



Relevant Facts and Strategies for Addressing COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy for Clinicians

1. Listen with empathy

Don't dismiss patient questions about the vaccines. Acknowledge how they're feeling without necessarily agreeing, for example "It's okay to have questions or want more information."

2. Ask open-ended questions

Open-ended questions, such as "What have you heard about the COVID vaccines?" or "Why do you feel that way?" to better understand their concerns. Elicit any inner conflict about getting vaccine through double – sided reflections. For example, "You are concerned about the risks about the vaccines, and you have also seen what COVID has done to people you care about."

3. Share trusted information

To respond to concerns, keep these simple facts in mind (see below). When you don't know how to address their concern, offer to help find answers. Asking for permission before offering information to help build trust and collaboration. Avoid pushing unwanted information on them. After you present information, ask for their thoughts on what you just shared.

4. Explore value of getting vaccinated

Benefits: Protect family and friends, keep working, attend games and concerts, or travel. Consider sharing your own reasons for getting vaccinated and experience with vaccination. More positive stories might balance out the negative stories that patients hear.

5. Refer patients for vaccination

If patients decide to get vaccinated, tell them about nearby places where vaccines are offered on a walk-in basis (e.g., CVS or your closest pharmacy). Even write them a prescription, e.g., "1 dose of J&J or 2 doses of Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine ASAP."

Adapted from World Health Organization (<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/how-to-talk-about-vaccines>)



Responding to Concerns from Patients:

Severity of COVID-19

1 in every 500 Americans has died of COVID-19. It is a threat to every American

COVID-19 vaccines are protective against serious COVID-19 complications, including hospitalization and death

"This vaccine was rushed, it's not safe"

All vaccines went through 3 phases of clinical trials to test for safety and efficacy

The process was open and transparent, and followed by the FDA and CDC

mRNA vaccines have been studied for over 10 yearsⁱⁱⁱ

"I'm scared of side effects or long-term effects"

Vaccine side effects such as slight fever, arm soreness, and fatigue are normal signs that your body is building protection. If they occur, over the counter medications such as acetaminophen are useful to reduce

Complications from vaccine are rare but serious side effects are much more common in people who get the infection (See Figure 1.)

People who are infected can have long-term complications that can last a month or more

"I don't want to be vaccinated and I don't like any vaccinations"

Risks for unvaccinated vs. vaccinated persons: 5 times more likely to be infected ⁱ, 29 times more likely to be hospitalized ⁱⁱ, 11 times more likely to die ²

Vaccinations are standard in all 50 states because all mandate childhood vaccines. Most parents will acknowledge the value of vaccines against severe infections (e.g. measles) in children

"I already had COVID, I don't need the vaccine"

You should still get vaccinated to strengthen your immunity ^{iv}

It is possible to be infected with COVID-19 more than once

"I am young and healthy, so I don't need to get the vaccine."

Younger, healthier unvaccinated people are now being infected, hospitalized, and dying of COVID-19 ³

Adult 18 to 49 are now more likely to be infected and put their children at risk ^v (See Figure 2.)

1 in 4 infections recently have been in children under the age of 18 ^{vi}

More recent COVID-19 variant (Delta) is easily spread to others, even by infected persons with no or minimal symptoms

When more people get vaccinated, it protects everyone from infection ^{vii}

"I'm trying to get pregnant and the vaccine will make me infertile"

The vaccine is recommended by the CDC for women of child-bearing years or who are pregnant

The vaccine has been effective and safe for pregnant women

Over 200,00 women who received the vaccine (Pfizer & Moderna) were able to get pregnant ^{viii}

CDC says no evidence that shows vaccine ingredients can interfere with pregnancy ^{ix}

> 125,000 pregnant women have been infected ¹⁰

97% of hospitalized pregnant cases are unvaccinated ¹⁰

Those who are unvaccinated are more likely to have severe infection, pregnancy complications, and even die ^x

"I am worried that Immigration will have access to my information "

There is equal access to vaccines for undocumented immigrants ^{xiii}

"I do not want to pay for a vaccine" or "There should be incentives for receiving a vaccine."

