

# SHOTStracker



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If you would like more information  
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Florida SHOTS please contact

The Florida Department of  
Health Bureau of  
Immunization

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## I-TRENDS

# National Study Uncovers Widespread Problem of Undervaccinating and Delayed Vaccinations

*This article was excerpted from "Timeliness of Childhood Vaccinations in the United States: Days Undervaccinated and Number of Vaccines Delayed," JAMA, March 9, 2005, by Elizabeth T. Luman, PhD, et. al.*

### STUDY RESULTS

*Children were undervaccinated a mean of 172 days for all vaccines combined during their first 24 months of life. Approximately 34% were undervaccinated for less than 1 month and 29% for 1 to 6 months, while 37% were undervaccinated for more than 6 months. Vaccine-specific undervaccination of more than 6 months ranged from 9% for poliovirus vaccine to 21% for Haemophilus influenzae type b vaccine. An estimated 25% of children had delays in receipt of 4 or more of the 6 vaccines. Approximately 21% of children were severely delayed (undervaccinated for more than 6 months and for 4 or more vaccines).*

### CONCLUSIONS

*More than 1 in 3 children were undervaccinated for more than 6 months during their first 24 months of life, and 1 in 4 children were delayed for at least 4 vaccines. Standard measures of vaccination coverage mask substantial shortfalls in ensuring that recommendations are followed regarding age at vaccination throughout the first 24 months of life.*

The standard measure of vaccination coverage is the percentage of children who have accumulated the required number of vaccine doses, without regard to timing of the vaccinations. However, to maximize protection from vaccine-preventable diseases, the recommended childhood immunization schedule specifies ages at which each of the approximately 20 vaccinations should be administered during the first 18 months of life. Remaining appropriately vaccinated at all times decreases a child's risk of contracting vaccine-preventable diseases and prevents disease outbreaks.

This study examined timeliness of receipt of vaccination among a nationally representative

sample of children in the United States for each recommended vaccine and for all vaccines combined. It evaluated the cumulative number of days children spent undervaccinated during the first 24 months of life, the number of late vaccinations, risk factors for severe delay, and the relationship between delay and traditional estimates of vaccination coverage. In total, data for 14,810 children aged 24 to 35 months was analyzed.

Approximately 21% of children were undervaccinated for more than 6 months and for 4 or more antigens and were considered severely

**National study finds nearly 21% of children severely undervaccinated for more than 6 months and for 4 or more vaccines**

delayed in their early childhood vaccinations. In multivariate analysis, factors associated with severe delay of vaccinations included having a mother who was unmarried or who did not have a college degree, living in household with 2 or more children, being non-Hispanic black, having 2 or more vaccination providers, and using public vaccination providers.

Vaccination coverage rates have reached record-high levels in the United States, with estimated coverage higher than 85% among children aged 19 to 35 months for DTaP and varicella vaccines, higher than 90% for poliovirus, MMR, hepatitis B, and Hib vaccines, and 73% for the combined series of all of these vaccines.



## Did You Know?

Only 18% of children in the United States receive all vaccinations at the recommended times or acceptable early. (See cover story.) Reminder-recall systems are an evidence-based solution recommended to ease this problem. Florida SHOTS makes reminder-recall functions available to all participating providers.

## Waiting for Training?

If you've submitted an application for enrollment in Florida SHOTS and are awaiting training, we've added 16 additional trainers to address the demand. Additionally, a Web-based training program will be available this summer. This will make training fast, easy, and at your convenience. Stay tuned for details.

## Tech Tips

**Q:** If my password is more than 30 days old, can I still log in to Florida SHOTS?

**A:** As of May 9, we have added a grace log-in process for users whose passwords have expired. If your password is over 30 days old, you will be allowed to log in one time under your old password, and you will have to change your password at that time. Forgotten passwords still require a call to your internal administrator, or a call to the Florida SHOTS help desk.

### CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Dr. Short receives award; Secretary of Health Agwunobi (pictured with Charles Alexander) inspires teamwork; Jeanine Fuentes, Kim Vermillion, Diane Brunet, Joelisa Sherman, Mandy Patton, Susan Lincicome, and Janet Long promote Florida SHOTS

### SPECIAL REPORT

## Celebrating 85 by '05 Success

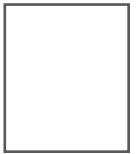
The 2005 BOI Summit was held April 26–27, in Orlando, Florida. Public and private health care providers gathered to celebrate passing the goal of 85% immunization coverage for Florida's children. The theme of this year's summit was "Building Success Through Teamwork" and the conference highlighted several of Florida's best early childhood immunization practices, including the importance of properly timing vaccinations. Presenters from the public and private provider sectors shared their successes in developing and managing coalitions; increasing immunizations among diverse populations; and benefiting from use of the immunization registry.

