Nottinghamshire County Council

COVID-19 Vaccination – Script to guide conversations with young people aged 12-15

Supporting young people in understanding the role of vaccinations is vital in encouraging uptake. Enabling young people to have informed conversations will help with their decisions about vaccinations.

Trusted adults who work with this age group can support the conversation, giving young people a voice to articulate their thoughts and options. This script is intended to be used alongside the other resources provided, such as NHS information and good quality websites providing further information for young people. Schools can also support this conversation using their curriculum. Links to curriculum resources have been provided to schools.

Encouraging a young person to think about COVID-19 and talk about vaccination is different to obtaining consent. Your role is to help young people have access to information that will enable them to make informed choices.

Parents of children aged 12-15 will be asked to give their consent for the vaccination. Children and their parents are encouraged to share information about the vaccine and discuss it together. Children may express a wish to have the vaccine and may have the capacity to provide informed consent themselves. Young people who understand fully what is involved in a proposed procedure, such as vaccination, can legally give consent. This is known as "Gillick competence". The vaccination team will also check that there is no medical reason why the young person should not have the vaccination on that day, for example if it is too soon after their previous dose.

Hi, I'm interested in understanding your experience of COVID-19 and the attitude of young people to COVID vaccination.

1. **Tell me about your experience of living through COVID-19.**

<u>Prompts</u>

➢ What word springs to mind when you hear COVID-19?
➢ What have been the greatest challenges for you during COVID-19 (over the past two years)?
➢ What are you looking forward to in life as COVID-19 restrictions are eased??

2. **COVID-19 has caused different types of illness in different people. Tell me about your experience. Have you had COVID-19 or know anyone who has had COVID-19?**

<u>Prompts</u>

➢ Tell me about it a little more
➢ Were you worried?
➢ That must have been very difficult/sad for you
➢ What have you learnt from this experience?

3. Tell me what you know about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Prompts

- Do you talk to your friends/family about COVID-19?
- Where do you go to get information about COVID-19?
- Do you think the vaccine is important? Why/why not?
- Do you know what the benefits are of the vaccine?
- Who can get vaccinated?
- Where can you get it?
- When can you get it?
- How many vaccines are needed?

4. Have you had your COVID-19 vaccine?

Prompts **if yes**

- When did you get it?
- Where did you get it?
- What were your reasons

Prompts **if no**

- Some people are worried about having the jab due to things they might have read or heard about it. What is stopping you from having the vaccine (may say: because I had COVID-19, I heard of someone who was ill after the vaccine; I don't like needles; I didn't have anyone to go with and didn't want to go alone)
- Are you aware that the COVID-19 vaccination works very well in helping prevent serious illness and stopping us from giving COVID-19 to family and friends?
- Where would you go to for trusted information about the COVID-19 Vaccinations?

Guidance notes

Vaccines

Vaccines are medicines which teach your immune system how to create antibodies that protect you from diseases.

Young people aged 12-15 years can get two doses of the Pfizer Biontech vaccine. The second dose is given 12 weeks following the first vaccine or if they have previously had COVID-19, whichever is later. Children who have tested positive and who are at high risk from COVID-19 should have their vaccinations delayed until at least 28 days.   While COVID-19 is typically mild or asymptomatic in most young people, it can be very unpleasant for some children. A course of vaccine will provide good protection against severe illness and hospitalisation.

Information about getting a vaccination can be found at [Vaccination and children aged 5-15 - NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CCG (nottsccg.nhs.uk)](nottsccg.nhs.uk) or at [Bassetlaw CCG (bassetlawccg.nhs.uk)](bassetlawccg.nhs.uk)

Why COVID vaccine is important

Vaccination means that we can stop the spread of the virus quickly and protect ourselves and those we love. Vaccinating 12- to 15-year-olds should also help to reduce the need for young people to have time off school and reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19. This should reduce the disruption to face-to-face education. By keeping children in school, this helps them stay emotionally well and happier. It will also help children and young people to safely participate in hobbies, social events, and plans to spend time with friends and family, as well as protecting from serious illness and even death. We need more people to get vaccinated so that way the spread of the disease is slowed down. It is important that everyone who can take the vaccine gets it as soon as possible.

