

UW Health: Offers tools to help talk with family, friends about COVID-19 vaccination

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MADISON, Wis. – Vaccination is the safest and simplest way to protect yourself from COVID-19, but some people are still unsure about being vaccinated; a conversation with a close friend can help put them at ease.

Discussions with close friends or trusted family members can have an impact on someone's decision to get vaccinated against COVID-19, according to a [survey](#) from the Kaiser Family Foundation.

In January 2021, 36% of those who answered the survey saying they were hesitant to get a vaccine were convinced to do so after talking with someone who convinced them to be vaccinated. The largest number, 17%, of those who were convinced by a personal conversation, did so after talking with a family member, while 5% were convinced by a friend.

Conversations with families and friends are influential parts of our lives for a variety of reasons, and discussing vaccination is no different, according to Victoria Egizio, behavioral health manager, health psychology, UW Health.

“A calm, gentle approach without pressure is more likely to be successful in the long run,” she said.

These types of conversations, however, are not always easy, and often don't come naturally, Egizio said.

But there are a few things someone can do to have an important conversation with a friend or family member about being vaccinated:

- Prepare a few talking points before the conversation so you have a plan
- Describe to the other person how much you value and care about them and want them to be safe
- Be clear that you are approaching them about the vaccine from a place of concern for their health
- Be open, curious and non-judgmental
- Be willing to hear why the person is hesitant to get the vaccine and have a calm, non-confrontational conversation about their hesitations
- If you have different opinions or other information to share with them, ask their permission to share this with them before you do so
- Go into the conversation as an exploration and opportunity to mutually hear each other out, not to change their mind immediately
- It may take time and several conversations for someone to change their mind

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), state [Department of Health Services](#) and [UW Health](#) have resources available to help prepare people for these types of conversations.

Egizio will be available for interviews today, and a recorded interview is also available.