

Building your patients' confidence in COVID-19 vaccines

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Now that the phased distribution of COVID-19 vaccines is underway, people are facing their own perceptions, concerns, and decision making about taking the vaccine. Some might want to be vaccinated as soon as possible. Others might be uncomfortable with the idea and need more information, role modeling, and encouragement.

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Blue Cross[®] Blue Shield[®] of Arizona (BCBSAZ) has developed a communication campaign to address people's uncertainties and help them understand the importance of vaccination in turning the corner on this pandemic. We invite you to join us in this ongoing effort.

Patient decision-making factors

A recent Pew Research Center [study of public intent](#) indicates that a complex mix of factors are contributing to people's decisions about getting a COVID-19 vaccine. It's important to understand and respond to these dynamics in patient communications.

- Perceived risk — Those who are concerned about getting a severe case of COVID-19 are more likely to accept the vaccine as a preventive measure.
- Understanding and trusting the science — Those who are confident in the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines are more likely to want to be vaccinated.
- Established habits — Those who typically get flu shots and other vaccines are more likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

- Partisan beliefs — People might be influenced by politically driven messaging in forming their opinions about the virus and the vaccine.

This awareness can help us open important conversations and communicate effectively about the vaccine.

Resources for patient communication and education

Many people consider their personal healthcare providers to be their most trusted source for vaccine information. Every conversation with a patient about COVID-19 vaccines is an opportunity to build confidence and help end the pandemic. The first step is to find out where the patient is in thinking about getting vaccinated. Are you hearing eagerness, or are you picking up on some skepticism or underlying fears? The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s webpage, [Making a Strong Recommendation for COVID-19 Vaccination](#), reminds us of the importance of leading with empathy, listening, responding to patient questions, and giving a strong recommendation.

On the CDC's [Answering Patients' Questions](#) webpage, you'll find suggestions for answering questions patients may have about topics including COVID-19 vaccine safety, natural versus vaccine immunity, known and unknown side effects, and the need for two doses of certain vaccines. The [Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines Among Your Patients](#) presentation and the [FAQs](#) webpage are other great CDC resources for preparing to answer questions about COVID-19 vaccines. The CDC has also created a [communication toolkit](#) with resources for you, your staff, and your patients. It offers fact sheets (including a [quick answers](#) study sheet for providers), posters, stickers, social media messages, and a video.

Working together to build confidence in COVID-19 vaccination

We're committed to partnering with you throughout the vaccination campaign—sharing information and resolving issues to make things go as smoothly as possible for you, your staff, and our members.

If you have questions or suggestions, don't hesitate to contact your [provider liaison](#) or call Provider Partnerships at 602-864-4231 or 1-800-232-2345, ext. 4231.

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