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# Talking Points for Health Care Leaders to Encourage Vaccine Confidence

## Building Vaccine Confidence in Health Systems and Clinics

Nurses are among the first priority groups to receive a COVID-19 vaccine in the United States. An important way to increase COVID-19 vaccination rates is building vaccine confidence among nurses within health systems, medical practices, and clinics.

These talking points can be used by leadership to increase vaccine confidence with their nurses.

### 1. Start from a place of empathy and understanding

- The pandemic has been stressful for everyone, especially on nurses and health care workers.
- The first step is to acknowledge the disruption COVID-19 has caused in all our lives and provide a space to discuss common concerns about COVID-19 and the vaccines.

### 2. Available COVID-19 vaccines

- In clinical trials, the FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccines were highly effective at preventing COVID-19 and were nearly 100% effective at preventing COVID-related hospitalizations and deaths.
- The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are mRNA vaccines. For full protection, they require two doses. To work properly, the second dose must be from the same vaccine manufacturer as the first. That means if your first dose was the Moderna vaccine, your second dose must also be the Moderna vaccine.

### 3. How the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines work

- mRNA vaccines carry genetic material that teaches cells how to make a harmless protein found on the surface of the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Genetic material from the vaccine is destroyed by our cells once copies of the protein are made and it's no longer needed.
- Our bodies recognize the protein shouldn't be there and build T-cells and B-cells that will remember how to fight the real virus that causes COVID-19 if you're infected in the future.

- mRNA vaccines don't affect our DNA because mRNA doesn't enter the cell nucleus where DNA resides.
- mRNA COVID-19 vaccines can't give you COVID-19 because they don't contain the live virus that causes COVID-19.

## 4. Side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines

- It's common to have mild side effects after getting vaccinated. It's especially common after the second dose of the mRNA vaccines.
- Possible side effects include:
  - Soreness or swelling at the injection site
  - Fever
  - Chills
  - Fatigue
  - Headache
- These side effects are signs that your immune system is doing exactly what it's supposed to do. It's working and building up protection against the virus.
- We've seen no trends of serious or long-term side effects. Side effects usually last a few days at most.

## 5. Safety

- COVID-19 vaccines are being held to the same safety and effectiveness standards as all vaccines.
- The FDA and CDC are intensely monitoring the administration of vaccines to assure their safety.
- Tens of millions of people have received COVID 19 vaccines in the United States. Many people have reported only mild side effects after vaccination. And there's no evidence that vaccination has contributed to any deaths.

## 6. Vaccine distribution

- The federal government supervises a centralized system to order, distribute, and track COVID-19 vaccines.
- The CDC orders all vaccines.
- Vaccination providers receive vaccines from CDC's centralized distributor or directly from a vaccine manufacturer.
- States and jurisdictions across the United States are using different Web-based applications for vaccination clinic management.

## 7. Getting vaccinated

- Each state has its own plan for deciding which groups of people will be vaccinated first. But vaccinating nurses and other health care workers is a priority.

- Contact your state health department for more information on its plan for COVID-19 vaccination and to find out which vaccination management system they're using for vaccine enrollment and scheduling.

## 8. Empowering your workforce

Empower nurses by helping them to feel confident in their decision to get vaccinated and to recommend vaccination to their patients. This is the element that is most important for your discussion.

Empowering Tactics:

- Engage local and national professional associations, health systems, and health care personnel often and early to ensure a clear understanding of the vaccine development and approval process, new vaccine technologies, and the benefits of vaccination.
- Ensure your practice(s) is equipped to create a culture that builds confidence in COVID-19 vaccination.
- Strengthen the capacity of nurses to have empathetic vaccine conversations, address myths and common questions, provide tailored vaccine information to patients, and use motivational interviewing techniques when needed.

## 9. Five strategies for building COVID-19 vaccine confidence among health care personnel

- Encourage senior leaders to be vaccine champions.
- Host discussions where personnel at different levels can provide input and ask questions.
- Share key messages with staff through emails, break room posters, and other channels.
- Provide information and resources to health care teams about COVID-19 vaccines, how they've been developed and monitored for safety, and how teams can talk to others about the vaccines.
- Make the decision to get vaccinated visible and celebrate it.

## 10. Use the tools available

- There are several materials on the CDC website like toolkits that include posters, fact sheets, and social media content that you can use to increase vaccine confidence in your clinic or facility.
- For more information and to view the toolkits, visit [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus).