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# News

## COVID-19 pandemic leads to major backsliding on childhood vaccinations, new WHO, UNICEF data show

News release

23 million children missed out on basic vaccines through routine immunization services in 2020 – 3.7 million more than in 2019 - according to official data published today by WHO and UNICEF. This latest set of comprehensive worldwide childhood immunization figures, the first official figures to reflect global service disruptions due to COVID-19, show a majority of countries last year experienced drops in childhood vaccination rates.

Concerningly, most of these – up to 17 million children – likely did not receive a single vaccine during the year, widening already immense inequities in vaccine access. Most of these children live in communities affected by conflict, in under-served remote places, or in informal or slum settings where they face multiple deprivations including limited access to basic health and key social services.

“Even as countries clamour to get their hands on COVID-19 vaccines, we have gone backwards on other vaccinations, leaving children at risk from devastating but preventable diseases like measles, polio or meningitis,” said **Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General**. “Multiple disease outbreaks would be catastrophic for communities and health systems already battling COVID-19, making it more urgent than ever to invest in childhood vaccination and ensure every child is reached.”

**In all regions, rising numbers of children miss vital first vaccine doses in 2020; millions more miss later vaccines**

Disruptions in immunization services were widespread in 2020, with the WHO Southeast Asian and Eastern Mediterranean Regions most affected. As access to health services and immunization outreach were curtailed, the number of children not receiving even their very first vaccinations increased in all regions. As compared with 2019, 3.5 million more children missed their first dose of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis vaccine (DTP-1) while 3 million more children missed their first measles dose.

“This evidence should be a clear warning – the COVID-19 pandemic and related disruptions cost us valuable ground we cannot afford to lose – and the consequences will be paid in the lives and wellbeing of the most vulnerable,” said **Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director**. “Even before the pandemic, there were worrying signs that we were beginning to lose ground in the fight to immunize children against preventable child illness, including with the widespread measles outbreaks two years ago. The pandemic has made a bad situation worse. With the equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines at the forefront of everyone’s minds, we must remember that vaccine distribution has always been inequitable, but it does not have to be.”

For [more information on this story and links to further data](#).

## The WUENIC data you see today

[Kristi James](#), WHO headquarters

Data play an important part in realizing the [Immunization Agenda 2030](#) (IA2030). WHO's Immunization Information System (WIISE) was created as an end-to-end solution to ensure global data accuracy and usability.

This year, Member States, Reporting Entities, and Associate Members

submitted their annual immunization data using WHO and UNICEF's electronic Joint Reporting Form (eJRF). As at 20 July 2021, 178 of them reported their 2020 data through the eJRF of which 168 (or 87%) of WHO Member States. This

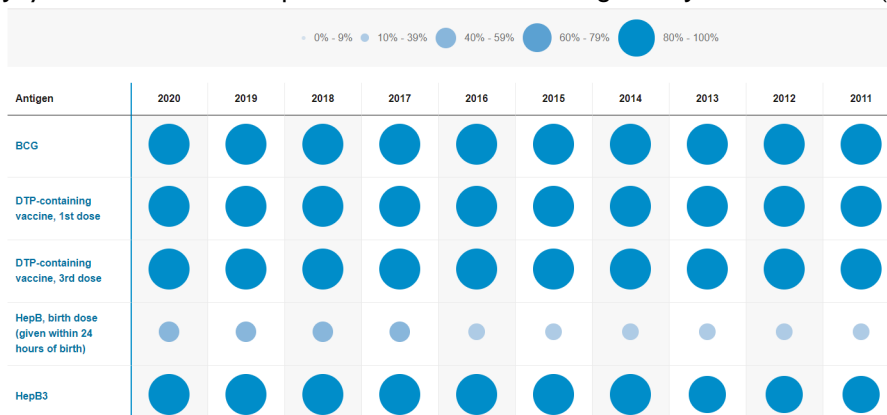


Photo 2: Global vaccination coverage over time

vaccines through routine health services in 2020, the highest number since 2009 and 3.7 million more than in 2019. For more on main findings see [press release](#) and [summary presentation](#).

You can now view, interact and download the officially reported data and WUENIC data in one location.

Thanks to WIISE, you can visit WHO's Immunization Data Portal and:

- Choose the information you want to evaluate
  - Filter data by region, country, or other country grouping
  - Start with a high-level overview of the data you selected and then go into the detail
- Easily make comparisons between data sets
  - Compare data sets between vaccine-preventable disease and vaccination coverage
- Quickly visualize the data
  - Visualize and analyze data over time – view trends and time series analysis
  - Maps are animated to show data over time
  - Colors used in data visualization were selected to accommodate color blindness
- Export the data you need so you can refer to them later

See all the [latest immunization data](#) here.

