



NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES NATIONAL INFLUENZA CONSUMER SURVEY: ADULTS

New Vaccination Recommendation Gaining Awareness; Physicians Play Key Role in Motivating Adults to Get Influenza Vaccine

Influenza causes more than 200,000 hospitalizations and between 3,330 and 49,000 deaths a year, depending on the severity of circulating strains. With the new universal influenza recommendation for all Americans 6 months of age and older, the need to understand and overcome key barriers to influenza immunization is greater than ever.

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) commissioned a survey of adults to assess influenza awareness, knowledge, beliefs and practices, as well as to identify vaccination obstacles. The survey found there is already impressive awareness of the new influenza vaccination recommendations. While the intent to vaccinate this season is approaching 60 percent, the survey also revealed several prevailing misconceptions about influenza that demonstrate the need for continuing education and public awareness.

Key Findings

More than two-thirds of Americans are aware of new universal influenza vaccination recommendation

- Awareness of new universal vaccination recommendation impacts vaccination intentions, leading to higher vaccination rates
 - 77 percent of those who are aware of the new recommendation have/plan to vaccinate this season
 - 17 percent of those who are unaware of the new recommendation plan to get vaccinated

Nearly six in 10 (57 percent) Americans plan to vaccinate for influenza this season

- Seniors (age 65 and older) have the highest intent to vaccinate this year (73 percent)
- Adults 45 to 54 years old have the lowest intent to vaccinate this year (49 percent)

Health Care Professionals (HCPs) – particularly physicians – play a key role as vaccine motivators

- Among those already vaccinated, or who intend to vaccinate, 76 percent received HCP recommendation
- Among those unlikely to vaccinate, 35 percent received HCP recommendation
- Physician recommendations were the most motivating (vs. other HCPs)
 - Among those motivated to vaccinate by any HCP, 76 percent received a physician recommendation versus 39 percent who received a nurse, nurse practitioner or physician assistant recommendation

Altruism toward family and community tops list of reasons to vaccinate

- Getting vaccinated protects others in your family from getting flu (95 percent); protects others in the community (94 percent)
- Desire to protect against a disease that could confine an individual to bed for up to a week (92 percent)
- Vaccine was easily available, conveniently offered (90 percent)
- A physician or nurse recommended vaccination (81 percent)

Misconceptions and “magical thinking” account for several key reasons not to vaccinate; of those who say they do not plan to get vaccinated:

- 71 percent believe there are other effective ways besides vaccination to prevent influenza
- 69 percent say they are healthy and flu doesn't worry them
- 62 percent believe the vaccine can cause the flu or side effects
- 51 percent say they have some concerns about vaccine ingredients
- 48 percent say the vaccine may not match the virus or be effective this year
- 47 percent say vaccination is not necessary because they never get influenza

Additional misconceptions concerning influenza

- More than six in 10 Americans (62 percent) erroneously believe the vaccine protects against just one type of flu – or strain – each year
- More than one-third (34 percent) of all Americans erroneously believe that hand washing works just as well – or better – than vaccination to prevent flu
- More than four in 10 (43 percent) aren't aware that nasal mist is an alternative for adults under age 50

About the survey

The survey was conducted on behalf of NFID by Opinion Research Corporation CARAVAN® Omnibus. Results are based on telephone interviews conducted August 27-30, 2010, with a sample of 1,010 adults (503 men and 507 women) age 18 years and older. The margin of error is ± 3 percent for the entire sample.

About NFID

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is a non-profit, tax-exempt (501c3) organization founded in 1973 and dedicated to educating the public and health care professionals about the causes, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases.

October 2010