

Health Education Sessions



Photo: GVNML Health Supervisor and the Village Health Worker raise awareness of health issues amongst male family members, Ithakoi village.

Many villagers in rural Rajasthan hold traditional beliefs about prenatal care and looking after young babies which often leads to weak mothers and unhealthy children. As reproductive health relates to all family members, not just women, we involve the women's mother and father-in-law, her elder and younger brother-in-

law and her husband in our health awareness training as it's these people who often make the health decisions. GVNML Health Supervisors fix a date and time to meet in each street, and bring together different groups of people, either entire families, or groups of women, or their husbands to offer very practical advice through hands on exercises. One of these could be asking families to lay out all the food pregnant women should and should not eat then talking through their choices.

The Health Worker explains that pregnant women shouldn't be lifting heavy loads during pregnancy, or working late preparing food for family guests, that she needs to rest and eat appropriately, including lots of green vegetables and dairy products. Tips are also given on baby care. Women of child bearing age are brought together to talk about contraceptive methods. Condoms are distributed and the women are shown how to use them. Our staff are able to provide confidential advice on birth control, having already built up trust with the women.

This, combined with our other interventions in Reproductive Health, is ensuring that the infant mortality rate is falling, mothers are healthy and well cared for and there are more hospital births.