## Immunization dashboard Global

### Reported cases of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs) globally

Here you will find global trends and total numbers in reported cases of vaccine-preventable disease (VPD) up to 2020. These data can help monitor improvements and identify gaps for evaluation. These data are reported annually through the WHO/UNICEF Joint Reporting Form on Immunization (JRF). Reporting for 2020 is currently in process and may be incomplete.

[More on reported cases](#)

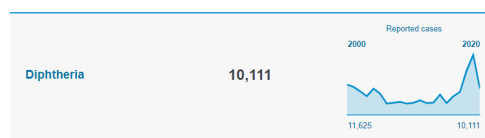


Photo 1: Global immunization dashboard



is an 11 percentage-points reduction from the previous year, but still an achievement given the global context. Once submitted, the data were harmonized and stored in WIISE Mart where they were immediately ready for visualization on WHO's Immunization Data portal.

The officially reported data through the eJRF contribute to the WHO/UNICEF Estimates of National Immunization Coverage (WUENIC) data that were released on 15 July 2021 reporting that 23 million children missed out on basic childhood

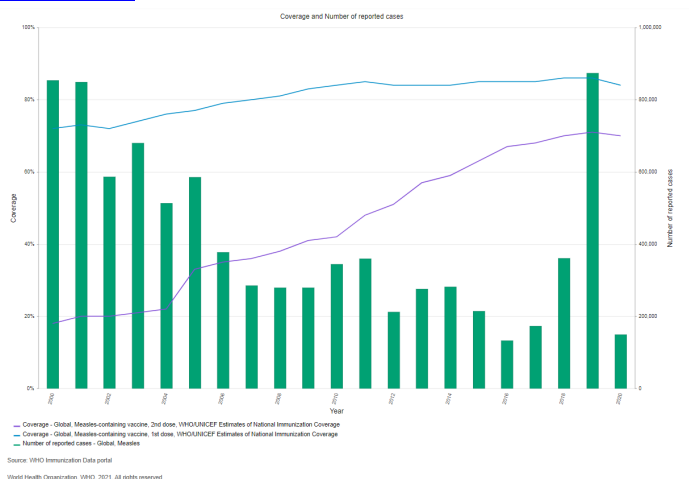


Photo 3: Indicators chart

## Featured resources: COVID-19 vaccines

### Updated WHO SAGE Roadmap for prioritizing uses of COVID-19 vaccines in the context of limited supply

WHO departmental news

This interim guidance was initially issued in October 2020, based on advice from the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization; it has been updated following the discussions at an extraordinary meeting of SAGE on [29 June 2021](#). A summary of the major revisions appears in Annex 3 (page 20), including evolving key assumptions and epidemiological considerations.

The roadmap is available at the following [link](#).

## Call for experts

### Call for experts to join candidate roster for the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization [SAGE Secretariat](#)

The World Health Organization (WHO) is seeking experts to serve as members of the Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE). A *call for experts* are available [HERE](#), provides information about the advisory group in question, the expert profiles being sought, the process to express interest, and the process of selection. Through this current effort, WHO is seeking to fill an opening on the advisory group as of January 2022, but also aims to develop a roster of candidates for future openings, with a view to ensuring a more rapid and efficient recruitment and onboarding process, as the need arises.

WHO is inviting anyone interested in serving on the **Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) on Immunization** to consider applying for inclusion on the newly established **SAGE Roster**. Applications are now conducted by way of an online survey process, the link for which appears within the call for experts. *The deadline for applications is Friday, 10 September 2021.*

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#### VIEW PREVIOUS EDITIONS

For previous editions of the GIN, visit the [GIN archive](#) on the WHO website.

## Past Meetings/Workshops

### XXVI Meeting of PAHO's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

Cuahtemoc Ruiz Matus, Margherita Ghiselli, Jennifer Sanwogou, [Octavia Silva](#), PAHO-Washington, DC

Location: Virtual

Date: 14-16 July 2021

Participants: PAHO's Assistant Director Jarbas Barbosa, TAG Members, SAGE Chair Dr Alejandro Cravioto, 250+ participants from 52 countries and territories in the Americas, including EPI managers, managers of epidemiological surveillance of vaccine-preventable diseases, heads of laboratory, presidents of National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG), PAHO immunization staff and representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Gavi, UNICEF, Rotary International, Sabin Vaccine Institute, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, among other immunization partners and experts.

Purpose: To review the regional progress on selected topics and issue recommendations to address the current and future challenges faced by national immunization programmes in the Region of the Americas.

