

5. Barriers to vaccination - cost, time, spousal refusal

Key Messages

- If your husband is resistant, you might start by telling your husband that the baby depends on both of you for his/her security, growth, and development. If he is still concerned, I can come talk to him or he can visit the clinic to learn more about vaccines and their safety.
- If you are concerned about the cost you might incur to get your child immunized, remember that immunization can save the family money by preventing diseases that would need to be treated—sometimes with expensive medicines or many more visits to the clinic or hospital. The baby can end up having serious complications of the preventable diseases.
- It may seem like a long time to travel to get to the clinic and also to wait for your child to be vaccinated, but if your child were to fall ill from one of the diseases that vaccines can prevent, you would have to spend much more time and resources getting care for him or her.

Corresponding FAQs

- *# 24: Traditional methods have protected my family for generations. Why should I believe immunization will be better for my child?*
- *# 25: My husband refused to let me bring the baby back for more immunization because the last time the baby received an immunization, the baby fell sick. What can I do?*
- *# 26: How can I convince my husband to give me transport money to bring our baby for the next immunization?*
- *# 37: Why should I bring my child for immunization when it takes up so much of my day each time?*
- *# 38: Do I have to pay for immunization?*

Characters

FLW **Grace**
Caregiver **Sarah**

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Narrator: Welcome to Audio Job Aid number 5. You will soon hear a conversation between a mother, Grace, and a frontline worker, Sarah. Grace has brought her son to the clinic because she thinks he has an ear infection and while Sarah is checking Grace in, she notes that Grace's children have not received their vaccinations. Let's listen to how Sarah figures out the barriers that have kept Grace from bringing her children for immunization...

Grace: Hello, Sarah, it's nice to see you again! We haven't seen you since you delivered your baby. How are you and your baby doing?

Sarah: Hi, yes, we are all fine although I think the baby has an ear infection, so that is why we are here to see the doctor.

Grace: Oh, I am sorry to hear that he is feeling unwell, but the doctor will be able to help him. We will do a general check to make sure it's nothing serious. First, can I see both your children's immunization cards to see if they are on schedule?

Sarah: I don't have them. My husband threw both in the trash as soon as he saw them. My sister has talked many times about how important immunization is. But my husband gets upset anytime I try to talk to him about it.

Grace: I'm glad you're trying to talk to him about this, Sarah. Many people have concerns about vaccinations. While you are waiting for the doctor, would it be alright if we talk about some of your husband's concerns and see how we can address them?

Sarah: Sure, it would be nice if I could convince him. His main argument is that his mother says she never used medicines from a doctor or a hospital. She had other methods to protect her family for generations.

Grace: He's not the only one who thinks that way, Sarah. Many people that we meet put a lot of faith in traditional practices.

Sarah: Exactly, and so he says, why should he change his ways.

Grace: Well, it might seem hard to believe that immunization makes a difference because we don't often see the harmful effects of these diseases anymore. You have to remind your husband that before vaccines were widely used, it was very common for families to lose one or more children to diseases like measles, polio, TB, whooping cough or tetanus.

Sarah: Oh yes, I remember now. That means today, immunization protects children from these and other diseases, so more children grow well and survive.

Grace: Exactly! What I have found to be helpful with fathers who have questions or concerns is to remind them that their baby depends on both parents for their security, growth and development. And immunization is one simple and easy thing you both can do to provide those things for your baby. If your husband is still concerned, I can come talk to him or you could encourage him to talk to the local religious guide who is very supportive of vaccination and can help your husband understand how important and safe vaccines are.

Sarah: Wow, I am happy to hear that our religious leader supports vaccination – my husband has said a few times that vaccination is against our religion. So it would be very helpful for my husband to hear from his religious guide, since he trusts him a lot.... But, Grace, even if I can convince him, bringing my child for immunization still isn't so easy. It took a very long time for me to get here today since the bus comes so infrequently. And it also means that I have to take time away from my work, which costs us money that we really need during these challenging times. So coming back many times for immunizations doesn't seem so possible since it is time consuming.

Grace: You are not alone in having this problem, and I wish I could make it easier for everyone to come to the health center. Sometimes we hold vaccination days in the villages, during market days or church days, to make it more convenient for caregivers to bring their children, but we can't do that all the time in every village. In the end it is important to remember that immunization can save the family time *and* money by **preventing** diseases that would need to be treated—sometimes with expensive medicines or many visits to the clinic or hospital.

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Sarah: That is a very good point. And you know what, I think my husband will be quite convinced by that point about money too. If he doesn't agree on the money matter, I can tell him that I'll save enough money from the monthly expenses to bring our children in - for my family's sake.

Grace: That's a great idea Sarah. I'm sure he will see how important this is to you. And you can make him understand that a few appointments in the first year of your children's lives will lead to a lifetime of protection.

Sarah: I hope so. Thank you so much, Grace. I think I'm good to discuss with my husband now and will persuade him to be an immunization champion

Grace: You're most welcome, Sarah. I'm confident that you will be able to convince him but please let me know if I can do anything to help. I look forward to seeing you and your husband with the children at the clinic for vaccinations very soon!

Narrator: One thing that caregivers all over the world have in common is being very busy with having to take care of their children. Perhaps caregivers in your community also have traditional beliefs that make them opposed to vaccination, or maybe there are other barriers like transportation or costs that make it hard for caregivers to bring their children for vaccination. When you are talking with caregivers, be sure to use the same skills that Grace did, including listening carefully to the issues they're facing and not judging them for not able to bring their children for vaccination. You can also talk with your fellow frontline workers to brainstorm together appropriate responses to traditional beliefs or practices in your community that may go against vaccination.