



## Increasing COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence in the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce

The purpose of this resource is to provide employers with practical tips to increase employee confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and ultimately increase the number of employees who get vaccinated.

### What's in it for you?

More vaccinated employees means your workplace is better protected for employees, customers or clients who come into your workplace.

### What's in it for your community?

Similarly, as more people in the community are vaccinated, the whole community is better protected. Getting vaccinated against COVID-19 gives us all the chance to get back to the things we like to do and reconnect with the people we love.

Employers are in the position to provide information to employees and create work environments and policies that support employee health, safety, and well-being. Reasons for being unsure about getting vaccinated against COVID-19 vary widely and may include:

- Uncertainty about COVID-19 vaccine safety & how well they work.
- Not feeling at risk of COVID-19 or not feeling the need to get vaccinated.
- The time and transportation needed to get vaccinated or competing life priorities.

## FIVE STEPS TO BUILD CONFIDENCE IN COVID-19 VACCINES IN YOUR WORKPLACE

### 1. Share credible, trustworthy, and timely information about COVID-19 vaccines

- WHY?**
- This will help your employees know the facts, helping them make an informed decision.
  - It is common to feel anxious about vaccination.
- HOW?**
- Use internal communications (such as employee-facing website, email, lunchroom/washroom posters, virtual town hall meetings) to inform employees about vaccine safety, effectiveness, and the benefits and possible side effects of vaccination.
  - Share trusted resources with employees (listed in the *RESOURCES* section on the next page).

### 2. Share regular updates on where to get vaccinated

- WHY?**
- This will help your employees plan for their vaccination.
- HOW?**
- Follow Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's (SMDHU) social media accounts.
  - Regularly check the SMDHU website for the schedule of pop-up clinics across Simcoe Muskoka and other venues to get vaccinated such as pharmacies and primary care.
  - Share updates from SMDHU social media and website with your employees. Links to SMDHU social media accounts and webpages are listed on the next page.

### 3. Identify people who can be vaccine champions in your workplace

- WHY?**
- People we know and trust can influence our decisions and behaviours. If employees hear about other colleagues who plan to get vaccinated or who have been vaccinated, they may be more likely to do so themselves.
- WHO?** Consider:
- Owners, leaders (e.g. managers), and employees who have a personal or professional interest in health and safety (e.g. health and safety committee members).
  - Having champions who are known to and respected by the different people employed at your workplace.
- HOW?**
- Encourage champions to share their individual reasons for getting vaccinated.
  - This also means sharing reasons why they might have been hesitant, and why they ultimately decided that vaccination was right for them.



#### 4. Implement policies that encourage and support employees to get vaccinated

- WHY?**
- Workplace vaccination policies are an important way to help safeguard the work environment
  - Supports are important. Some individuals may not get vaccinated because they can't afford to take time off work and/or don't have access to transportation to get to a community vaccination clinic.
  - Others might not have time outside regular working hours to get vaccinated because of other personal commitments.
- HOW?**
- Develop and implement a vaccination policy for your workplace. See recommendations on how to do this [here](#).
  - Allow employees to take some time out of their workday to book their vaccine appointment.
  - Offer flexible working hours or paid leave (e.g., 2-4 hours) to attend their appointment.
  - Offer transportation support to and from vaccine clinics.

#### 5. Celebrate getting vaccinated!

- WHY?**
- Hearing about co-workers who have been or are planning to get vaccinated may help to create an environment that builds confidence among those who are still hesitant to get vaccinated.
- HOW?**
- Ask permission to share employee stories through your workplace communication channels.
  - Congratulate and thank employees who share with you that they intend to get – or have already been – vaccinated.
  - Provide [stickers](#) as an option for vaccinated employees to wear and use promotional graphics in internal communications.

### RESOURCES

#### Vaccine safety & effectiveness

[How vaccines work & vaccine safety](#) – video (Immunize Canada)

[How vaccines are developed](#) – video (Health Canada)

[Vaccine development and approval in Canada](#) – infographic (Health Canada)

[COVID-19 vaccine safety](#) – fact sheet (Ontario.ca)

[Vaccine safety, concerns and possible side effects](#) – fact sheet (Health Canada)

What you should know about each vaccine – fact sheets (Health Canada)

- [Moderna mRNA vaccine](#)
- [Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA vaccine](#)
- [AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine](#)
- [Janssen \(Johnson & Johnson\) vaccine](#)

#### COVID-19 vaccine myths, debunked

[COVID-19 vaccine: Breaking down myths & providing facts](#) – fact sheet (City of Hamilton)

[Addressing 9 COVID-19 Myths and Facts](#) – video (US COVID-19 Prevention Network)

[Myths and facts about COVID-19 vaccines](#) – fact sheet (US Center for Disease Control)

[Which vaccine is better?](#) – Video (Dr. Samir Gupta, University of Toronto respirologist)

#### Vaccine availability

For information on where to get vaccinated, please visit the SMDHU [Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage.

For easy to share messages about COVID-19, the COVID-19 vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine pop-up clinics, please follow and share SMDHU social media accounts. You can find SMDHU on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) & [YouTube](#).

### REFERENCES

1. Behavioural considerations for acceptance and uptake of COVID-19 vaccines: WHO Technical Advisory Group on Behavioural Insights and Sciences for Health, meeting report, 15 October 2020. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. Accessed March 23, 2021 <https://www.who.int/publications/item/9789240016927>
2. Presseau J, Desveaux L, Allen U, et al. Behavioural science principles for supporting COVID-19 vaccine confidence and uptake among Ontario health care workers. *Science Briefs of the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table*. 2021;2(12). <https://doi.org/10.47326/ocsat.2021.02.12.1.0>
3. US Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Start Building Confidence in COVID-19 Vaccines Now. *Workplace Vaccination Program*. Accessed online March 23, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/essentialworker/workplace-vaccination-program.html>
4. The Behavioral Insights Team. (2021, March 15). Four messages that can increase uptake of the COVID-19 VACCINES. Retrieved March 25, 2021, from <https://www.bi.team/blogs/four-messages-that-can-increase-uptake-of-the-covid-19-vaccines/>

Last revised August 31, 2021