

Salud SOL!

HCHS/SOL Newsletter



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The Importance of Vaccination to Prevent Diseases

Vaccines are one of the most successful public health tools in history. They can prevent diseases that cause major epidemics, deaths, and life-long health issues. Vaccines have successfully aided in minimizing the impact of polio and diphtheria in the US, and help control viruses and other infections such as measles, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, hepatitis B, and meningococcal meningitis. **The purpose of vaccines is not to eliminate the organism that can make you sick (for example: fungus, bacteria or virus), but to prepare your body to be ready to fight off infections (immune response), to protect you from getting sick, to reduce the severity of the disease, and to reduce the risk of complications or death.** Vaccines stimulate the immune system of people to produce specialized cells and/or antibodies (immunity). Thus, these body's defenses are prepared for the moment we come into contact with an organism, and can prevent the development of a very serious disease. **Vaccines do not contain live organisms that could harm you; therefore, you cannot get the disease from the vaccine.** Sometimes after vaccination, you might experience a sore arm, a mild fever or body aches. These symptoms are part of your immune system's expected reaction and they just mean that your body is learning how to fight the pathogen.

As with all other medicines, each new vaccine must undergo evaluations to ensure it is safe and effective. All vaccines are first tested on animals. If a new vaccine works on animals, then it is tested in small human clinical trials. Highly trained scientists and specialized doctors at the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) evaluate the results of these clinical studies. The FDA also inspects the research facilities and the pharmaceutical companies to make sure they follow strict regulations and manufacturing guidelines. Once a vaccine is authorized, the FDA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) continue to monitor its use to make sure that there are no safety concerns. **All currently authorized vaccines in the US have gone through this process and are safe, effective, and reduce your risk of developing the illness that they target.**

Scientists have rigorously analyzed data from many epidemiological and clinical studies, and the overwhelming majority of **public health experts agree that vaccination has prevented tens of thousands of deaths and millions of diseases in the United States alone.** Vaccines benefit mainly those that get vaccinated but can also protect at risk people living in your community (group immunity).

Did you know that you can even make sure your baby is born with protection from certain diseases by getting vaccinated when you are pregnant? For information visit [Pregnancy and Vaccination | CDC](#)

Vaccination rates are lower among Hispanics/Latinos than among other groups in the United States. This could lead to increased health inequalities in our community. Hispanics/Latinos are suffering serious diseases, and even dying of preventable diseases. **Take the time to ask your doctor about which vaccines may be important for you and your family. Make sure all of your questions and concerns are discussed during your visit.** Like with many other health topics, there can be a lot of overwhelming or confusing information on vaccines. It is important to look for reliable sources when considering this information. To learn more about vaccines, go to [Vaccines & Immunizations | CDC](#)

If you have a question about vaccines please call the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Immunization Hotline at 347-

HCHS/SOL Updates

Annual Follow-Up Interviews: We continue calling you for your annual interview to learn about changes in your health and to update your records of hospitalizations and emergency room visits. Call us at **718-584-1563** if you haven't heard from us in the last 6 months.

In-Person Visit 3 and Ancillary Studies: A member of the SOL team will be calling you soon to invite you if you are currently eligible to participate in a study. You may also contact us to find more at: **718-584-1563**

Miami, Florida

305-243-1828



www.saludsol.net

Bronx, New York

1-718-584-1563



Facebook.com/ @SOLBronx

Chicago, Illinois

1-800-749-4765



San Diego, California

1-619-205-1926



@HCHS_SOL_Bronx

Coordinating Center

1-919-962-3254



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL



Blog: <https://bronxhchssol.blogspot.com>