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## Working with vaccine-hesitant caregivers

An editorial in the Canadian Family Physician suggests that clinicians should put their energy into working with vaccine-hesitant caregivers (fence-sitters) who outnumber the vaccine refusers.<sup>1</sup> As well as providing numbers and facts consider telling stories to build trust with caregivers.

The initial article suggests that providers spend time discussing vaccines and not deriding parental concerns.<sup>2</sup> Present vaccination as the default option and focus on the benefits of protection yet be honest about side effects when asked.

Examples of comments include:

- “I strongly recommend you should receive these vaccines today.”
- “The risk of anaphylaxis is approximately 1 in a million, the same as the yearly risk of being struck by lightning.”

Table 2 in the article<sup>2</sup> contains answers to commonly asked questions by parents, e.g. “the amount of aluminium in vaccines is similar to that in breast milk or infant formula”.

This Gem has been checked by Associate-Professor Helen Petousis-Harris, vaccinologist at the University of Auckland.

References:

1. Vaccine hesitancy and the art of family medicine. Canadian Family Physician (2019) [View here](#)

2. Addressing vaccine hesitancy. Canadian Family Physician (2019) [View here](#)

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