

HOW TO COUNTER VACCINE MISINFORMATION WITH PATIENTS



Misinformation on social media and other channels can affect vaccine confidence. As trusted messengers, health care providers are essential in helping patients find and follow reliable, evidence-based information.



Follow the steps below to learn how to counter false information.



USE AN EMPATHETIC, COLLABORATIVE, AND CONCISE APPROACH

Establish trust and likeability with patients so that they follow your guidance over misinformation online or elsewhere. Remember to:

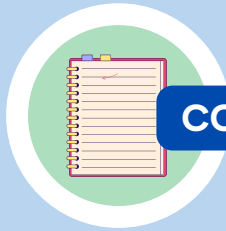
- Listen attentively to people's concerns and communicate clearly and simply.
- Instead of relying solely on scientific information, share your own experience about choosing to vaccinate yourself and your family.
- Maintain a friendly and welcoming tone. Shaming, arguing, or judging can harm efforts to build trust and collaboration.
- Promote collaboration and acknowledge shared goals. Say, "It is clear we both want improved health and safety for everyone in our community, including you."



KNOW THE SOURCE OF MISINFORMATION

- To address misinformation in your community, you must first learn more about it: where, when, why and how it starts, spreads, and evolves.
- Understand where the questions and knowledge gaps may exist for your patients.
- Listen to and analyze misinformation circulating in your community through social and traditional media.

How to Counter Vaccine Misinformation with Patients



CONFIRM WHAT INFORMATION IS FACTUAL

- Be mindful that when a myth is re-stated to a patient, it may stand out more than the truth.
- The myth could be that "COVID-19 vaccines make people sick." A provider's response should be: **"While you may feel sick after getting a COVID-19 vaccine, that is a sign your body is building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19."**
- Be honest about what is known and unknown. Then, counter myths and misinformation with evidence-based facts. Share materials and websites that are authored by experts.



PREVENT AND ADDRESS MISINFORMATION

- Hospital systems can partner with community groups and organizations to develop public health messages tailored to the populations they serve.
- Hospitals, facilities, and office staff should be trained on how to address misinformation, accounting for patients' diverse needs, concerns, backgrounds, and experiences.



PROVIDE INFORMATION AND FOLLOW UP

- Give patients accurate, clear, and easy to find information that answers common questions. This can be through office visits, your website or social media posts, or other places where they obtain health or vaccination information.
- If a patient refuses vaccination during one visit, keep the vaccination conversation going. Follow up with them and discuss vaccines again during their next office visit.

For the Surgeon General's Toolkit on Misinformation, visit:
vaccinesourcehub.org/resource/toolkit-confronting-health-misinformation