Congratulations to Dr. Douglas Short of the Outpatient Pediatric Center, Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children and Women, Orlando, who was recognized for his outstanding support of the Florida SHOTS program. And a special thanks goes to all of you around Florida who are working together to stamp out vaccine-preventable diseases.

## We Need Your Input!

Log on to [www.brunetgarcia.com/survey](http://www.brunetgarcia.com/survey) today (password: tracker6) and help us make Florida SHOTS the best tool it can be. A private research company is conducting a survey of all immunization providers in Florida. Whether you currently use the registry or not, we want your input about your immunization practices and your perceptions of the features and benefits of Florida SHOTS. Your feedback will be used as we move forward to refine the system to best meet provider needs.

All responses will be entered in a drawing to win a \$250 American Express gift certificate (one entry per office) awarded by the research firm. The survey is designed to take less than 10 minutes of your time, and you may designate anyone in the office who is knowledgeable about your immunization practices to respond. If you cannot access the survey online, call Jenny Camet at 904-346-1977 to request a faxed copy of the survey.



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## I-TRENDS

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However, reliance on this indicator alone masks substantial delays during the first 2 years of life prior to becoming fully vaccinated. While vaccine-preventable disease incidence is generally low in the United States, vaccination timeliness is particularly important for diseases that have the potential to cause large outbreaks, such as measles, and for diseases that currently are circulating, such as pertussis.

The US measles epidemic in 1989 to 1991 was caused by a failure to provide timely vaccination, and according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “only a sustained effort to provide age-appropriate vaccination will prevent another resurgence of measles.”

Pertussis is another example of the importance of timely vaccination. During 2003, 11,647 cases of pertussis were reported in the United States; incidence was highest among infants who were younger than 6 months, and infants accounted for the highest proportion of pertussis-related hospitalizations and death.

In addition to risk of disease and disease outbreaks, delayed vaccinations have administrative implications. Vaccine providers report difficulty in assessing vaccination status

and determining appropriate catch-up regimens for children who have fallen behind in their vaccinations.

Assessing days undervaccinated reveals weaknesses in childhood vaccination programs. Physicians are in the best position to assess the needs of their patients to determine reasons for delay. Evidence-based solutions exist for many of these needs, such as reminder-recall systems, extended office hours, expanding availability of pediatric care, and education regarding the importance and safety of vaccinations. Minimizing the time spent incompletely protected from vaccine-preventable diseases is important to the health of individuals and to public health and should be given even greater emphasis by public health programs and vaccination providers.

### SHOTS TRACKER EDITOR'S NOTE:

*What can health care providers do to ensure that children are age-appropriately immunized? Active participation in Florida SHOTS includes not only accessing children's records, but also updating records and using the reminder-recall features of the registry as an automated tool for identifying children who need vaccinations in the future or who are behind schedule for age-appropriate vaccination.*

## Welcome Aboard!

We here at Florida SHOTS would like to wish a warm welcome to the 94 practices that enrolled during the month of April 2005. A recent enrollee, Cynthia Hazim, receptionist at Pediatric Professional Associates in Miami, says this about Florida SHOTS:

“We found out about the registry through information mailed to us from Florida SHOTS, and we called to enroll. Our experience with our trainer was wonderful. She was thorough, and the program is very easy. Florida SHOTS saves us a lot of time.”

Asked what she would tell another doctor's office that was considering why they should enroll in the registry, Cynthia says, “It will save you time writing paperwork. The blue 680 form looks neater and more professional than hand writing. The registry is very user friendly. Click a button and print the form. It would be hard to enter all the patients at once, but we input as each person checks out. We love it. It will really be great this summer [with the back-to-school crunch].”

YES, please contact me to schedule a visit with a regional coordinator to enroll in Florida SHOTS.

Sign me up for electronic copies of *SHOTS Tracker*.

EMAIL 1: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL 2: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL 3: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

NL:V1:16

## How Do I Enroll in Florida SHOTS?

### SIGN UP TODAY!

Fill out this information card and mail it back to us. Please include proper postage.

Call **(877) 888-SHOT**, or send an email to the help desk at **flshots@doh.state.fl.us** if you need more information.

So many enrollment options... and they're all FREE!



The Florida Department of Health Bureau of Immunization  
Bin A-11, 4052 Bald Cypress Way  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1719



NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE:

## Easy Enrollment Form

[www.flshots.com/Providers.html](http://www.flshots.com/Providers.html)

## Florida SHOTS Enrollment: Fast. Easy. Free.

Florida SHOTS (State Health Online Tracking System) is a free, statewide, centralized electronic immunization registry that helps health care providers and parents keep track of immunization records. Enroll today at <http://www.flshots.com>.

## E-Tracker

To receive this newsletter via email as well as regular mail, please fill out and return the tear-off card included in this newsletter. Include as many email addresses as you would like to receive the newsletter.

