

Vaccine Hesitancy and Whānau

Ngā whānau e māngere ana ki te kano kano



Why whānau are hesitant to immunise

- The fear of their child experiencing adverse reactions, even if mild or temporary, can create uncertainty
- Vaccinations become less urgent when parents see healthy, unvaccinated pēpi. This hesitancy may stem from a belief that immunisations were perhaps overemphasised in public health discourse. Lack of obvious negative outcomes making the need for them feel less urgent
- Appointments are rushed and the nurses lacked empathy particularly as first-time parents witnessing vaccinations
- Lack of understanding regarding health information due to jargon.

“There are a lot of babies with and without vaccinations and most of the time both groups are fine, so I don’t think they are important or unimportant—I don’t see the big fuss about them.”

Things to consider when discussing vaccination with whānau

- It is important to receive immunisation information in a clear and balanced manner
- Communication that avoids medical jargon, instead favoring language that feels familiar and accessible. The use of casual, everyday language was seen as essential in ensuring that key messages about immunisation were understood and retained
- Understanding of immunisations as a preventative measure and that immunising pēpi is a ‘common-sense’ approach to ensuring long-term whānau Hauora
- Give clear, thorough explanations to help parents and the wider whānau feel more confident in their decision. Whānau experiences and support can make the difference in whether to vaccinate or not
- Take a proactive approach — contact new parents early and discuss immunisations and 6-week check. New parents and whānau may need time to understand this new information and have further conversations with the nurse
- Take a moment to explain how the pēpi and māmā is likely to react after the vaccination is given. Acknowledge it may be hard to watch, and may be an emotional time for the māmā

“I just want them to speak to me like a normal person. Speak to me with my language.”

The following have been framed to capture the essence of kōrero with participating Māori Māmā:

1

Mo Mātou (for us) — find out who we are, what we want and how we can work together

2

Te Taonga (Treasure, valuable) — provide opportunities for us to tell our stories

3

Tūhonohono (building and maintaining connections) — connect to our culture, mātauranga (knowledge systems), rongoā (healing practices) and ensure unfettered access to choices in care

4

Mātauranga Whakakoranga (Subject, teachings and training) — learning and training opportunities to share knowledge

5

Pūtea tautoko (Financial support) — resource Māori Māmā to participate and engage

6

Hanga Mahere (To plan, to make, create) — develop tools and models of engagement.

References

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