Details: PAHO convened its regional meeting of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases on 14-16 July 2021. Given the global COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held virtually via Zoom. TAG Chair, Dr Peter Figueroa, opened the meeting by welcoming all participants and recognizing the hard work done by health care workers during the pandemic to maintain immunization, surveillance, and all aspects of immunization programmes. PAHO's Assistant Director, Dr Jarbas Barbosa, joined in opening the meeting by acknowledging Dr Figueroa and other participating TAG Members, and welcoming participating representatives of national immunization programmes, NITAG presidents, WHO SAGE chair Dr Cravioto, and all partners and agency representatives participating in the meeting. Informative sessions and discussions followed, covering the following topics:

- Update on the Regional Immunization Programme
- Digital Health in Immunization
- Regional Update on the Elimination of Measles and Rubella
- COVID-19 Vaccination
- Vaccination of High-Risk Groups in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Vaccine Hesitancy among Adults in the Caribbean
- Communication and Demand for COVID-19 Vaccines
- Regional ESAVI Surveillance System for COVID-19 Vaccines
- Statement of the TAG on COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination
- Recommendations for the Final Phase of Polio Eradication
- Managing Advantages and Risks when Integrating Other Temperature-Sensitive Health Products into the Vaccine Cold Chain

Under the leadership of Dr Figueroa, TAG Members set out to review the topics and issue recommendations for each. The 2021 TAG Meeting Final Report covering all topics and recommendations will be available at this [link](#).



TAG Members, Cuahtemoc Ruiz Matus, and Andrés de Francisco at the XXVI Meeting of PAHO's TAG on Vaccine-Preventable Diseases, July 2021. Credit: Fernando Revilla, PAHO/WHO.

## Links

### Organizations and Initiatives

American Red Cross

[Child Survival](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Polio](#)

[Global Vaccines and Immunization](#)

Johns Hopkins

[International Vaccine Access Center](#)

[Value of Immunization Compendium of Evidence \(VoICE\)](#)

[VIEW-hub](#)

JSI

[IMMUNIZATIONbasics](#)

[Immunization Center](#)

[Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program \(MCHIP\)](#)

[Publications and Resources](#)

[Universal Immunization through Improving Family Health Services \(UI-FHS\) Project in Ethiopia](#)

PAHO

[ProVac Initiative](#)

PATH

[Better Immunization Data \(BID\) Initiative](#)

[Center for Vaccine Innovation and Access](#)

[Defeat Diarrheal Disease Initiative](#)

[Malaria Vaccine Initiative](#)

[RHO Cervical Cancer](#)

Sabin Vaccine Institute

[Boost – A Global Community of Immunization Professionals](#)

UNICEF

[Immunization](#)

[Supplies and Logistics](#)

USAID

[USAID Immunization](#)

[USAID Maternal and Child Survival Program](#)

WHO

[Department of Immunization, Vaccines & Biologicals](#)

[ICO Information Centre on HPV and Cancer](#)

[National programmes and systems](#)

[Immunization planning and financing](#)

[Immunization monitoring and surveillance](#)

[National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups Resource Center](#)

[SIGN Alliance](#)

Other

[Coalition Against Typhoid](#)

[Confederation of Meningitis Organizations](#)

[Dengue Vaccine Initiative](#)

[European Vaccine Initiative](#)

[Gardasil Access Program](#)

[Gavi the Vaccine Alliance](#)

[Global Polio Eradication Initiative](#)

[Immunization Academy](#)

[International Association of Public Health Logisticians](#)

[Immunization Economics resource](#)

[International Vaccine Institute](#)

[Measles & Rubella Initiative](#)

[Multinational Influenza Seasonal Mortality Study](#)

[Network for Education and Support in Immunisation \(NESI\)](#)

[Stop Pneumonia](#)

[TechNet-21](#)

[Vaccine Safety Net](#)

[Vaccines Today](#)

### WHO Regional Websites

[Routine Immunization and New Vaccines \(AFRO\)](#)

[Immunization \(PAHO\)](#)

[Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization \(EMRO\)](#)

[Vaccines and immunization \(EURO\)](#)

[Immunization \(SEARO\)](#)

[Immunization \(WPRO\)](#)

### UNICEF Regional Websites

[Immunization \(Central and Eastern Europe\)](#)

[Immunization \(Eastern and Southern Africa\)](#)

[Immunization \(South Asia\)](#)

[Immunization \(West and Central Africa\)](#)

[Child survival \(Middle East and Northern Africa\)](#)

[Health and nutrition \(East Asia and Pacific\)](#)

[Health and nutrition \(Americas\)](#)

### Newsletters

[Immunization Monthly update in the African Region \(AFRO\)](#)

[COVID-19 Vaccines Newsletter \(AFRO\)](#)

[WHO/Europe Vaccine-preventable diseases and immunization \(VPI\) news \(EURO\)](#)

[Immunization Newsletter \(PAHO\)](#)

[The Civil Society Dose \(GAVI CSO Constituency\)](#)

[TechNet Digest](#)

[Vaccine Delivery Research Digest \(Uni of Washington\)](#)

[Gavi Programme Bulletin \(Gavi\)](#)

[Immunization Economics Community of Practice](#)