

# QUICK GUIDE TO ADULT VACCINE MESSAGING



Vaccines aren't just for kids, but many adults don't know they are vulnerable to vaccine-preventable diseases. It can be challenging to convince adults, without a health care provider recommendation, that they should be vaccinated, even if they have a high risk of complications from vaccine-preventable diseases due to conditions like heart disease or asthma. This **Quick Guide to Adult Vaccine Messaging** provides some effective, research-tested messages you might like to use, as well as tips on customizing your approach and language depending on your audience.

## What Motivates Adults to Get Vaccinated?

Motivations to get vaccinated vary from person to person. But thanks to focus group research conducted by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 2013, we know three common motivators are:

- **A recommendation from a health care provider.**  
Recommendations from health care providers are the most important factors in convincing adults they should be immunized. During every visit, it is critical for health care providers to review their patients' immunization history to determine whether he or she needs to be vaccinated.
- **Protection against diseases that could have serious consequences.**  
Adults are motivated to get vaccinated if they believe it will protect them from diseases that could lead to serious illness, missed work or school, medical bills, and inability to care for loved ones.
- **A desire to protect others.**  
Although some adults don't believe that they are susceptible to serious illness, most do think that immunization is important for those that are at risk. Adults are willing to get vaccinated if they understand that protecting themselves means protecting those around them.

## What Types of Messages Work?

Through the same CDC focus groups, we know the types of messages that appeal to adults include those that:

- Are simple, concise, direct and to-the-point;
- Stress prevention or encourage vaccination as a way to be proactive or have control over their health;
- Empower adults and provide information that can help them make an informed decision; and
- Encourage adults to speak with their health care providers for more tailored information.

We also know it's important to end with an "ask" — a statement that encourages adults to take action. For example:

- Talk to your health care provider about which vaccines you may need.
- Make an appointment today with your health care provider to get immunized.

## What are Some Examples of Effective Messages?

Using these basic guidelines, CDC tested several types of messages in their focus groups. They found some effective message themes for certain vaccines were:

YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR  
HEALTH – AND OFTEN  
OTHERS AROUND YOU – BY  
GETTING VACCINATED.

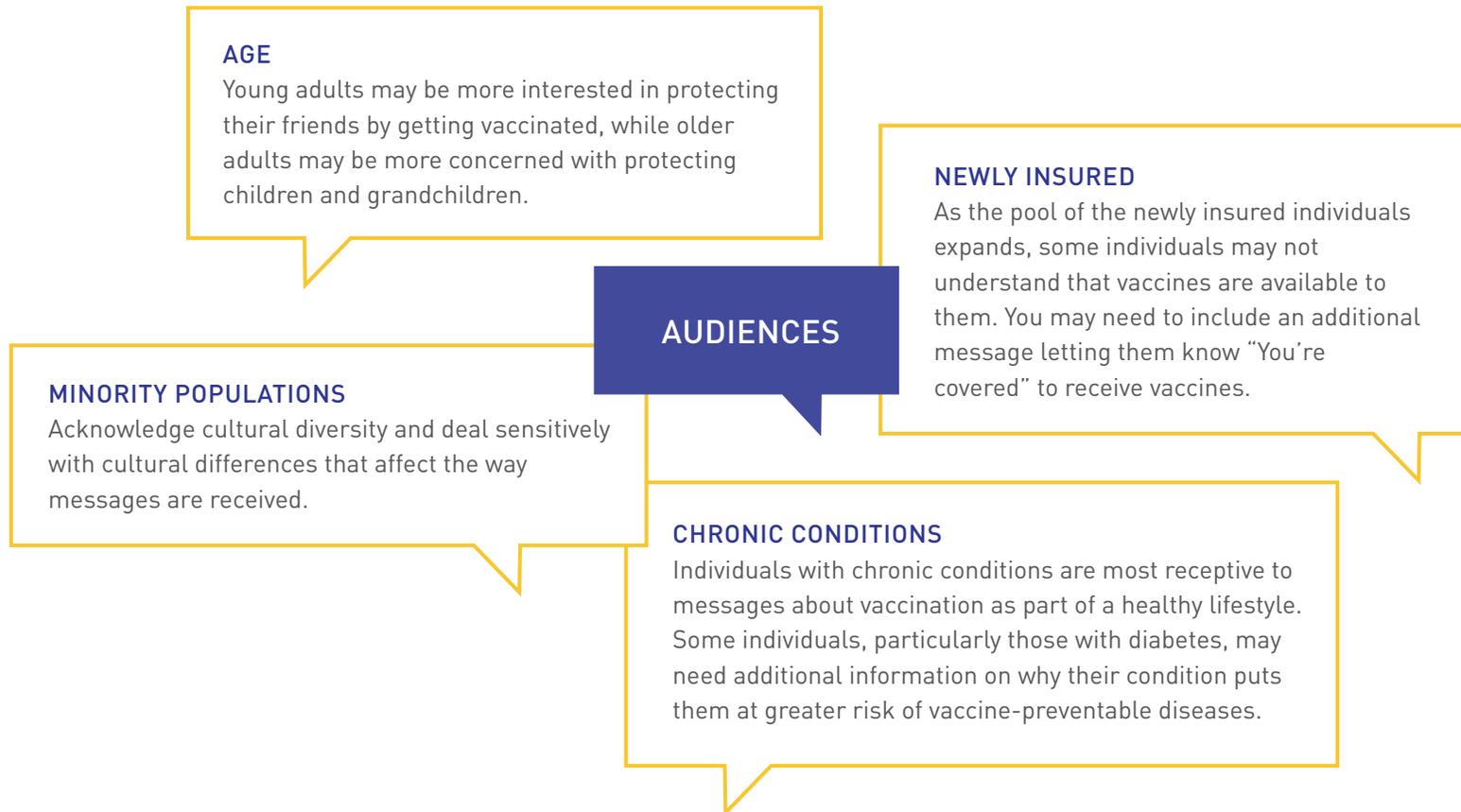
ALL ADULTS ARE  
AT RISK FOR VACCINE-  
PREVENTABLE DISEASES.

