

## VACCINATION

Vaccination is one of the greatest public health achievements of the 20th century, resulting in dramatic declines in mortality and morbidity for many infectious diseases. An annual influenza, or flu, vaccination is now recommended for all persons aged 6 months and older; however, it is especially important for certain groups, including older adults, who experience more serious complications.<sup>10</sup> Influenza vaccination efforts should begin as soon as the seasonal influenza vaccine is available in September and continue throughout the influenza season, generally into February. During the 2008–2009 flu season, only 43.7 percent of women aged 50–64 years reported receiving a flu vaccine; this did not vary significantly by race and ethnicity. Women aged 65 years and older were more likely to report receiving a flu vaccine (65.8 percent). However, non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic women aged 65 and older were much less likely to receive the flu vaccine than non-Hispanic White women of the same age (48.6 and 50.9 versus 69.0 percent, respectively).

A pneumococcal vaccination protects against a bacterial infection that may cause a form of pneumonia, meningitis, or ear infection. It is recommended for young children, adults aged 65 years and older, and those with certain health conditions or behaviors such as asthma and cigarette smoking.<sup>11</sup> In 2009, 61.7 percent of women

aged 65 and older reported ever receiving a pneumococcal vaccination. However, less than half of all non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic women aged 65 and older had received the pneumococcal vaccination compared to 65.7 percent of non-Hispanic White women of the same age.

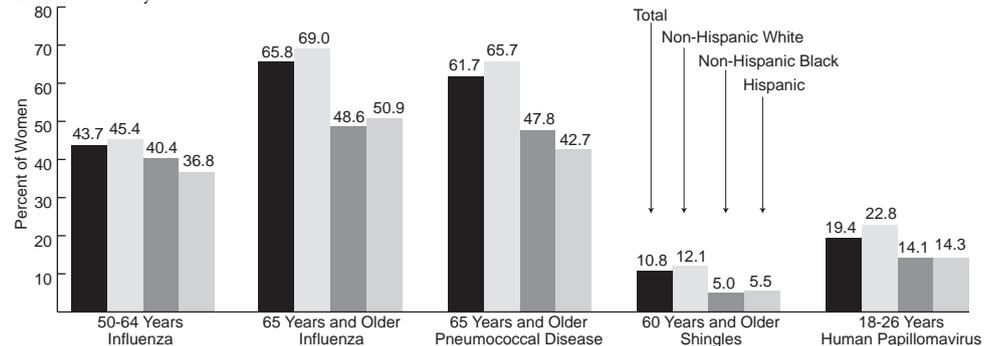
Two newer vaccinations, first recommended in 2006, protect against shingles and human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. Shingles is a reactivation of the virus that causes chickenpox. It occurs mostly in older adults and produces a skin rash that can create debilitating pain lasting months or even years. The shingles vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 60 years and older without certain conditions that may weak-

en the immune system.<sup>12</sup> In 2009, only 10.8 percent of women aged 60 years and older reported receiving shingles vaccination.

Genital HPV is the most common sexually transmitted infection in the United States and some HPV types can cause cervical cancer in women. Vaccination is universally recommended for girls aged 11–12 years. Catch-up vaccination is recommended for females aged 13–26 years who have not been previously vaccinated.<sup>13</sup> In 2009, only 19.4 percent of women aged 18–26 years had received HPV vaccination. Non-Hispanic White women were more likely to have been vaccinated for shingles and HPV than non-Hispanic Black or Hispanic women.

### Receipt of Selected Vaccinations\* Among Women, by Recommended Age Group and Race/Ethnicity,\*\* 2009

Source III.2: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey



\*Having received the flu shot or nasal spray from September 2008 through February 2009; having ever received the pneumonia shot; having ever received the zoster or Shingles vaccine; and having ever received the HPV shot or cervical cancer vaccine. \*\*The sample of American Indian/Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders was too small to produce reliable results.