CONVERSATION GUIDE ON COVID-19 VACCINES

Let's talk about COVID-19 vaccines

Migration Council Australia

HARMONY ALLIANCE
MIGRANT & REFUGEE WOMEN FOR CHANGE

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Introduction

About this Guide

Harmony Alliance has worked closely with women from migrant and refugee backgrounds to examine the impact of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout on their lives, understand their concerns and their preferred approaches.

This guide is designed to support conversations about COVID-19 vaccines in your organisation, community or family. This guide addresses gender specific issues and provides practical guidance for women to facilitate their conversations with families and communities.

About this Guide

This guide will help you have a respectful conversation about COVID-19 vaccines and provide resources to help those who seek more information before getting vaccinated.

The Guide was developed by Migration Council Australia (MCA) in close consultation with Harmony Alliance—an alliance of organisations providing a national inclusive and informed voice on the diversity of issues impacting the experiences and outcomes of migrant and refugee women.

Get ready for the conversation

By having a conversation about COVID-19 vaccines we can help to keep communities safe and contribute to reducing COVID-19 related harm and stop the transmission of the disease.

Addressing concerns about COVID-19 vaccines can be a challenging topic as some concerns are based on deeply personal experiences, beliefs, misinformation and past experiences of poor or unfair health treatment.

Get ready for the conversation

Before starting a conversation about COVID-19 vaccines there are some things that you can do:

- Pick the right time for you and the person you want to talk to. It is important to choose a moment and a place where both of you are comfortable.
- Keep a nice and friendly approach.
- Remember that our opinions are built around different factors and circumstances.

If they do not feel ready to talk, let them know you will be available if they need help in the future.

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Having the conversation

1. Be empathetic and acknowledge their emotions

Deciding whether to get vaccinated can be overwhelming. It is normal to have questions about COVID-19 vaccines and it can be difficult to tell if all the information out there is true. You can help others by first listening carefully and without judgement.

Acknowledge their emotions to show that you care and that they have been heard. This does not mean you have to agree with the other person but that you understand how they are feeling.

I am not sure if I should get vaccinated.

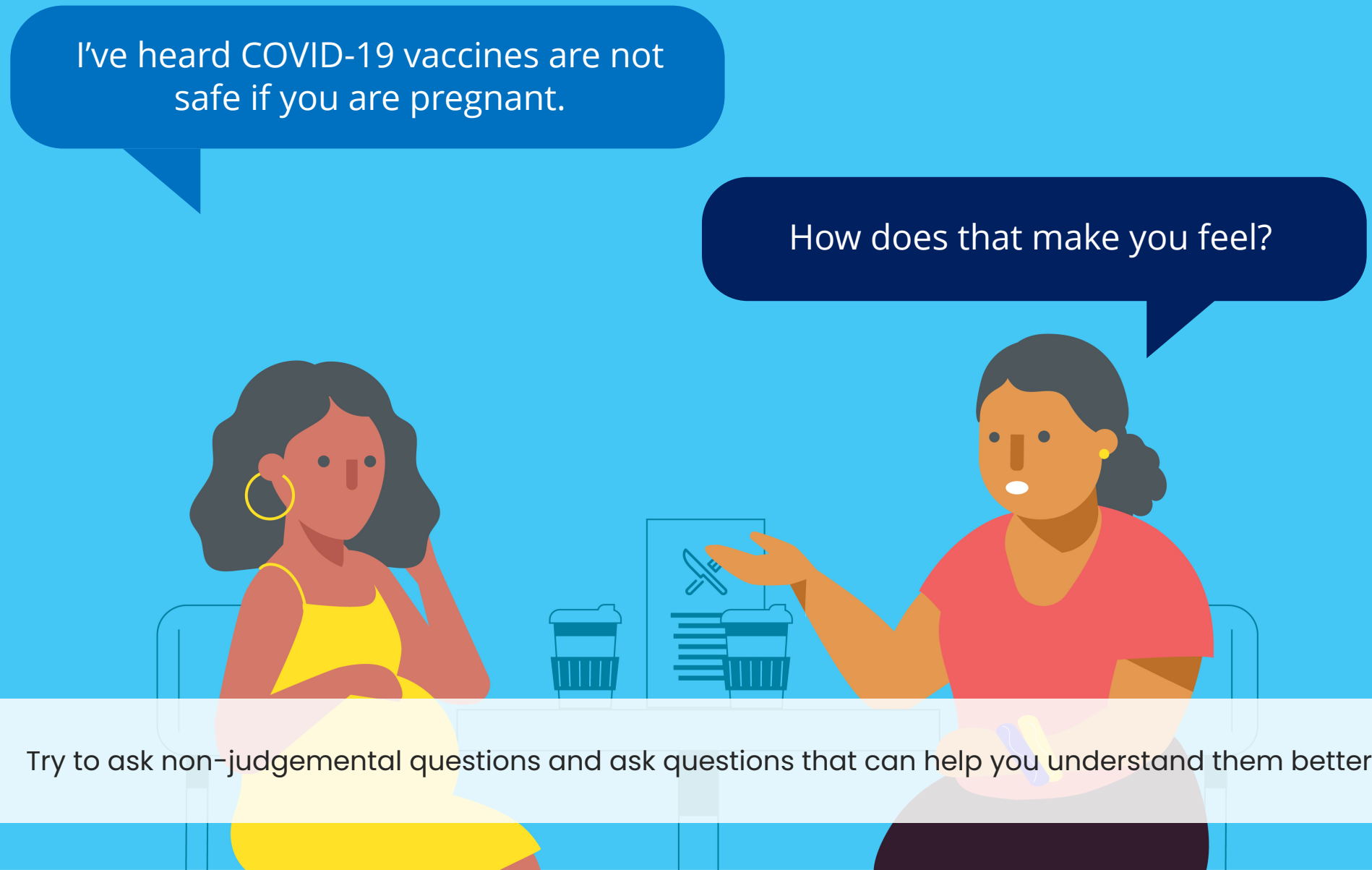
I understand how you feel. It is normal to have questions and feel unsure.

