

# Immunizations Save Lives and Dollars



Immunizations represent one of modern medicine's great advances. Measles provides a case in point. In the United States in 1920, nearly 470,000 measles cases were reported, and 7,575 Americans died. The measles vaccine was licensed in 1963, and by 1998 there were only 89 reported cases, with no deaths. And in the greatest vaccine success story, medical experts in 1980 declared smallpox eradicated and discontinued routine vaccination against this disease, which once killed, disfigured, or blinded millions around the world.

Immunizations save lives and help stop diseases from spreading. Babies and toddlers who receive all of their immunizations on time can be protected from ten dangerous diseases:

- Measles
- Mumps
- Rubella (German Measles)
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Diphtheria
- \* Tetanus
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough)
- Type b (Hib) Meningitis
- Chickenpox

Babies are more likely to suffer complications or die from vaccine-preventable diseases than older children. To be fully protected, toddlers must receive all of their immunizations by age 2.

## Ohio's Progress

Ohio has improved its rate of immunizing children from 50% in 1994 to over 76% in 1999. This progress is due to continuing state and federal investment in:

- *Immunizations* for children whose families do not have health insurance or who cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket for their shots.
- *Immunization Action Plans*, county-based programs that fund immunization clinics, educate parents, and assess barriers.
- *IMPACT, the confidential, statewide immunization registry and recall system*, which keeps track of children's immunization records and notifies parents when the next immunization is due. To register a child, families can call (800) 946-6863, 24 hours a day.

## Challenges Remain

Despite Ohio's progress through the 1990's, challenges remain. Statewide, 76.6% of Ohio's two-year-olds were fully immunized in 1999, similar to the national rate of 77.9%. Children in Ohio's eight major cities and rural areas are less likely to be fully immunized by age two, according to retrospective surveys conducted by the Ohio Department of Health.

## Key Facts: Immunization

- Immunizations save money. Every \$1 spent on diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough programs saves \$29 in direct medical costs and indirect social costs.
- Ohio has improved its rate of immunizing children. In 1994, 50% of Ohio's two-year-olds were fully immunized; by 1999, over 76% were.
- The cost of immunizations is out of reach for many families. The full series of required vaccines costs over \$420 not including doctor's office fees.
- Healthy Start/Healthy Families, Ohio's Medicaid program for children and families, covers all immunizations children need. Families can call (800) 324-8680 to apply.

Barriers that prevent children from receiving all their immunizations on time include:

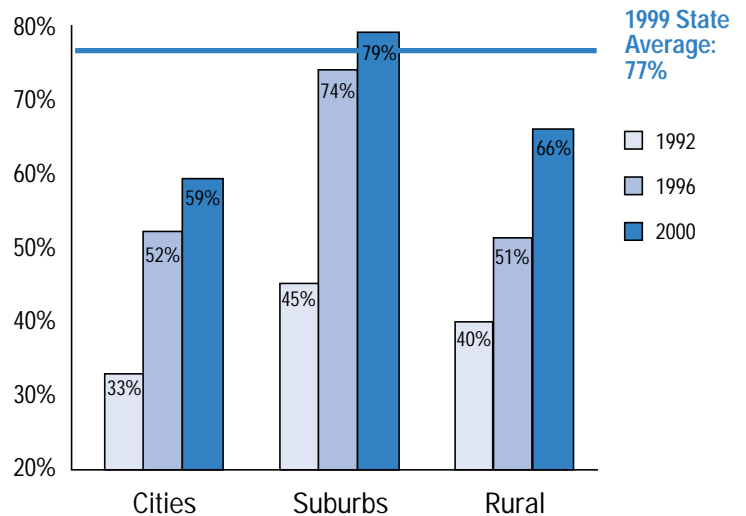
- *Cost:* Many working parents do not have health insurance that covers these costs and cannot afford to pay out-of-pocket for the full series of vaccines.
- *Lack of information:* If children do not see a doctor regularly, their parents may not know which immunizations are required or when their children need them.
- *Lack of knowledge:* Some parents may not understand the potential danger of common childhood diseases, especially those like polio which are no longer common due to immunizations.

### Recommendations to Continue Progress

To protect Ohio's children from childhood diseases and increase immunization rates, Ohio should:

- *Continue to invest in local Immunization Action Plans* to help communities educate parents and carry out effective immunization programs.
- *Strengthen the Ohio Department of Health's confidential, statewide immunization registry and reminder/recall system.* Periodic reminders that follow families when they move boost immunization rates in states that use them.
- *Make sure that families who cannot afford \$420 or more for a full series of vaccines can get no-cost or low-cost vaccines to protect their children.*
- *Invest dollars to make sure all children can receive newly approved vaccines,* like that for chickenpox, as recommended by medical experts.

**The Immunization Gap:**  
Percentage of Ohio Two-Year-Olds Fully Immunized, in Eight Major Ohio Cities, Suburbs, and Rural Areas



Source: Ohio Department of Health, "Eight Major Cities, Suburbs & Rural Counties Survey" (1992, 1996, 2000)

Visit the CDF-Ohio web site (<http://www.cdfohio.org>) for the 2000 recommended immunization schedule.



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Briefing Guides are available on the following topics:

- Child Care Assistance
- Child Care Quality
- Child Poverty
- Child Support
- Children's Health Insurance
- Fourth Grade Reading
- Head Start Basics
- Head Start Quality
- Immunizations
- Ohio Works First
- School Facilities