

COVID-19 Vaccine Education:

A guide for conversations with nursing home team members

Information current as of 1-14-2021

**AHRQ ECHO National Nursing
Home COVID-19 Action Network**



AMDA – The Society for Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine contributed to this slide presentation



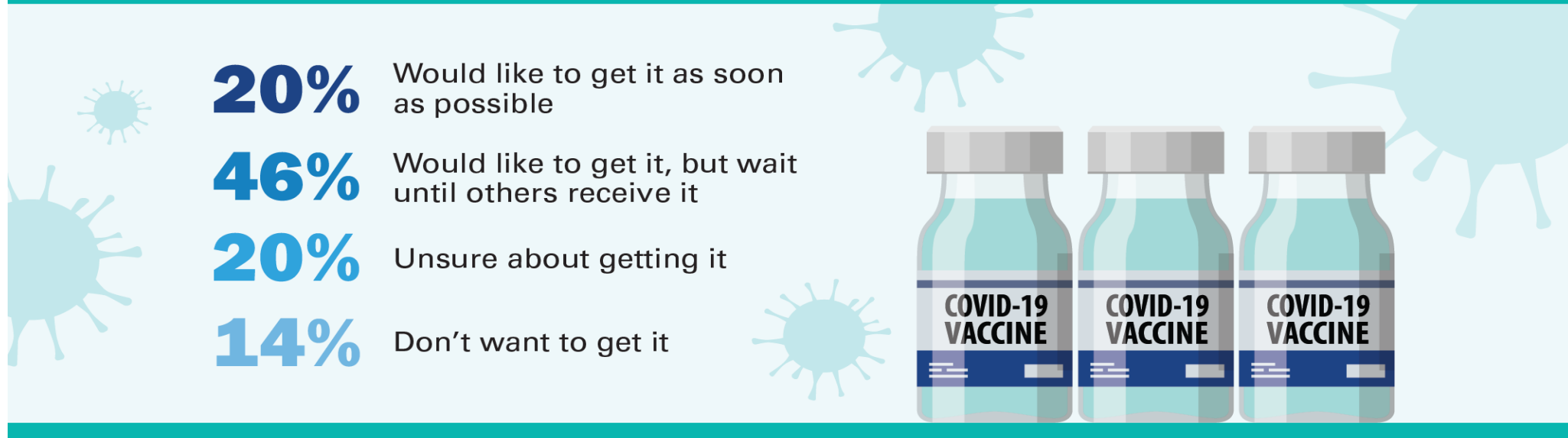
COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy is real

- Specific LTC staff concerns may include:
 - “Being first” – are there things about the vaccine that we do not understand yet?
 - Safety – are there longer-term side effects?
 - How long will the protection last?
 - What is Emergency Use Authorization (EUA)?
- Updated CDC information may be found at:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/toolkits/long-term-care/faqs.html>

COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy is Common

National Poll on Healthy Aging report, University of Michigan (November, 2020)

Views on Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine AMONG ADULTS AGE 50-80



Malani P, Singer D, Solway E, Kirch M, Kullgren J. Older Adults' Perspectives on a COVID-19 Vaccine. University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging. November 2020. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/2027.42/163523>

How to Frame the Conversation

- Most Important: *This is what we have been waiting for!*
 - This is how we save lives, our own and everyone around us.
 - For the first time in the United States, long term care staff are first. We have risked our lives caring for residents and now we can protect one another by getting the vaccine.
- Meet people where they are:
 - Designate a quiet, safe, comfortable area for conversations with educators/facilitators that staff trust.
 - Everyone has questions and concerns – do not rush.
 - Listen and respond clearly and compassionately.
 - Answer questions with respect and honesty.

COVID-19 Education: questions to anticipate

- Is the vaccine safe?
- Should we trust health experts and the government when the vaccine was developed so quickly?
- How do COVID-19 vaccines work? Is there new technology and could that cause harm?
- What is an emergency use authorization (EUA) and what does that mean for me?
- How soon after the second vaccine will I be protected, and for how long?
- Will I still need to wear a mask?
- **What are the possible short and longer-term side effects?**

COVID-19 Education: questions to anticipate

- I'd rather wait until other people (my coworkers) have gotten the vaccine and see how they do; then I'll consider getting it during the second clinic. Is that ok?
- What if I had COVID-19 or if I have tested positive for antibodies – should I still get the vaccine?
- Could I get COVID-19 illness from the vaccine?
- Could someone in my family (household) 'catch' COVID-19 from me if I get vaccinated?
- I am pregnant – is the COVID-19 vaccine safe during pregnancy?
- I am breast feeding – is COVID-19 vaccine safe during breast feeding?
- Can the vaccine lead to infertility?

COVID-19 Education: questions to anticipate

- I am under 18 years old – can I still get the vaccine?
- Are there medical or other contraindications to getting the vaccine?
- I am worried about missing work due to side effects and I need the money. will nursing home management handle that?
- I get my information from Facebook or other social media – is there anything wrong with that?

Are the COVID-19 Vaccines Safe?

- Currently approved COVID-19 vaccines are considered to be safe and effective.
- Most side effects occur within 6 weeks of someone getting the vaccine. FDA has required 8 weeks of safety monitoring.
- FDA advises a minimum of 3,000 participants to assess safety. Current studies have 30,000 to 50,000 participants.
- This demonstrates how safety is a top priority for the FDA and the healthcare community.

Should we Trust the Healthcare System about COVID-19 Vaccine Safety?

- YES
- The FDA is using the same standards as it has for years.
- There are no steps being 'skipped' in vaccine development or safety evaluation.
- There are two advisory committees:
 - The Vaccine and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) that advises the FDA
 - The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) that advises the CDC.

Are there Any Concerns about Vaccine Technology?

