

10 tips for talking about vaccinations

As with any conversation, the approach you take will be key:

1. Remember the aim of the conversation is to gain trust and support people to hopefully accept vaccinations.



2. Raising the subject gives the message that this is important and gives permission to ask questions.



3. Ask questions to help understand the individual's main concerns. Listen to them.

4. Be empathetic. Tell them you understand why they might be concerned and why they may have questions.



5. Acknowledge we all want what's best for ourselves and our loved ones.

6. Avoid fact-filled lectures which could be counterproductive. Stick to the concerns raised and provide a limited number of main points in response, expressed simply.



7. Focus on the risk to them. Many people have little experience of diseases because of other successful vaccination programmes.



8. Identify a myth as being false and focus on the benefits of vaccination while acknowledging the side affects of vaccines.



9. Highlight the consensus among health professionals and scientists about the evidence in support of vaccination. Confirming that you've received the vaccine sets an important example.



10. If people decide not to be vaccinated, **be clear they can change their mind at any stage** and leave the door open for further discussion.



These practical tips are adapted from Bedford H and Elliman (2019) : BMJ