Talking to servicemembers about the COVID-19 vaccine

Points to remember when engaging individuals and small groups reluctant or indifferent to accepting the vaccine

Preparing for & navigating the conversation

- Gauge servicemember attitudes, values, and viewpoints
- Anticipate a range of emotions
- Consider inviting a vaccinated peer to group discussions to encourage and enlighten others
- Lean on current, evidence-based resources to combat false information
- Encourage open, authentic dialogue
- Personalize your message
- Allow servicemembers to ultimately make their own decision about the vaccine

Common concerns and impressions

- The science was rushed and insufficiently tested prior to approval
- Women will experience negative impacts on fertility
- The government is attempting to indoctrinate instead of educate
- Young, healthy people are not at risk for contracting COVID-19
- There exists a potential for serious side effects and unknown health risks
- Politicians and other authorities are pushing their own agenda and eroding public trust
- Severity of the virus has been exaggerated

Top 5 key messages

1) “The risks of COVID-19 infection are vastly higher than risks associated with the vaccine.”

2) “The majority of healthcare professionals took the vaccine as soon as it was approved and available.”

3) “The vaccine may help you develop a more lasting immune response.”

4) “Getting the COVID-19 vaccine not only protects you, it will also protect the people you care about including your family and friends, and those who cannot get the vaccine yet.”

5) “The more people who get vaccinated, the faster we can reach herd immunity, which will help open the economy and get lives back to normal.”

Supporting facts

- **61,000 Americans** died during the 2017-2018 flu season, the worst in the last 10 years
- **More than 500,000 Americans** have been killed by COVID-19
- COVID-19 vaccines **do not contain the live virus**
- The COVID-19 vaccine primes the immune system to fight infection. **None of the approved vaccines alter DNA**
- Vaccine trials were thorough and included nearly 30,000 participants
- Research started in the 1990s to prevent past coronavirus diseases, providing a jump start to COVID-19 vaccine development

Resources for more information

- TRICARE: Official COVID-19 vaccine resources. [tricare.mil/covidvaccine](http://tricare.mil/covidvaccine)