeat back or state a summary and ask questions to get to the root of their concern.

*"What is it about doctors that makes you nervous? When you say you are worried about the safety of the vaccine, what do you mean?" or "So you're nervous about side effects? [Pause to listen and prompt the person if needed:] Tell me more."*

**Share about your own journey:** You had to make your own decision about the COVID-19 vaccine, you may have even changed your mind at some point. Share with your friends and family how you did that, it may help them on their own journey.

*"How I originally felt about the COVID-19 Vaccine was \_\_\_\_\_, but after I talked to \_\_\_\_\_ I decided that \_\_\_\_\_."*

**Express empathy and connect on values:** Validating concerns, expressing empathy, and demonstrating that you understand will help make your friends and family feel more comfortable.

*"That must be frustrating and scary to worry about missing a day of work and making rent."*

<sup>1</sup> Source: [Kaiser Family Foundation](#)

The information on this website has been aggregated from the CDC and other trusted medical resources and is not medical advice. If you have additional questions we encourage you to speak to a medical provider. This information was last updated March 29, 2021.

**Pair shared values with key facts:** As you surface what your friends and family's concerns or motivations are, focus the conversation around the values you hear them express and relate those values to yourself. Then you can connect those values to the benefits of the vaccine.

*"I also really care about not taking chances with my personal health. I know it seems like the vaccine came out all of the sudden. Health experts have been working on the technology for these kinds of vaccines for years, and there was a massive global effort put into developing them. I know so many people who have gotten the vaccine, and now millions of people are getting vaccinated every day."*

**Help your friends and family find their own reason to get vaccinated:** Everyone who chooses to get vaccinated does it for a reason—to protect their family, to protect their children, to be less anxious, to visit their parents, or to get back to activities like seeing friends, resuming work, or returning to school. The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are most compelling to them personally.

*"I am getting vaccinated so that I can visit my grandparents again, why is getting vaccinated important to you?"*

**Wrap up the conversation and identify additional supports:** Depending on how the conversation went, wrap up appropriately and offer additional help if you can. Some of your friends and family may want to get vaccinated, but need help getting an appointment or getting transportation to a vaccination site.

*"I'm so glad you're feeling good about vaccination. I have heard that [VACCINE PROVIDER/LOCATION] has appointments available, do you want help getting an appointment?" or "I understand, it's a really personal decision. Can I circle back with you in a few weeks once you know more people who have been vaccinated?" or "Do you have a way of getting there? I can drive you!"*

Toolkit Sources: [Motivational Interviewing](#), [OFA Legacy Training](#), [CDC](#), and [Kaiser Family Foundation](#).