

COVID-19 Vaccinations & Dental Teams

Points for Providers



How to talk about COVID-19 vaccination with patients

Start by asking permission to discuss vaccines. Say something like, *"If it is okay with you, I would like to spend a few minutes talking about COVID-19 vaccines and your family."*

Motivational interviewing: Ask the patient a scaled question. **For example,** *"On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to get a COVID-19 vaccine?"* (1 = never; 10 = already have an appointment to get vaccinated). Then explore both sides of whatever number is given.

Sample Response: Let's assume someone says 4. This is where curiosity comes in.
You can say, *"Okay, why 4? And why not a lower number?"*
Let them answer, and ask a follow-up question like, *"What would help you move to a 5 or 6?"*

Why should a dental team member talk about vaccinations?

Populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19 are also at higher risk for oral diseases and experience oral health and oral healthcare disparities at higher rates.

COVID-19 has led to closure and reduced hours of dental practices, which limit routine care and prevention.

Dental care often includes aerosol-generating procedures that can increase viral transmission. Vaccinated dental teams and patients make dental care safer for everyone.

Oral health professionals are champions of disease prevention! Biannual dental hygiene appointments, brushing and flossing education, smoking cessation resources, and promoting drinking water are rooted in prevention. Vaccination is one more action that can prevent disease.

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Common Questions



Do I need a COVID-19 booster?

Yes. The protection COVID-19 vaccines provide decreases over time, especially for certain groups of people. CDC recommends everyone ages 12 and older get a booster for the best protection against COVID-19. Data show that an mRNA booster increases the immune response, which improves protection against getting a serious COVID-19 infection.

Are COVID-19 vaccines safe even though they were developed rapidly?

Yes. Although COVID-19 vaccines were developed quickly, research and development on vaccines like these have been underway for decades. All vaccine development steps were taken to ensure COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness, including clinical trials, authorization for approval, and safety tracking with vaccine monitoring systems.

Why should I get the COVID-19 vaccine if I might get COVID anyway?

COVID-19 vaccination **significantly lowers your risk** of severe illness, hospitalization, and death if you get infected. Compared to people who are fully vaccinated and boosted with COVID-19 vaccinations, unvaccinated people are more likely to get COVID-19, much more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19, and much more likely to die from COVID-19.

If I get the vaccine, am I protected against variants?

People who are fully vaccinated can get vaccine breakthrough infections and spread the virus to others. However, it appears that vaccinated people spread COVID-19 for a shorter period than do unvaccinated people. While research suggests that COVID-19 vaccines are slightly less effective against the Delta variant, the Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna and Janssen/Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccines still appear to **provide protection against severe COVID-19.**