All vaccines are free

An important incentive is that many businesses require proof of vaccination among workers

Concerts and other forms of entertainment require proof of vaccination or recent negative test

"I'm allergic to eggs so I can't get the vaccine" or "I'm afraid of having an allergic reaction"

None of the vaccines contain eggs ^{xi}

If you have severe vaccine allergies, tell the team and they will observe you for 30 min after the vaccination

Severe allergy (anaphylaxis) is extremely rare: in 4.7 cases per 1 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine, and 2.5 cases per 1 million doses of Moderna vaccine ^{xii} No one has died.

"It is too inconvenient for me. I don't want to go twice. The hours don't work with my schedule"

J&J vaccine is one dose only

Local pharmacies offer COVID-19 vaccination, so it is more convenient for you

Many clinics and vaccine sites are open on the weekends

"The vaccine will alter my DNA"

mRNA only teaches cells how to make a protein to trigger an immune response

Our cells will then break down the mRNA ¹¹

mRNA will not interact with your DNA

Figure 1. Absolute Excess Risk of Various Adverse Events after Vaccination or SARS-CoV-2 Infection Barda N et al. ^{xiv}

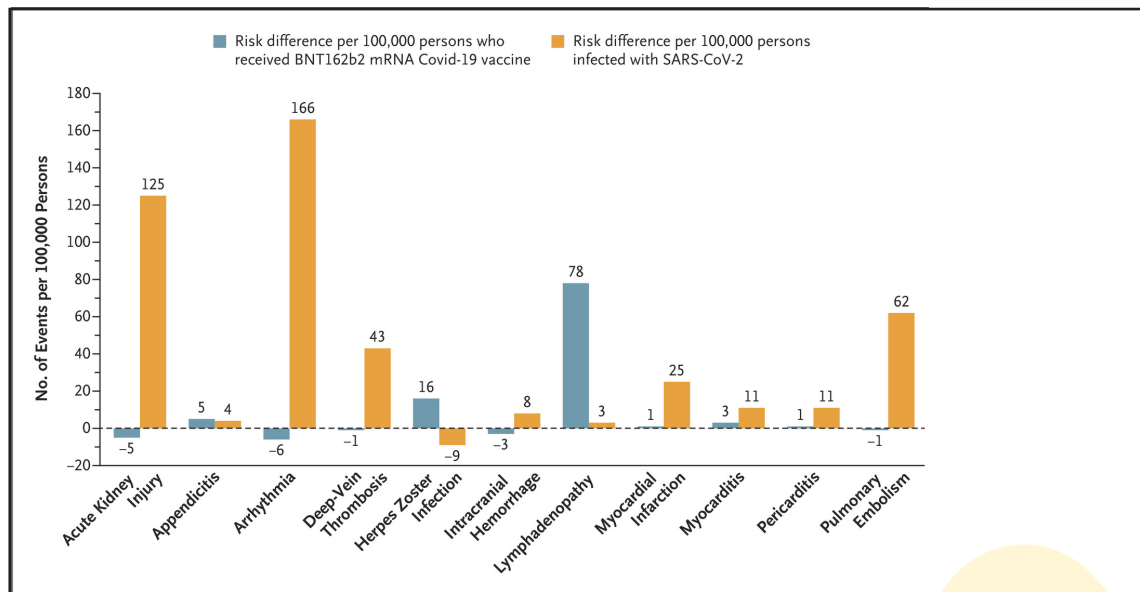
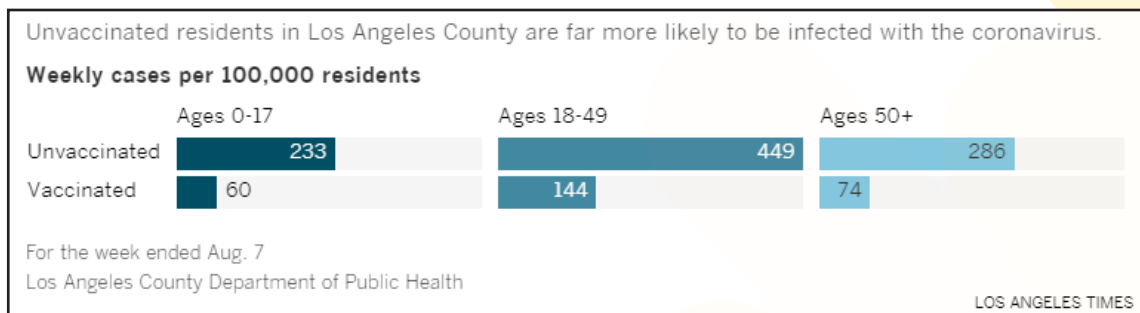