I've heard that the vaccines were developed very fast. How do we know if they are safe?

The vaccines have been tested for safety like all other vaccines. Scientists around the world worked together to develop COVID-19 vaccines and this teamwork has helped them to speed up the process.

2. Ask open-ended questions to understand their concerns better

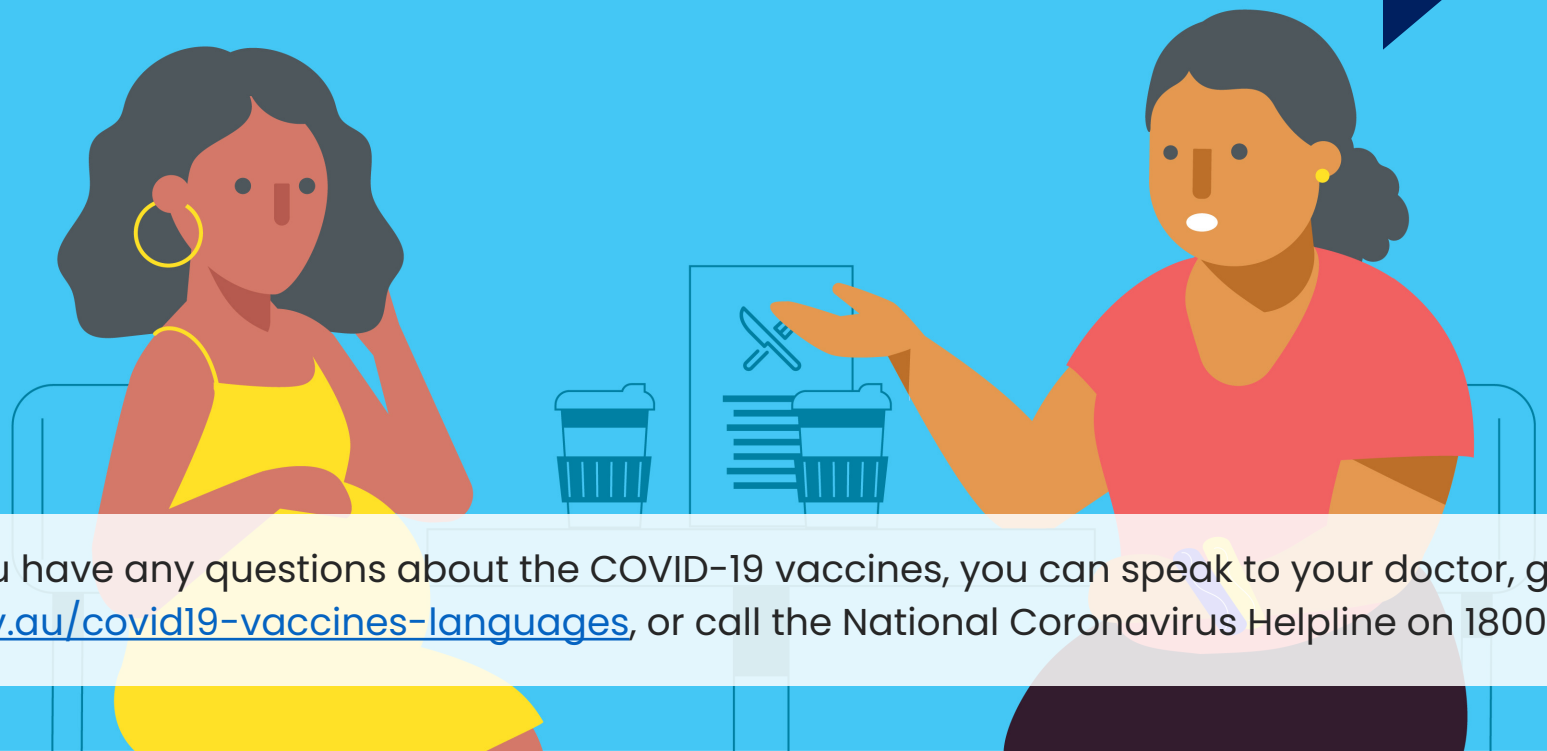
Open-ended questions lead to responses other than “yes” or “no”. These questions can help you get more information about the other person’s concerns, where they got information from and how they found answers to their questions. This can also help the other person to better understand their thoughts.



