

Hispanics/Latinos and Immunizations

Infectious diseases are still major causes of illness, disability, and death. Moreover, new infectious agents and diseases are being detected, and some diseases that were once considered under control have reemerged in recent years. In addition, antimicrobial resistance is evolving rapidly in a variety of hospital- and community-acquired infections.

Vaccines can prevent the debilitating and in some cases fatal effects of infectious disease. Although vaccines have helped eliminate the illness and disability related to polio, measles, and rubella, for example, the organisms that cause these diseases have not disappeared. They have only receded and have the potential to reemerge if vaccination coverage drops. Vaccines protect more than the vaccinated individual—they also protect society.

Historically, childhood vaccination rates have been lower in certain minority populations compared with the majority population. Immunization efforts need to be intensified, particularly to increase vaccination coverage for children living in poverty. Substantial numbers of undervaccinated children remain, particularly in large urban areas with traditionally underserved populations, causing concern about potential outbreaks of disease.

Many adults are also at increased risk for vaccine-preventable diseases. Vaccination coverage against pneumococcal infections and influenza among African Americans and Hispanics, for example, remains substantially below that of the general population. (US DHHS, 2000).

- **Adult Immunization**
- **Child Immunization**
- **References and Resources**

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