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CHAPTER 8

Infectious Diseases

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CHAPTER CONTENTS

General Principles of Microbial Pathogenesis

Despite the availability of effective vaccines and antibiotics, infectious diseases remain an important health problem throughout the world. In the United States and other high-income countries, infectious diseases are particularly important causes of death among older adults and in people who are immunosuppressed or who suffer from debilitating chronic diseases. In the developing world, inadequate access to medical care and malnutrition contribute to a heavy burden of infectious diseases. In these areas, six of the ten leading causes of death are infectious diseases. Tragically, most of these deaths occur in children, with respiratory and diarrheal infections taking the greatest toll.