Try to ask non-judgemental questions and ask questions that can help you understand them better.

I feel worried about the side effects on pregnant women.

It is normal to be worried about side effects, but research shows that pregnant women normally experience mild side effects such as headaches or muscle pain and more severe reactions are very rare.



If you have any questions about the COVID-19 vaccines, you can speak to your doctor, go to health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines-languages, or call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.

3. Ask if you can share trusted information with them

It is important to remember that you may not have all the answers, or you may not be able to address all their concerns. Once you are sure you understand their questions or concerns, you can ask them if you can share trusted information with them or help them to look for information.

By asking this, they will feel included and more willing to listen, instead of feeling that they are receiving unsolicited advice.

How do I know if I can get vaccinated while breastfeeding?

COVID-19 vaccines are safe for women breastfeeding. If you are interested, I can tell you where to find more information about it.

You can find where to get trusted information at the end of this conversation guide.

Yes, I feel like more information can help me.

You can see a GP for information about the COVID-19 vaccine. The Department of Health also has a guide for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

4. Discuss reasons to get vaccinated

Getting vaccinated is a personal decision and we all have different reasons to get the COVID-19 vaccine. Some benefits of vaccination are protecting people from death and severe illness from COVID-19, offering a path to normalcy, being able to visit your relatives, and reducing the chances of outbreaks and restrictive measures.

Share your reasons for getting vaccinated and what helped you to make your decision. If you also had concerns that you worked out, you can share what helped you to overcome these concerns.

If things are going to stay the same, why do we need to get vaccinated?

COVID-19 vaccines protect us from getting very sick from COVID-19.
I got vaccinated because I want to protect my family.

I want to visit my family overseas.

I feel safer being vaccinated.

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Where to find information

Department of Health

The Department of Health website offers a range of translated resources in 63 community languages. This website provides information about the COVID-19 vaccine such as how to get the vaccine, side effects, misinformation, and commonly asked questions. You can also find videos, radio messages, fact sheets, posters and social media resources.

You can find more information here
https://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/covid-19-vaccines/covid-19-vaccine-information-in-your-language

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder

The COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic Finder is an online tool that provides information in 15 community languages about when and where you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine and allows you to book an appointment in the nearest vaccination clinic.

You can find more information here
health.gov.au/covid19-vaccines-languages

National Coronavirus Helpline

The National Coronavirus Helpline provides information on the COVID-19 vaccine and can assist you in locating a vaccine clinic and providing contact information to make a booking.

You can call National Coronavirus Helpline on
1800 020 080. This service is available 24h 7 days a week.
For interpreting services call TIS National on 131 450 and ask to be connected to the National Coronavirus Helpline.

States/Territories Health Departments

States and territories have also developed translated resources with information on the COVID-19 vaccine.

- ACT
- NSW
- QLD
- SA
- TAS
- VIC
- WA
- NT

RANZCOG

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) provides updated information and guidance on the COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant and breastfeeding women and those planning pregnancy following the advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI).

Healthdirect

Healthdirect provides health information and advice on the COVID-19 vaccine. Its website provides information in English on frequently asked questions. This includes the COVID-19 Vaccine Side Effects Symptom Checker that can help with concerns about the side effects after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine.

You can find more information here
https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/coronavirus

MyAus COVID-19 App

The MyAus COVID-19 App is a free app developed by Migration Council Australia that provides COVID-19 information and support in 29 community languages, including information on the COVID-19 vaccine in accessible language.