VACCINE-PREVENTABLE  
DISEASES CAN CAUSE  
SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES,  
EVEN DEATH.

YOU HAVE TOO MUCH TO  
DO TO RISK GETTING SICK,  
SO GET VACCINATED.

## How Do I Adapt These Messages for My Audience?

It is important for you to know the community you are trying to reach. Each audience is slightly different, and you must consider these differences when crafting your message. For example:



Of course, health care providers can enhance messages for any audience by personalizing their recommendations. For example, comments like “I’m immunized” or “my parents are immunized”, or sharing personal stories, can be very compelling when talking with adults about the importance of vaccines.

## How Do I Share My Message?

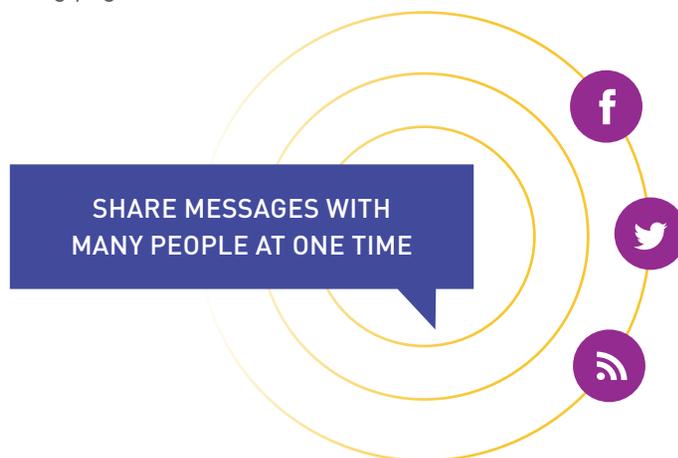
### How Do I Develop Posters and Flyers?

Posters and flyers are a great way to spread the word about adult vaccines. They can be placed anywhere from doctor's offices and pharmacies, to community centers, libraries and post offices. Creating effective, eye-catching materials can be easy with a few simple tricks:

- 1 Stick to a single message. *(Check previous pages for ideas.)*
- 2 Always ask your audience to *do something*, such as, "Ask your health care provider which vaccines you may need."
- 3 Use visuals, such as a photo or drawing, to catch the eye.
- 4 Be sure to place text above or to the side of the picture. Text below pictures is often ignored.

### How Do I Use Social Media?

Social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, etc., provide an excellent way to share messages with many people at one time, even when you have a limited budget. A great toolkit offering suggestions for beginners is included in the "Where Can I Get Help?" section found on the following page.



## Any Parting Words of Wisdom?

Unfortunately, there's not a magic bullet – no single message will reach all adults. However, you can maximize your impact by following these guidelines:

- **Stress the relevance and importance of timely vaccinations**, by highlighting the likelihood of contracting the disease, explaining how bad the disease can be and providing clear benefits.
- **Use empowering messages and provide support tools** to help adults understand vaccine risks and benefits so they can make an informed decision.
- **Provide transparent and plain language information** on vaccine-preventable diseases and vaccines, including safety and efficacy as well as where to get vaccines.
- **Encourage adults to talk with their health care providers** about vaccines that are right for them.