- mRNA Vaccines – vaccine does not use live virus or killed viral particles
 - The vaccine helps our bodies build antibodies against the COVID-19 virus in case we are exposed in the future
 - mRNA technology is not new – it has been used before
- Can these new technologies give me COVID-19? **NO**
- Can these new technologies change my DNA? **NO**

What is an EUA and what does that mean for me?

- An Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for a vaccine is based on the need to use a vaccine quickly to save lives during a public health emergency.
- EUA is a shorter process **but no steps are skipped in the safety evaluation process.**
- The FDA will assess if the vaccine's known and potential benefits outweigh the known and potential risks.
- Both advisory boards (VRBPAC and ACIP) will also review all the data and make recommendations
- An EUA does not mean that authorization was done too quickly or that the vaccine is not safe

When and How Long will I be protected by the COVID-19 Vaccine?

- Most of the vaccines are 2 doses, 3-4 weeks apart
- Protection begins 1-2 weeks after the second dose
- We will most likely not know how long the vaccine will be protective when we receive it
 - More research is needed
- We may need to have vaccine shots for COVID-19 on a regular basis (like the flu shot) but we do not know this yet

Will I still need to wear a mask after I receive the vaccine?

YES!

Current vaccines are about 90-95% effective.

Wearing a mask, practicing social distancing and consistent hand washing will protect others, especially nursing home residents.

What are possible short and longer-term side effects?

Will the vaccine make me sick?

- The vaccine will not give you COVID-19
- Short-term discomfort: headache, muscle pains, fatigue, chills, fever, pain at injection site. These side effects are normal and common. They last 1-2 days.
 - It means your body is doing its job and making antibodies (IT IS A GOOD THING)
 - Side effects could be more pronounced with the second dose.
- More serious reactions may include shortness of breath, cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell. If these or other reactions occur, consult your healthcare provider right away.
- EACH PERSON MUST COME BACK FOR A SECOND DOSE FOR THE VACCINE TO BE EFFECTIVE (must be the same brand of vaccine as the first dose.)

I'd rather wait until other people (my coworkers) have gotten the vaccine and see how they do; then I'll consider getting it during the second clinic.

Is that ok?

- We appreciate this concern. The good news is that tens of thousands of people have already been vaccinated.
- It is important that as many eligible people get vaccinated as soon as possible in order to achieve the best results
- Having staff vaccinated on two different days allows people to cover for one another in case someone is out for a day due to side effects
- The longer each person waits to be vaccinated, the greater the chance of contracting COVID-19 illness and possibly spreading it to nursing home residents, coworkers or family members

Could someone in my family (household) 'catch' COVID-19 from me if I get vaccinated?

- **NO.** There is no evidence that people who have received the vaccine are contagious or can spread COVID-19 to family or household members due to the vaccine
- However, it is possible that someone is infected with COVID-19, asymptomatic, and could spread the virus to others unrelated to receiving the vaccine
- Standard recommendations apply within households in order to prevent spread: wear a mask; keep at least six feet apart from one another; use frequent, thorough hand washing; clean/disinfect frequently used surfaces such as light switches and door handles.

Questions about Pregnancy, Breast Feeding, Fertility

- I am pregnant – is it safe for me to get the vaccine?
 - If someone who is pregnant is part of a group designated to receive the vaccine (e.g., healthcare workers), she may choose to be vaccinated. There is limited data on vaccine safety in pregnancy; however, pregnancy by itself is not a contraindication at this time. It is recommended that each person discuss the risks and benefits of vaccination with their healthcare provider
- I am lactating or breast feeding – is the vaccine safe for me and safe for my baby?
 - There is no data on vaccine safety during lactating or breast feeding. It is recommended that each person discuss vaccination with their healthcare provider

Questions about Pregnancy, Breast Feeding, Fertility

- I might want to get pregnant in the future – are there risks of infertility with the vaccine?
 - There is no data yet on fertility after the vaccine. The vaccine has not been associated with infertility
 - It is recommended that each person discuss options with their healthcare provider

I am under 18 years old – can I still get the vaccine?

- The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been approved for ages 16 and up
- The Moderna vaccine has been approved for ages 18 and up
- Studies are being done to determine whether or not the vaccine is safe in younger children
- This guidance may be updated soon – please check back for updates
- Most states require parental consent for someone under age 18 to receive the vaccine

Are there medical or other contraindications to getting the vaccine?

- There are a few serious health conditions that may suggest someone should not take the vaccine. Most people with chronic health conditions are still recommended to receive the vaccine.
- Certain allergies or a history of severe allergic reactions to ingredients in the vaccine may be a contraindication to receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.
- These questions should be discussed with your healthcare provider.

I am worried about missing work and not getting paid – I need the money. How will nursing homes handle that?

- Each nursing home will have policies for when staff should remain out of work after being vaccinated (for example, depending on particular symptoms or side effects)
- Each nursing home should establish paid sick leave policies regarding days off for all workers, to reduce barriers to getting the vaccine

Where are you getting your information?

- It is important to get information from reliable sources (CDC, medical directors, providers) **Social media (Facebook and other sites) may have misinformation and opinions. Reliable sites include:**
- **CDC:** <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/covid-conversations/answering-questions.html>
- CDC: About COVID-19 vaccines: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/about-vaccines.html>
- CDC: Provider Resources for COVID-19 Vaccine Conversations with Patients and Answering Patients' Questions: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/covid-conversations/>

You are the leader and role model

- Tell your own vaccine story: talk about how you will make or how you made your decision
- Lead by doing. Discuss with staff/family/care partners your decision to get the vaccine and talk about your experience after you got immunized
- Talk about how you felt, if any side effects, that they only lasted for a few days after the vaccine
- Continue to invite questions and provide information
- Listen, listen and listen again

QUESTIONS?

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