

CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

How can parents talk to other parents who are not yet ready to vaccinate their kids against COVID-19?

Empathy and understanding are important in discussions that involve people having opposing views (regardless of the issue), especially when it comes to children. This is why family and friends, especially other parents, are often one of the most trusted sources for information and advice. And while conversations about COVID-19 and the vaccines should follow similar principals, these can be particularly sensitive topics for parents considering vaccinating their children.

Research shows that for parents of kids aged 11 or younger, many parents are undecided about vaccination – and it can be a sensitive topic. Parents feel an immense amount of pressure to make the right choice for their kids and to protect them from harm; therefore, advice about the COVID-19 vaccines from other parents can be met with a bit of sensitivity.



IT'S UP TO YOU
COVID-19 VACCINATION

CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

The tips below may help guide your conversation with other parents and make it one of shared experiences rather than direct advice that can lead to friction and confrontation.

TRY TO	
Listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hear concerns and questions from other parents without judging or dismissing them.
Lead with Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat their questions and concerns with respect. Try not to convince anyone that they shouldn't have concerns or feel the way they do. It's okay to have questions. Remind them that no matter what decision they choose to make, they are great parents and that their instincts should be trusted.
Set the Right Tone (Be Patient, Honest and Open)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be open and honest about what you know and what you don't know – and about any fears or doubts you had.
Share Your Own Experience and Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share which facts helped you make the decision to get your kids vaccinated or how you weighed the risks and benefits. Share any discussions that you had with your pediatrician about vaccine safety and why it's important to vaccinate children. Pediatricians are the most trusted messengers for parents when it comes to decisions about the health of their kids. Share how the experience was for your child/children. Talk about any side effects or fears they had. Parents can relate to one another by sharing stories about their kids' experiences getting vaccinated and how you helped comfort them through that.
Encourage Them to Stay Open and Continue Discussing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Say the decision is theirs and they should do their research and continue these conversations with their pediatrician or medical care team. Offer help and support no matter their final decision.

CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

AVOID	
Making Assumptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Don't assume that parents have the same reasons for not getting their kids vaccinated. Don't assume they haven't done research or thought about it.
Judging Their Point of View	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember that parents in general are very protective of their children and only want the best for them. Their point of view may not align with yours but that doesn't mean that their motivation is not in the right place. By judging their viewpoint, this may lead the conversation to be more confrontational and less productive.
Blaming Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lot of false information about COVID-19 and vaccines. Try to talk about the information directly instead of saying someone is wrong, especially if this someone is their pediatrician. If they claim their pediatrician recommends against vaccines for their child/children, encourage them to get a second opinion but do not dismiss their view. Remember each child is different and there may be many factors impacting the pediatrician's recommendation.

BENEFITS & IMPACTS OF VACCINATING KIDS AND TEENS	
Keeping Them Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 vaccines help give children strong protection against serious illness and complications.
Keeping Others Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although fewer children and teens have had COVID-19 than adults, they can still catch the virus, get sick, and spread it to others.
Let Them Be Kids Again	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccinating kids can help keep them in school and help them safely participate in sports, playdates, and other group activities.