

Vaccines: Why does its importance go far beyond Covid-19?



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Knowledge against ignorance, health against disease, life and death ... A thousand reflections of the Permanent Battle in which we are all involved". This excerpt was written by Oswaldo Cruz, a sanitary doctor, essential in the fight for the implementation of mass vaccination and eradication of smallpox in the country.¹ Its "permanent battle", in fact, is still seen more than a hundred years later.

Even with several setbacks throughout history, the "culture of immunization" has been consolidated and with it several diseases such as measles, polio, rubella have had an unquestionable drop in cases worldwide. The evolution of health systems in responding to the demands for more and better vaccines and the presence of the Unified Health System are crucial factors for the quality of immunization in Brazil.

With the emergence of the new coronavirus pandemic, the importance of immunization has been increasingly emphasized. The race against time to create a vaccine in record time has boosted our expectations every day. However, while we look forward to the arrival of this new vaccine, have you looked at your vaccination books?

Undoubtedly, COVID-19 stands out due to the exponential number of cases worldwide. However, it is important to remember that other diseases are also extremely relevant in the current scenario. According to

a warning from the World Health Organization (WHO), vaccination coverage in several countries has declined due to the effects of the pandemic, with an impact on about 80 million children under one year of age.² The interruption of routine vaccination in children and at-risk groups can lead to an increase in cases of vaccine-preventable diseases, with retrogression in the achievements and may present more severe conditions than the current pandemic.³

In 2018, measles infected almost 10 million people and killed more than 140,000 worldwide and as of May 2020 there was still active circulation of the virus in the country. In the same period, yellow fever cases were also recorded in 56 municipalities in 4 Brazilian states.⁴

Vaccination should be considered an essential and essential health service that should not be interrupted, according to the National Immunization Program (Programa Nacional de Imunizações - PNI).⁵ With the goal of vaccinating more than 60 million high-risk people, campaigns are being adapted with achievements outside health centers to avoid contact with sick individuals such as empty schools, supermarkets and pharmacies, in addition to the "drive-thru" option on residence of people who have limitations for health reasons.⁶

The awareness of everyone, together with the improvement in the strategy to contain new outbreaks, will undoubtedly be key elements to win this battle and strengthen ourselves for the next ones. ■



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