

# Vaccine Hesitancy Guide

As providers deal with vaccine hesitancy and refusal among parents and patients, here are some practical reminders and tips:

## Build Rapport

Alongside making a strong recommendation for vaccination, continue to build rapport with parents and patients through active listening and an invitational approach. Core elements of the invitational approach:

- Encourage critical thinking and engagement with the decision-making process
- Assure families that they can change their minds about their vaccination schedule in the future
- Affirm and sympathize with the difficulty of the decision-making process
- Honor autonomy
- Accept decisions without judgement

**Source:** Make J, Lauver A. Increasing trust and vaccine uptake: Offering invitational rhetoric as an alternative to persuasion in pediatric visits with vaccine-hesitant parents (VHPs). Vaccine X. 2022

## Educate About Risks & Address Misconceptions

Educate families about risks of morbidity and mortality from vaccine preventable diseases and misconceptions about vaccines. Offer a follow up appointment to continue the discussion.

- Prescribe scientific websites for families to continue exploring the topic of vaccines. These include:
  - [CHOP Vaccine Education Center \(VEC\)](#)
  - [Immunize.org](#)
  - [HealthyChildren.org - From the American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- Prepare yourself to educate patients by reviewing facts and common myths about vaccines on the [Philadelphia Immunization Program website](#).
- Order free print patient handouts and posters (including on MMR vaccine and travel) through the [Philadelphia Immunization Program website](#) and a [VEC prescription for information pad](#).

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## Counsel Parents to Avoid Exposures

- Remind parents to call before bringing their sick, unvaccinated child to the office, clinic, or emergency department, especially if the child has fever and rash. This will help avoid waiting room exposures to infectious diseases such as measles and expedite work up for vaccine preventable diseases in these vulnerable patients.
- Provide information to parents who are refusing vaccine, such as this handout:
  - [What If You Don't Vaccinate Your Child? \(Immunize.org\)](https://www.immunize.org/what-if-you-dont-vaccinate-your-child/)
- If sending an unvaccinated patient to the ED for a potential infection, alert the hospital by calling the ED or transport lines.

## Documentation & Coding

Add ICD10 codes for immunization refusal and counseling.

- Z71.89 is the code for immunization counseling
- Z28.82 is the code for vaccine refusal but there are other vaccine specific codes such as Z28.21 for influenza refusal
- More on coding from [AAP: Refusal to Vaccinate](#)

Integrate a vaccination refusal and counseling template into your EMR.

- Example: "Parent declined vaccination today. Risk of morbidity and mortality from vaccine preventable illness discussed. Referred to [add preferred online resources]. VIS sheets provided. Advised to call health care facilities before coming in with fever and/or rash to avoid waiting room exposures and expedite work up for vaccine preventable diseases."