

GETTING VACCINATED – A DIRE NEED OF TIME

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“No madam, I didn't get vaccinated because four people died due to corona vaccination in my village” a reply from my driver upon my query to COVID-19 vaccination, that made me think about these myths and disbeliefs which are major obstacles in vaccination uptake. Some of the other myths prevailing in our community related to COVID-19 vaccination are^{1,2}; it causes infertility, a western propaganda, implanting microchip through vaccination, it will cause death after 2 years, money making agenda, vaccines are not tested properly, vaccine will cause COVID-19 and fear of unknown. Debunking these myths and encouraging community for vaccination are big challenges². COVID-19 vaccination is a key public health approach to combat pandemic³. We are still struggling with polio vaccination; Polio is endemic in three countries, i.e., Pakistan, Nigeria and Afghanistan and is eradicated from the rest of the world⁴, very alarming situation for us as a Nation.

Listening to people's doubts about vaccinations carefully and respectfully and referring them to someone they trust is one of the most effective ways to address them. These concerns could be emotional or their personal experiences and their previous views of poor or unequal treatment. Don't overburden individuals with data and facts; rather, appreciate their viewpoints or experiences and inquire about their reasoning, not what we think they need to hear³. A range of organizations within and beyond the health sector can play a vital role in sharing accurate information about vaccination and its benefits. Almost everyone can help by understanding the principles of vaccination and knowing where to go for more authentic information, as well as freely expressing their desire to be vaccinated. Various organizations and employers can boost confidence by openly sharing their support for vaccination, or personal experience of getting vaccinated. This contributes to the acceptability of vaccination as a social norm in the workplace.

Vaccines are amongst one of the most effective public

health interventions and an important tool in the fight against COVID-19. Fortunately, all the COVID-19 vaccines which have been approved for emergency use around the world are safe even for people with weakened immune system because none of them contain live virus in it. COVID-19 vaccinations⁵ that are both safe and effective are making a substantial contribution to averting severe disease and death. As vaccinations become available and immunity develops, it's critical to continue to follow all of the COVID-19 prevention recommendations that include⁶: physical distancing from others; wearing a mask, especially in crowded and poorly ventilated environments; washing hands frequently with soaps or hand sanitizers; covering any cough or sneeze with a bent elbow or tissue; and opening windows and keeping rooms well ventilated when indoors.

To help make vaccination as easy as possible, employers needs to give employees the time and flexibility they need to attend vaccination appointments, and even recover from vaccination side effects. Local civil society organizations and community groups can help people to make vaccination appointments, organize transport or offer any other assistance that might help make it easy for someone to get vaccinated^{5,6}.

Vaccination will help keep us, our family and our community safe from COVID-19. This will bring us all closer to do what we love with the people we care about. People may learn about vaccines and vaccinations by having intelligent and polite interactions with them. In this way, we can make a significant contribution to public health. Last but not least; happy to share that we successfully convinced our driver and he got vaccinated. Federal Medical and Dental College has a vibrant and proactive community medicine department and it has organized various health awareness sessions in community to debunk the myths and promoted COVID-19 vaccination.

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