

# HOW TO TALK TO FRIENDS & FAMILY ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

COVID-19 vaccines are rolling out in Pennsylvania, bringing us new hope and a path back to our lives. Every Pennsylvanian who chooses to get vaccinated brings us a step closer to moving past the COVID-19 pandemic. Together, we can defeat the virus.

Many of us have friends and family who are hesitant to get the vaccine. Here are some ideas for how to talk to loved ones about their concerns in a safe and supportive way.

## Listen with empathy

COVID-19 vaccines are new, and it's normal for people to have questions about them. There is so much information—and misinformation—about COVID-19 vaccines and it can be overwhelming. You can help by listening without judgement and identifying the root of their concerns.

Acknowledge their emotions so they know they have been heard. For example, you can say, "It sounds like you are stressed at work and home, and concerns about the vaccine are another source of stress. That's really tough."

## Ask open-ended questions

Asking open-ended questions can help you understand what your friend or family member is worried about, where they learned any troubling information, and what they have done to get answers to their questions. For example, you can ask, "How did watching that news report make you feel? What did you do next?"

Try not to dismiss their concerns as unreasonable or foolish. For example, avoid things like, "That's a silly concern," or "Why would you be worried about that?"



## Ask if you can share information

When we have good information, we can make good decisions.

Once you understand your loved one's question or concern, ask if you can provide some information, and tell them where you get information you trust. If they agree, they will be more willing to listen to you instead of feeling like you're pushing unwanted information on them.

You can find answers to common questions from reputable sources, including [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) or the PA Unites Against COVID website at [PA.gov/COVID](https://PA.gov/COVID). You can also encourage them to talk to their doctor, nurse, or pharmacist. Sharing quick, accurate answers from trusted sources can go a long way toward moving someone from worry to confidence. If you don't know the answer to their questions, consider offering to help look for information.

## Help them 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.

After addressing concerns with empathy and facts, you can steer the conversation from “why not” to the important reasons that matter to them—their “why.” You may choose to share your reasons for getting vaccinated or discuss common goals you may have, like visiting with each other safely. The reasons that someone may choose to get vaccinated will always be those that are most compelling to them personally.

## Help make their vaccination happen

Once someone decides on their “why,” help them make a commitment to get vaccinated. Help make the path to vaccination shorter, easier, and less stressful for them. Offer to help your family member or friend make a vaccination appointment at a location nearby and, if needed, go with them to the appointment. Offer to help with transportation or to babysit if they need childcare. And if you can't be there in-person, help them find resources and assistance.

## Get connected to resources

Sign up for our weekly email updates and find out more about COVID-19 vaccines at [PA.gov/COVID](https://PA.gov/COVID). You can also get help by calling the PA Department of Health Hotline at 1-877-724-3258.