

## Example of a supportive flu vaccine yarn

This resource presents an example of an actual flu vaccine yarn (conversation - for a description of yarn see last page of the resource) between an immunisation provider and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patient. As a provider, you can use this document for ideas about what to say and how to say it. It is not meant to be prescriptive, feel free to adapt.

"I can see that you're due for your flu shot. Do you have any questions or concerns about getting the flu shot?"

Immunisation provider



"I don't know whether to get it. My mum had the flu shot the other day and it gave her the flu. I don't want to get the shot and get sick like her."

Patient



The immunisation provider has started this conversation by asking if the patient has any questions, and has let the patient talk without interrupting. They may nod while the patient is speaking to show they are listening.

"Do you have any other concerns about having the flu shot?"

The immunisation provider here is encouraging the patient to express any other concerns they might have.



"No, I don't think so."



"Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns with me."

## Example of a supportive flu vaccine yarn (continued)

“So, you mentioned you don’t want to get the flu shot and get sick like your mum.”



“Yep, that’s right.”



“It’s normal to have concerns and I can see you’re really thinking about your health. Can I share with you what I know about this vaccine? We can explore your concerns together.”

“That would be great.”

Here, the immunisation provider is acknowledging the patient’s concerns and asking for their permission to share knowledge about immunisation.



“The flu vaccine does not have a live virus, so it cannot give you the flu. But it is normal to feel a bit achy, tired or feverish after getting your shot, and have redness and swelling at the spot where the needle went in. These side-effects are normal, they mean that your body is responding well to the vaccine”.

## Example of a supportive flu vaccine yarn (continued)

“So, why did my mum end up with flu even after getting the flu shot?”



“It takes the body a couple of weeks after getting the flu shot to build its strength and immunity against the flu. So, if you come into contact with the flu virus soon after you receive your flu shot, you can still catch the flu.”



“So, you can get the flu even if you’ve had the shot?”



“Yes, until the shot’s had time to work. Also, it’s never 100% guaranteed to stop you getting the flu, but if you have the flu shot, you’re less likely to get really sick and need to go to the hospital if you do catch the flu. It also helps to protect Elders, bubs and people with other health problems you live with or have close contact with, as they’re more likely to get really sick from the flu.”

The next step is for the immunisation provider to recommend vaccination.

“I have the flu shot every year and I recommend that everyone has it. I recommend that you have it. We can chat to the practice nurse about getting the flu shot today if you would like.”



“That sounds good.”

**Note:** For suggestions on how to address other common questions about flu and the flu shot (e.g. ‘Why get the shot if I don’t feel like I’m at risk of getting the flu?’), see the [Flu vaccine information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people](#).

## Example of a supportive flu vaccine yarn (continued)

### What is a yarn?

Yarn is an Aboriginal English word that describes an informal conversation or storytelling in a culturally safe environment<sup>1</sup>. Yarning is a way of sharing knowledge. By providing unstructured time to touch on things such as life, family, health and achievements, yarning helps build mutual respect for one another<sup>2</sup>.

To have a good vaccination yarn, however, it is important to first build rapport with the patient and make the service and the consultation culturally safe. It is also important to ask about vaccination status and offer vaccination at any appointment. To find out how to build rapport and cultural safety, and how to offer vaccination opportunistically, see Talking about vaccination with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families at [skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals](http://skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals).



**For more information** about SKAI, visit: [skai.org.au](http://skai.org.au).



**For more information** about vaccination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, see [www.vaccinationforourmob.ncirs.org.au](http://www.vaccinationforourmob.ncirs.org.au)

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### About this resource

This resource is informed by Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation (SKAI) ([skai.org.au](http://skai.org.au)) conversation principles that were adapted using a cultural lens.

This resource was developed by Aboriginal Population Health Trainee Larissa Karpish, in collaboration with the Social Science team at NCIRS, and Aboriginal colleagues: Ms Katrina Clark and Ms Kiya Shipley.

### What other resources can support my conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families about vaccines?

For a list of resources designed specifically to support immunisation providers in having supportive vaccination conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, go to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources section on the SKAI website at [skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals](http://skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals).

For guidance on how to build rapport with families, strengthen cultural safety in your service, and offer vaccination opportunistically see Talking about vaccination with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families at [skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals](http://skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals).

#### References

References used in the development of this resource can be seen at [skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals](http://skai.org.au/healthcare-professionals)