



Helping clients move past barriers to get vaccinated for measles

A resource for Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Washington

Sometimes clients share concerns that are preventing them from getting vaccinated. By listening carefully and sharing helpful information, you can help them feel more confident about the measles vaccine. Here are some common concerns and ways you could respond, using your own words in client conversations.

“I do not have health insurance.”

- You do not need insurance to get the measles vaccine (or most other vaccines). Vaccines are available for free for or at a low cost.
- Free vaccines for adults without insurance are provided through the Washington State Adult Vaccine Program. Some providers charge up to \$23.44 per dose to cover their costs.
- All children under 19 in Washington can get vaccinated at no cost, regardless of whether they have health insurance. These vaccines are paid for through the Childhood Vaccine Program.
- You also can go to community clinics, community programs, pharmacies and or local health departments that provide no-cost or low-cost vaccines regardless of insurance.

“I’ve heard vaccines cause autism.”

- Vaccines do not cause autism. Scientists studying vaccines for many years have found no link between vaccines and autism.

“I’m worried about my immigration status.”

- You do not need to tell anyone your immigration status to get vaccinated.
- The free and low-cost vaccine programs in Washington state are available for everyone, no matter their immigration status.

“How do we know the vaccine is safe?”

- It’s understandable if people have concerns about vaccine safety. Some communities have been targeted with misinformation campaigns. Some people have suffered harmful health effects from government mistreatment.
- The measles vaccine works and has been proven to be safe. Doctors and researchers around the world have proven it is safe over decades of experience and study.

“I do not want to get sick or miss work because of the vaccine.”

- Measles makes people much sicker than the measles vaccine.
- Measles keeps people out of work or school for at least a week.
- Some people get no side effects from the vaccine. Some get mild side effects for a day or two, like a sore arm, tiredness or low fever.





“Measles isn’t serious. I’m willing to risk it.”

- Measles is a serious illness that affects your health and life. Most people recover. But some people have problems like ear infections, pneumonia or brain swelling.
- If you are unvaccinated, you can easily spread measles before you know you’re sick. Measles is most serious for babies, young kids, pregnant people and others with weaker immune systems.
- Before the measles vaccine was introduced in the 1960s, it was known as a severe illness that infected millions of people every year. Cases are spreading again because vaccination rates have gone down.

“I do not know who to trust about vaccines.”

- That is understandable. There is a lot of false information about vaccines. But you can usually tell facts from false information so you can make an informed decision.
- Talk to people you trust in your community who know the facts. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist.
- When you see or hear information about the measles vaccine, think about a few things to separate facts from false information. Is the information from a reliable source like a hospital, clinic or local health department? If yes, it is probably accurate. If the information uses extreme words like “all” or “never,” be skeptical. If the information is trying to scare or anger you, it is likely false. If the information attacks people without providing facts (such as “Doctors are lying to you”), it is likely false. If the information is trying to sell you something, it is likely false.

“I am busy, and getting vaccinated is inconvenient.”

- Getting vaccinated can be inconvenient. But there are programs to make it easier, such as free vaccinations and free rides to clinics.
- Getting measles or being exposed to measles if you’re unvaccinated would be very disruptive.
- Measles lasts a week or longer, and people with measles should stay home and apart from other people.
- If you’re unvaccinated and get exposed to measles, you should stay home and apart for other people for 21 days.

“A leader at my place of worship said I shouldn’t get vaccinated.”

- Almost all religions allow or encourage people to get vaccinated, because vaccines protect individuals, families and communities against serious illness.
- In some religions, people have worried that materials in vaccines conflicted with their religious views. However, in most religions, the official rules (doctrine) allow people to get vaccinated. That is because religious leaders decided it was more important to prevent serious illness and save lives.
- It might help to share facts about the measles vaccine with your faith leader.



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