Are the vaccines safe?

All COVID-19 vaccines have been very well tested before being licenced to use with people. Before recommending COVID-19 vaccination for children and young people, scientists conducted clinical trials with thousands of children and young people and no serious safety concerns were identified. The vaccine has gone through all the necessary safety procedures to be approved by the UK's independent medicines regulator, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Once a vaccine is in use, it is continuously monitored to make sure it continues to be safe. Millions of people have already been vaccinated and most side effects are mostly minor, with serious side effects being extremely rare.

Because vaccines work by triggering your immune system to produce a reaction, you can have side effects after you receive the vaccine. Things like having a temperature, or feeling achy, or getting a headache are common after receiving many vaccines and this is the same for the approved COVID-19 vaccines. Having these symptoms means that your immune system *is working as it should be*. Usually, these symptoms last a much shorter time than a real infection would (most are gone within 1–2 days). You cannot get COVID-19 from any of the vaccines. If you experience minor side effects after the vaccination, you can rest and take paracetamol (follow the dose advice in the packaging) to help you feel better.

The vaccination programme always veers on the side of caution and for that reason you may be asked to wait for 15 minutes after the vaccine, for example if you have had an allergic reaction to another vaccination previously. Allergic reactions to the COVID-19 vaccine are extremely rare and happen almost immediately. Some people may be nervous about needles or getting an injection. The team is trained to deal with reactions and treat them immediately.

The speed with which Covid-19 vaccine were created is a global success story.

The speed within which the COVID-19 vaccine was created is a huge success story. Evidence of what is possible when scientists across the world work together. No short cuts were taken in creating the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine came about so quickly through people working together, in a world-wide collaboration of scientists, funders, researchers and health leaders.

Vaccines are tested on many thousands of people in different parts of the world. They have been tested on people of different ages and ethnicities. They have been tested for both safety and to make sure that they work in preventing serious illness from COVID-19 (effectiveness & efficacy).

The vaccine has things in it that I disagree with.

Vaccines contain an active ingredient, which is a very small amount of a harmless form of the bacteria or virus you are vaccinating against, which cannot cause disease but will stimulate the immune system. This will prevent someone from getting seriously ill in the future. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain animal products or eggs and are suitable for vegans and vegetarians. None of the vaccines contain pork or microchips. COVID-19 vaccines have followed the same development steps as other vaccines, which have been used safely and effectively for many years.

COVID is just like the flu so why do we need a vaccine?

Over 150, 000 people have died from COVID-19 in the UK and almost six million (5.6m) people have died from COVID-19 worldwide. Society has been shut down during the pandemic and the vaccine has an important role to play in helping society and the world to open again. Vaccines are helping to make travel and holidays abroad safer.

Worryingly, we are seeing an increase in the number of people experiencing long COVID. This is a new condition that we are still learning about. From what the science is telling us, long COVID can cause long term health problems. Vaccine strengthens the ability of the body's immune system to fight COVID-19. The research shows that people who have had COVID-19 infection and the COVID-19 vaccination are better protected than those people who have just had the infection.

What you know about the vaccination and where can you find trusted information?

We get information or news from many places TV, TikTok, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, the Government, news alerts, school, our friends, and families. Sometimes the information that we receive has started as a rumour and although it may sound persuading is not true.

There is a lot of misinformation and inaccurate information about COVID and COVID vaccination it is important that you always use a trusted website such as the NHS website to get your information. NHS resources for young people about COVID-19 vaccination are available. Fact checking and myth-busting are two ways society checks whether news is real. The website Vaccination | Everything COVID contains more information about vaccination and is aimed at young people.

Pregnancy and COVID vaccine

COVID poses extra dangers during pregnancy. Unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated pregnant women are at an increased risk of becoming seriously ill and of pre-term birth if they contract COVID-19. So, it's important that any woman who is pregnant or planning to become pregnant gets the COVID vaccine, which can be given safely at any stage during pregnancy.

Young people who get the COVID vaccine will also be helping to protect your mother, sisters, girlfriends and other women in your family and community who could become pregnant. You are also helping to protect the lives of their babies.