

# IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing LI

## The COVID-19 Pandemic and Vaccines

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### Introduction

As countries begin to establish and implement their plans for vaccination against COVID-19, this briefing provides an overview of the WHO guidance on vaccination and some examples of how countries in the IIMHL network are taking forward their plans. An example of the rollout of vaccines in Canada is outlined by the Canadian Government. Ireland's publication "Maximising the Benefits of a COVID-19 Vaccine: Getting the Psychology Right" will be of interest to all IIMHL countries. An equitable framework for the US across HHS, State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Authorities is given with equity being important.

### World Health Organisation

The WHO international work on vaccines shows a video of how vaccines work and looks at the outcome of a meeting on behavioural considerations for acceptance and uptake of vaccines. The WHO also gives tips for professional reporting of vaccine information.

### Definitions

**A vaccine** is a biotechnology product that stimulates the production of antibodies in a way that makes a person immune (or resistant) to an infectious disease. Vaccines are usually made from the causative agent of the disease itself, or from a synthetic substitute.

**Vaccination** is the term used to describe the process of getting a vaccine into a person's body, usually by injection or orally. b. Vaccination is one of the most cost-effective ways to avoid diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimate that, around the world, vaccination prevents around 2 to 3 million deaths per year.

While vaccination is a medical innovation, **its success relies on human factors** – vaccines only work if people take them. Behaviour, in turn, is determined by attitudes, perceptions, knowledge, understanding, and emotion. Psychological factors influence when – or even whether – a person will seek vaccination for themselves or for those they care for. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/source/Maximising%20the%20Benefits%20of%20a%20COVID-19%20Vaccine-Getting%20the%20Psychology%20Right%20\(PSI\).pdf](https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/source/Maximising%20the%20Benefits%20of%20a%20COVID-19%20Vaccine-Getting%20the%20Psychology%20Right%20(PSI).pdf)

## WHO: How do vaccines work?

This five minute video explains this.

<https://youtu.be/V4JAo9Phnol>

## WHO 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

Behavioural research has shown that vaccine acceptance and uptake can be increased by adopting the three strategies below.

- Creating an enabling environment – making vaccination easy, quick and affordable, in all relevant respects.
- Harnessing social influences – especially from people who are particularly trusted by and identified with members of relevant communities.
- Increasing motivation – through open and transparent dialogue and communication about uncertainty and risks, including around the safety and benefits of vaccination.

A common theme is engagement with local communities in developing and implementing tailored strategies to support vaccination uptake. Working in partnership with communities, building trust and ensuring that messages come from trusted endorsers are key to successful strategies.

It is essential to consider local contexts when judging the relevance of research findings. While this report has sought to extract evidence-based principles that can be considered relevant across a wide range of populations and settings, the evidence available is overrepresented from high-income countries; these behavioural considerations should be further researched locally, including in underrepresented low- and middle-income settings, to inform targeted and context-specific interventions.

New evidence relevant to increasing COVID-19 vaccine acceptance and uptake will emerge over time, which means that obtaining and using up-to-date evidence is critical. This report is designed to provide a framework within which to consider new knowledge as it emerges and to help to shape forthcoming policies

<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/337335/9789240016927-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

## Canada

**The Government of Canada: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccines: Overview**  
January 2021

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. Free vaccines will be available to everyone who lives in Canada over the course of 2021. Until extensive immunization is achieved, public health measures will continue to be essential to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Canada and save lives.

On these pages you will find details of the Canadian vaccination programme :

[Authorized COVID-19 vaccines](#)

[Who will get vaccinated first](#)

[Monitoring COVID-19 vaccine safety and effectiveness](#)

[Securing vaccines for everyone who lives in Canada](#)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/vaccines.html>

## England

### Government of England: Public Health England

14 January 2021

Data Source: NHS National Immunisation Management System  
COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake Monitoring Programme  
Public Health England (PHE)

The first PHE COVID-19 vaccine monitoring data includes:

- weekly national cumulative vaccine uptake for those aged 80 and over; and those aged under 80 years old for the current week
- weekly regional cumulative vaccine uptake for those aged 80 and over; and those aged under 80 years old for the current week
- COVID-19 vaccine uptake after 5 weeks of the vaccination programme in England is 34.6% for the first dose and 9.8% for the second dose in those aged 80 years or older.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-vaccine-monitoring-reports>

## Ireland

### The Psychological Society of Ireland: Maximising the Benefits of a COVID-19 Vaccine: Getting the Psychology Right

November 2020

This document looks at the broad principles relating to the psychology of vaccinations across five main areas: engagement of people, made part of everyday life, have consistent role models, be non-threatening to people who hold non-vaccination views and finding and enhancing ways to boost vaccine uptake.

[https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/source/Maximising%20the%20Benefits%20of%20a%20COVID-19%20Vaccine-Getting%20the%20Psychology%20Right%20\(PSI\).pdf](https://www.psychologicalsociety.ie/source/Maximising%20the%20Benefits%20of%20a%20COVID-19%20Vaccine-Getting%20the%20Psychology%20Right%20(PSI).pdf)

## US

### **The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine: Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine for Adoption by HHS, State, Tribal, Local, and Territorial Authorities**

October 2020

To ensure that the allocation framework is equitable and can be seen as equitable, the committee designed its framework so that it

- (1) can be easily and equally understood by diverse audiences,
- (2) reflects widely accepted social and ethical principles,
- (3) can be reliably translated into operational terms,
- (4) distinguishes scientific and ethical judgments in its application, and
- (5) does not perpetuate discrimination and inequities.

The foundational principles consist of ethical and procedural principles that reflect two lines of thinking: ethical principles and procedural principles.

<https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/a-framework-for-equitable-allocation-of-vaccine-for-the-novel-coronavirus>