Figure 2. Unvaccinated LA County residents are far more likely to be infected with the coronavirus. Los Angeles Times, August 23, 2021. ⁵



For more information, please see the following resources:

VaccinateLA: <https://vaccinatela.info/>

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics: <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/>

LA Times: <https://www.latimes.com/projects/california-coronavirus-cases-tracking-outbreak/>

We Can Do This: <https://wecandothis.hhs.gov/key-things-know-about-covid-19-spanish>

North Carolina COVID-19 Metrics: <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/vaccines>

- ⁱ Griffin, J.B., Haddix, M., Danza, P., et al. Sars-Cov-2 Infections and Hospitalizations Among Persons Aged ≥16 years, By Vaccination Status – Los Angeles County, California, May 1-July 25, 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Weekly Rep* 2021;70:1170-1176. Doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7037e1external icon>
- ⁱⁱ Scobie HM, Johnson AG, Suthar AB, et al. Monitoring Incidence of COVID-19 Cases, Hospitalizations, and Deaths, by Vaccination Status – 13 U.S. Jurisdictions, April 4–July 17, 2021. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. ePub: 10 September 2021. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7037e1external icon>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Nebraska Medicine. (2021, August 19). Were the COVID-19 vaccine rushed? Here's how the vaccines were developed so fast. *Nebraska Medicine*. <https://www.nebraskamed.com/COVID/were-the-covid-19-vaccines-rushed>
- ^{iv} CDC. (2021, September 9). Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 Vaccination. *CDC*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/faq.html>
- ^v Lin, R.G., Money, L. (2021, August 23). Breakthrough Infections Rise in LA County; Young Adults Most Infected With Coronavirus. *LA Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-08-23/la-me-young-adults-hit-by-covid-19-breakthrough-infections>
- ^{vi} American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021, September 13). Children and COVID-19: State-Level Data Reports. *American Academy of Pediatrics*. <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/>
- ^{vii} John Hopkins. (2021, July 21). I'm a Healthy Young Person. Why Should I Get a COVID Vaccine? *John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health*. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/im-a-healthy-young-person-why-should-i-get-a-covid-vaccine>
- ^{viii} Satin, A., Sheffield, J. (2021, August 23). The COVID-19 Vaccine and Pregnancy: What You Need to Know. *John Hopkins Medicine*. <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/the-covid19-vaccine-and-pregnancy-what-you-need-to-know>
- ^{ix} CDC. (2021, August 11). COVID-19 Vaccines While Pregnant or Breastfeeding. *CDC*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/pregnancy.html>
- ^x CDC Health Advisory. (2021, September 29). COVID-19 Vaccination for Pregnant People to Prevent Serious Illness, Deaths, and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes from COVID-19. *CDC Health Alert Network*. <https://emergency.cdc.gov/han/2021/han00453.asp>
- ^{xi} Mayo Clinic. (2021, September 2). COVID-19 vaccine myths debunked. *Mayo Clinic Health System*. <https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/featured-topic/covid-19-vaccine-myths-debunked>
- ^{xii} Shimabukuro, T., Cole, M., Su, J.R. (2021, February 12). Reports of Anaphylaxis After Receipt of mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines in the US – Dec 14, 2020 – Jan 18, 2021. *JAMA*. 2021;325(11):1101-1102. doi:10.1001/jama.2021.1967
- ^{xiii} DHS. (2021, February 1). DHS Statement on Equal Access to COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccine Distribution Sites. *Department of Homeland Security*. <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2021/02/01/dhs-statement-equal-access-covid-19-vaccines-and-vaccine-distribution-sites>
- ^{xiv} Barda, N., Dagan, N., Ben-Shlomo, Y., Kepten, E., Waxman, J., Ohana, R., Hernan, M.A., Lipstich, M., Kohane, I., Netzer, D., Reis, B., and Balicer, R.D. (2021, August 25). Safety of the BNT162b2 mRNA Covid-19 Vaccine in a Nationwide Setting. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa2110475>

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