

## Reinforcing the Need for Vaccination

To reinforce the need for vaccination, you may want to inform the patient of how vaccines have helped prevent several diseases. Considering using one of these options:

- “Vaccines have greatly reduced infection risk, hospitalization rates, and the severity of the disease if a person happens to contract it”
- “If people stop receiving vaccines, these diseases may become more common and rates of infection could increase”

If the individual is a younger, healthy individual who expresses that they are not worried about being hospitalized or contracting an infection, consider this approach:

- “Vaccines offer a safe and effective way to protect people against harmful diseases, which can affect anyone. Also, vaccines protect not only yourself, but those around you like family and friends.”

Make sure to avoid intimidating the patient to get a vaccine when stating these facts.

The patient should always feel as though they have autonomy in their decisions regarding their health.

Towards the end of the encounter, you could reinforce this idea using one of these statements:

- “It is always your choice whether or not to receive a vaccine. I just want to give you the information”
- “I hope this conversation has helped. It is your right to choose whether or not to get a vaccine, we just want to make sure you feel comfortable with the decision”

If the patient remains adamant about not wanting to receive a vaccine, let them know that they can always return if they change their mind and that you would be happy to administer their vaccine.

**Vaccines prevent up to 3 million deaths worldwide each year** and have reduced some disease rates by 99.9% since their creation. Vaccination is a vital tool in protecting patients and the community.

Patients may be hesitant to receive their vaccines for several reasons. Conversations with this patient population should always be conducted in a professional manner, with the patient’s best interests in mind.

## A Shot for Alabama Support



For help with COVID-19 vaccine questions, concerns, and assistance with vaccine scheduling, you can contact the Shot for Alabama Call Center:

**334-844-2018**



For More Information on COVID-19 Vaccines and Resources, please visit our webpage:

**<https://aub.ie/shot4alabama/>**



A Shot for Alabama is a collaboration between the Harrison College of Pharmacy and the Alabama Cooperative Extension System



**AUBURN UNIVERSITY**  
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# LET’S TALK ABOUT VACCINE HESITANCY



# A SHOT FOR ALABAMA



## Background

Studies have shown that 22% to 60% of practicing physicians in the United States, Canada, and Europe are hesitant to routinely recommend vaccinations to their patients. This leads to lower vaccine acceptance and immunization rates. Therefore, education on how to confidently discuss vaccines with patients is critical.

However, other individuals can contribute to the vaccination movement, including parents, caregivers, and trusted community stakeholders. Community-based strategies can help augment clinical vaccine hesitancy interventions. These individuals should also be aware of effective strategies to use while discussing vaccinations with community members.

Vaccine hesitancy is influenced by several factors, including the following:

- Lack of confidence in how well the vaccines works to provide protection
- Possible side effects
- Growing spread of misinformation
- Individual's unawareness of potential benefits of vaccines or risks of being unvaccinated
- Barriers to accessing vaccines, including lack of transportation or inability to pay

Discussing the details of a vaccine, such as evidence supporting its efficacy and safety, can help the person become more well-informed and may encourage them to receive the vaccine.



## Starting a Conversation with a Vaccine Hesitant Patient

It is important to approach the discussion with a vaccine hesitant patient in a way that makes them feel comfortable and gives them the option to speak freely.

Begin the conversation using these opening questions:

- “What reservations do you have about receiving this vaccine?”
- “What are some reasons you feel hesitant to receive this vaccine?”

Using open-ended questions allows you to begin the conversation at the patient's level without making any assumptions and determine why the patient is hesitant to help you decide further talking points when addressing the patient's concerns.

## Responding to Patient Concerns

When responding to the patient's reservations about receiving a vaccine, reinforce the fact that their concerns are understandable to avoid invalidating their beliefs.

You can first reply with reassuring statements such as these:

- “I completely understand your concerns and can see why these would make you hesitant to receive this vaccine”.
- “It is normal to be hesitant about receiving vaccines as it's a big decision. Would you be open to having a discussion about vaccination today?”

After ensuring that the patient feels like their concerns have been acknowledged and feels understood, you can then discuss the specific reasons why they are hesitant.

## Hesitancy Due to Inconvenience

If a patient denies vaccination due to factors of inconvenience, inform the patient of ways to make the process easier and less time consuming.

Consider responding to patient concerns with one of these options:

- “It does seem inconvenient to travel here multiple times for your vaccines. It is possible to give you multiple vaccines in a single visit depending on the type of vaccine.”
- “How would you feel about receiving multiple vaccines in one visit? This is sometimes an option.”

This may make the process simpler for the patient and encourage them to receive their vaccine(s).



## Hesitancy Due to Efficacy and Safety Concerns

When discussing the efficacy of a vaccine with a patient who has reservations about how well the vaccine works, only use evidence-based information from non-biased, credible resources or speak with your local pharmacist or physician.

When discussing the safety of a vaccine, it is important to give the patient honest information about the documented side effects that could occur. Reassure the patient that most vaccinations are generally well-tolerated, with injection site soreness, chills, and mild fever as typical side effects that are usually mild and resolve within a few days.