## Where Can I Get Help?

The following websites may help you find background information on a variety of vaccine topics, including vaccine benefits. Remember: You want to be informative, but you should always make sure you quickly get to an action statement (such as “talk with your health care provider”) so that adults will know what to DO with the information contained in the message.

### General Adult Vaccine Information:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/index.html>

Immunization Action Coalition: <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/adults>

National Foundation for Infectious Diseases: <http://adultvaccination.org/>

### Message Development and Sharing:

*Simply Put: A Guide for Creating Easy-to-Understand Materials.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/Simply\\_Put.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/Simply_Put.pdf)

*Health Literacy: Develop Materials.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/developmaterials/index.html>

*The Health Communicator's Social Media Toolkit.* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/socialmediatoolkit\\_bm.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/socialmedia/tools/guidelines/pdf/socialmediatoolkit_bm.pdf)

## Are There Some Good Sample Materials Available?

Using existing materials can save time and can suggest possible messages you may want to include or adapt for your own materials. Below are several examples of available materials tailored to specific audiences. Many are available in multiple languages.

### General

- General Posters/Flyers: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/for-patients/adults-all.html#posters>
  - African American male getting vaccinated: "My dad got shingles, my wife got whooping cough, that's why I'm getting the vaccines I need."
  - Mother: "I have too much to do to risk getting sick so I'm getting vaccinated"
  - Middle-aged woman: "I do a lot of things to stay healthy, including getting vaccinated"
  - Older African American woman: "I want to protect my health, so I'm getting the vaccines recommended for me"
- Pneumococcal Disease, General: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/pneumo-toolkit/waiting-room-poster.pdf>
- General Adult Vaccines: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/practice-toolkit/poster.pdf>
- Vaccinations for Adults: You're Never Too Old to Get Immunized: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4030.pdf>

### Personal Stories about Vaccines and Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

- Adult Vaccines: Personal Testimonies. Immunization Action Coalition. <http://www.vaccineinformation.org/adults/testimonies>
- Real Stories, Real People. National Foundation for Infectious Diseases. <http://www.nfid.org/real-stories-real-people>
- Shot by Shot. California Immunization Program. <http://www.shotbyshot.org/story-gallery>
- Together Educating About Meningitis (T.E.A.M.). National Meningitis Association. <http://www.nmaus.org/programs/team>
- Voices of Meningitis. National Association of School Nurses. <http://www.voicesofmeningitis.org>

### Pregnant Women

- Immunization for Women: <http://www.immunizationforwomen.org>
- Immunization & Pregnancy Flyer: [http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/downloads/f\\_preg.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/downloads/f_preg.pdf)
- What You Need to Know about Pregnancy and Vaccines: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/downloads/f-pregnancy-vaccines.pdf>
- Vaccinations for Pregnant Women: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4040.pdf>

## Chronic Conditions

### ASTHMA

- What You Need to Know about Asthma and Vaccines: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/downloads/f-asthma-vaccines.pdf>
- Asthma and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://www.adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/asthma-patient.pdf>
- Vaccinations for Adults with Lung Disease: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4045.pdf>

### DIABETES

- What You Need to Know about Diabetes and Vaccines: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/downloads/f-diabetes-vaccines.pdf>
- Vaccinations for Adults with Diabetes: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4043.pdf>
- Diabetes and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/diabetes-patient.pdf>

### HEART DISEASE

- What You Need to Know about Heart Disease and Vaccines: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/downloads/f-heart-disease-vaccines.pdf>
- Vaccinations for Adults with Heart Disease: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4044.pdf>
- Heart Disease and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/heart-patient.pdf>

### LIVER DISEASE

- Vaccinations for Adults with Hepatitis C: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4042.pdf>
- Liver Disease and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/liver-patient.pdf>

### LUNG DISEASE

- Vaccinations for Adults with Lung Disease: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4045.pdf>
- Lung Disease and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/lung-patient.pdf>

### KIDNEY DISEASE

- Kidney Disease and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/kidney-patient.pdf>

### HIV/AIDS

- HIV/AIDS and Pneumococcal Disease: <http://adultvaccination.org/professional-resources/public-health-toolkit/hiv-patient.pdf>
- Vaccinations for Adults with HIV Infection: <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p4041.pdf>