

Talking about the COVID-19 vaccine: top tips

Talking about the COVID-19 vaccine can sometimes be difficult as people can have different viewpoints and it can be challenging to have conversations with people who don't share the same views. It is natural that some people have questions.

Below are some top tips to having conversations about the vaccine which will help you when talking with your family, friends or your wider networks.



Do

- ✓ Read these top tips
- ✓ Be prepared
- ✓ Plan the conversation
- ✓ Start from a place of understanding
- ✓ Listen carefully
- ✓ Be supportive and talk through any concerns
- ✓ Share helpful information
- ✓ Offer to speak again if appropriate

Don't

- ✗ Guess - if you don't know an answer to the question
- ✗ Worry - you don't need to be an expert
- ✗ Get into a debate - give accurate information

Be prepared

- ✔ Take time to reflect on your own feelings beforehand.
- ✔ Think about previous challenging conversations you may have had and how it went and whether there is anything you would have done differently.
- ✔ Think about the purpose of the conversation and what you want to get out of it.
- ✔ When you feel ready, think about how, when and where the conversation will work best.

Start from a place of understanding

- ✔ Try to imagine how the other person is feeling and what their concerns might be. Thinking about their past experiences, values and background may help you to understand them better.
- ✔ People will have different reasons and motivations. Putting yourself in their shoes will help you understand these.
- ✔ Be sensitive and respectful in how you give information - particularly if it is different to the views the person has.

Plan the conversation

- ✔ Make sure that you will have plenty of time to talk and you are both comfortable.
- ✔ Think through what you are going to say beforehand, and how you will start the conversation.
- ✔ Try not to give your opinion too much but point people to accurate sources of information.
- ✔ Be prepared to answer the question about whether you have or decided not to have the vaccine – be honest and talk through what helped you to decide.

Listen carefully and take the time to find out how they feel

- ✔ Ask open questions, such as:

What do you think about the vaccine?

Where do you get your information about the vaccine?

Why do you think that?

Do you have any worries about getting the vaccine?

- ✔ Actively listen and acknowledge the other person's concerns and feelings.
- ✔ Check back to see whether you have understood what the other person is saying.
- ✔ Allow the other person the space to talk and finish what they are saying without interrupting them.
- ✔ Be comfortable with silence – don't rush to fill it with words.
- ✔ If you listen and engage, then the other person is more likely to listen to you in return.

Be supportive and talk through any concerns

- ✔ Be kind, encouraging and honest as this will help build up trust.
- ✔ Remember that eye contact, facial expressions and tone of voice matter as much as what you are saying.
- ✔ Acknowledge the other person's concerns as this can help them think differently.

After the conversation

Contact them again in a few days time to see how they are and whether they have had a chance to look at any of the information you gave them.

Remember, it can take three or four conversations for some people to feel more confident about the vaccine.

Share any helpful information

A lot of people are not opposed to vaccination but just feel like they don't know enough about it.

Further information



Questions about the vaccine?

Get information
you can trust

Vaccine facts



You can get further information about the vaccine from:

www.nhsselondonvaccinefacts.com

www.selondonccg.nhs.uk

