

# A CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

## Tips for Supporting Employees, Customers and Communities

This guide is intended to help you have productive conversations with your team members about COVID-19 vaccines. You may wish to use this guide for a staff meeting, or even just for small group or one-on-one conversations with employees and workers.

### TIPS FOR A CONVERSATION ABOUT COVID-19 VACCINES

#### **Listen more than you talk.**

This is a conversation, not a debate. It's not your job to convince people to get vaccinated. Rather, you're sharing information to help them make their decision. Be positive, inviting and respectful. Acknowledge "the choice is yours to make with your doctor or healthcare provider."

#### **Lead with empathy.**

Respect people's concerns and acknowledge that it's ok for everyone—even you—to have questions about vaccines. Don't talk down to people, lecture or make people feel guilty. Instead, be understanding, positive and hopeful.

#### **Facts about safety matter.**

Don't just say "the science is solid." Provide facts about the safety and efficacy of vaccines

using the talking points provided below. Remember, you shouldn't give medical advice, so encourage people with more advanced questions to talk with their doctor or healthcare provider. Finally, be sure to speak plainly and in a manner everyone will understand.

#### **Emotions are important.**

Show how vaccinations can help us get back to the things we love, like connecting with others, spending time with family and friends, traveling and going to events. Some people may feel frustrated it is difficult to get an appointment. Listen for these feelings and share facts to help people work through their concerns and frustration.

#### **Be inviting.**

As more people get vaccinated, ask them to share their stories with others. Hearing from someone who's already been vaccinated is one of the best ways to put others at ease. Celebrate the people who have taken this step for their health and the health of others.

#### **Be authentic.**

Share why you're getting vaccinated and why it's important to you and your family. Resources for Dealing with Pandemic-Related Stress & Anxiety.

# SAMPLE TALKING POINTS

## COVID-19 VACCINES ARE SAFE AND THEY WORK.

There are multiple COVID-19 vaccines that have been authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This means the clinical evidence for the vaccines have met the agency's rigorous scientific standards and are considered to be safe and effective. They have been studied in clinical trials with large and diverse groups of people, of various ages, races and ethnicities.

Vaccines teach our immune systems how to recognize and fight the virus that causes COVID-19 without having to get sick or put yourself and others at risk of severe illness and death.

Getting vaccinated is a much safer way to build protection than getting the disease. COVID-19 can have serious, long-term or life-threatening complications, and there is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you. And if you get infected, you could spread the disease to friends, family and others around you.

You may have some side effects after getting vaccinated. That's a normal sign that your body is building protection—and they should go away within a few days. Your arm may be sore or swollen. You may also feel tired, have a headache, fever, or chills. This does not mean you have COVID-19—in fact, it's not possible to get COVID-19 from vaccines.

Vaccines are being administered by trained health professionals. Some people might be offered a vaccine that requires two doses, given several weeks apart, while other people might be offered a single-dose vaccine. It may take several weeks after vaccination for your body to be ready to fight the virus if you are exposed.

## I'M PLEDGING TO GET VACCINATED, AND I HOPE YOU WILL TOO. VACCINES ARE IMPORTANT TO ME AND MY FAMILY BECAUSE...

COVID-19 vaccines can help us get back to the things we love.

They'll help protect me and the people I love from getting COVID-19.

They'll reduce hospitalizations and save lives.

As more people get vaccinated, they'll provide the safety and protection that will allow our economy to fully reopen.

We all want to protect our families, friends and loved ones. We want to get back to the moments we miss with our family and friends. Vaccinations can help us get back to many of the things we miss most, like spending time together, traveling and attending events.

## VACCINES ARE FREE AND WIDELY AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE AGES 12 AND OLDER IN THE UNITED STATES.

All adults over the age of 16 are eligible for vaccination. Children ages 12-15 are eligible for the Pfizer vaccine.

In order to protect yourself and prevent the spread, it's important that you get vaccinated at your earliest opportunity.

Several vaccines have been authorized by the FDA. All of them are safe and effective, so you should take the vaccine that's offered to you.

My top priority is the health and safety of our staff, our families, and our customers.

While we wait to get vaccinated, it's critical that we continue to wear masks (as needed/required), practice social distancing, wash our hands, and avoid crowds.

If you're exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms, stay home except to get medical care.

You should get tested for COVID-19 if you have symptoms, have close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more) with someone with confirmed COVID-19, or take part in activities that put you at higher risk for COVID-19

Even after you are vaccinated, please continue wearing a mask (as needed/required), washing your hands, staying home when you're sick and practicing social distancing while our community builds up immunity.

Our workplace will continue to (state your policy, e.g. "require masks and social distancing").

## I WANT TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOU TO GET VACCINATED. HERE'S HOW I'M GOING TO HELP.

*Note: These are examples of ways that small businesses can help. Not every small business will be able to offer these types of benefits or incentives, but you are encouraged to consider offering what you can.*

I will offer paid time off to any employee or worker who gets vaccinated. (Many businesses are offering between 4-6 hours per vaccine dose.)

I will provide a transportation voucher (i.e. Uber/Lyft gift card, bus pass, subway card, etc.) to help cover your transportation costs to and from a vaccine site.

I will reimburse your meals on the day(s) you get vaccinated, up to \$[amount].

I will reimburse you for child care expenses during your vaccine appointment(s), up to \$[amount].

I will offer internet access or language support services to help you schedule your appointment when it's your turn.

If you do experience side effects, I'll offer paid leave to help you fully recover.

I'll make sure you have the latest information about where to get vaccines. ([Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) can help you locate a vaccine site near you.)





## CONVERSATION STARTERS

I thought we could start with a conversation about how everyone is feeling about vaccines, and what information you need to answer any questions. My role is to support you and help you find the answers you need.

Does anyone know someone who has gotten vaccinated?

Has anyone here gotten vaccinated and want to share your story?

Is anyone especially excited or ready to get vaccinated? Why is that?

Is there anything I can do to make it easier for you to get vaccinated at your earliest opportunity?

For those of you still deciding, I have some information to share, and then let's talk through your questions. I won't be able to answer them all, but I'll do my best to make sure you know where to get answers.

And if there are any questions I can't answer, I encourage you to ask them to your doctor or another healthcare professional.

### It is normal to have questions.

Talk to your doctor or healthcare provider. We all need to be comfortable with our decisions and your doctor can help.

OK...what questions do you have?

## RESOURCES FOR EMPLOYEES

- [Small Business Guide to COVID-19 Vaccines](#) (Also in [Spanish](#).)
- Handout: [COVID-19 Vaccines: What You Need to Know](#) (Also in [Spanish](#).)
- Handout: [COVID-19 Vaccines: Frequently Asked Questions](#) (Also in [Spanish](#).)
- Handout: [COVID-19 Vaccines: Myths & Facts](#) (Also in [Spanish](#).)
- [Dealing with Pandemic Stress & Anxiety](#)

*Please visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page for the most up-to-date information.*