For Health Professionals

Talking with parents who are Ready to Vaccinate?

Evidence-based discussion tips for health professionals

Goals

- to prevent hesitancy
- to support timely vaccination

As many as 50% of these parents have some questions about vaccination[1]. Eliciting and answering these parents' questions may prevent hesitancy. Parents who feel their questions have been dismissed by health professionals may be more vulnerable to misinformation[2].

Presentation

Parents who are ready to vaccinate:

- usually present seeking vaccination at or near the recommended milestone
- may have process-oriented questions including what to expect during and in the days after the consultation
- may want information about managing common reactions and when to seek medical advice
- may not know what the vaccines are for
- may want information to help them answer questions from friends or relatives
- may have questions about safety
- may have questions about the ingredients in the vaccines
- may have questions about their child's immune system and whether it can manage multiple vaccines.

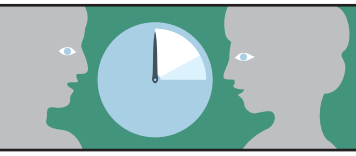
Supporting parents who are ready to vaccinate

Consultations with parents who are ready to vaccinate are usually straightforward. To give valid consent parents need to:

- be competent to make the decision
- be provided with sufficient information
- understand the information provided
- be able to act freely and voluntarily.

Parents do not need all the available information about a vaccine to achieve valid consent. Therefore, you are only obliged (legally and ethically) to provide information that is material (of value or importance) to the parent. This is best achieved through an interaction with parents that enables you to identify what is material to the parent[3].

SKAI Sharing Knowledge About Immunisation Early Childhood
NCIRS National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance
Australian Government Department of Health



How long should it take? 10–15 mins

Elicit questions

"Have you had time to read the information? Do you have some questions you'd like me to answer before we vaccinate Evelyn?"[4]

"What questions do you have today?"

"Do you have some questions?"

Inviting and addressing parents' questions enables you to provide them with the information that is material to them. This can help prevent simple questions from escalating into hesitancy[2].

Some parents need permission to express and explore their concerns[4]. Asking "Do you have some questions?" reduces unmet patient concerns when compared with "Do you have any questions?", perhaps because "Any questions" usually signals the end of a consultation[5].

Share knowledge

"There are some things we can do to make vaccination easier for Zac."

"Aisha might feel mildly unwell in the days after vaccination, but most don't children have any noticeable reaction at all. After we vaccinate her, I can give you some information to help you look after her if she does feel unwell."

Vaccinate, then book the next appointment

"Let's book the next appointment before you leave today to be sure Dylan gets the next dose on time."

Booking an appointment for the next dose and sending parents reminders results in more timely vaccination uptake[6].

Further reading
providers.talkingaboutimmunisation.org.au

References
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5. Berry NJ, et al. Sharing knowledge about immunisation (SKAI): an exploration of parents' communication needs to inform development of a clinical communication support intervention. Vaccine 2018; 36(44): 6480-90.
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