

Communicating with your patients about the COVID-19 Vaccine

As COVID-19 vaccines are distributed and administered across the U.S., we, as dental professionals, need to be prepared to communicate with our patients about the vaccine. Some patients will be excited about the vaccine while others may be hesitant to receive it. All patients fall on a continuum, with those demanding the vaccine on one end of the spectrum and those refusing the vaccine on the other end (see CDC diagram below). It's the patients in the middle of that spectrum that will often benefit the most from factual conversations about the risks and benefits of the vaccine.



[CDC: Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines Among Your Patients - Tips for the Healthcare Team, slide 18](#)

Having high-quality conversations with our patients about the COVID-19 vaccine is exactly what RADM Timothy Ricks, the USPHS Chief Dental Officer, recommended in his January 18, 2021 USPHS Chief Dental Officer Newsletter. He noted **“the key contribution of oral health professionals may be simply to provide education to all of our patients about the safety and efficacy of the vaccine and to refer patients who are in the current vaccination group (as specified in each state vaccination plan) to a location that administers the vaccine.”**

The following COVID-19 vaccine resources from the CDC and NIH will help you prepare for conversations with your patients about the vaccine. Because resources are rapidly being developed, you are encouraged to periodically revisit the NIH and CDC COVID-19 vaccination webpages for the latest information.

COVID-19 Vaccine Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [CDC COVID-19 Vaccination](#) - CDC's COVID-19 vaccination webpage
- [COVID-19 Vaccination Communication Toolkit](#) – this webpage has a lot of helpful presentations, posters, [fact sheets](#), and FAQs
- [Talking to Recipients about COVID-19 Vaccines](#) – this webpage includes patient education materials as well as provider training
- [Understanding and Explaining mRNA COVID-19 Vaccines](#) – this resource covers the mechanism of action of COVID-19 mRNA vaccines

- [Answering Patients' Questions](#) – this webpage contains questions and answers related to vaccine safety and side effects
- [Continuing the Journey of a COVID-19 Vaccine](#) – this patient education material is designed for those who would like to know more about the COVID-19 vaccine approval and safety monitoring process
- [COVID-19 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\) Vaccine Recommendations](#) – this webpage outlines the current recommendations for allocation (i.e. phase 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2) of COVID-19 vaccine
- [COVID-19 Vaccinations in the United States](#) – this webpage tracks the number of COVID-19 vaccine doses distributed and administered by state/territory.

National Institutes of Health

- [NIH COVID-19 Vaccine Resources](#) – NIH's COVID-19 vaccines webpage
- [A Communicator's Tip Sheet for COVID-19 Vaccination](#) – this tip sheet lists Do's and Don'ts for communicating about the COVID-19 vaccination
- [Shareable Resources on Coping with COVID-19](#) – although this webpage is not specifically about the vaccine, there are several mental health infographics to help our patients cope with the pandemic