

National Survey on Adult Vaccination Reports Low Consumer Awareness of Vaccines and the Risks of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases

The comprehensive U.S. Adult Immunization Schedule calls for vaccination of adults against 14 infectious diseases. The recommended vaccines are safe and effective and the diseases they prevent are very serious, yet Americans forego vaccination at alarming rates. While vaccines that could protect them go unused, more Americans die each year from vaccine-preventable diseases than from breast cancer, HIV/AIDS, traffic accidents and many other causes.

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) has had a long-standing commitment to encouraging optimal use of all vaccines recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As part of its initiative focused on adult immunization, NFID conducted a survey of U.S. adults to gauge awareness of vaccines and found that low awareness is complicated by complacency about the severity risk of getting vaccine-preventable diseases.

Key Findings

Very few adults can name more than one or two diseases that are vaccine preventable

- About half of respondents (49 percent) correctly named influenza as a vaccine-preventable disease; just 3 to 18 percent could name any of the other vaccine-preventable diseases.
- Pneumonia (18 percent), chickenpox (13), tetanus (13), Hepatitis B (11), Hepatitis A (10), measles (10), human papillomavirus/cervical cancer (7), mumps (7), diphtheria (4), rubella (4), shingles (4), meningitis (3), whooping cough (3)

Nearly half of adults are not concerned about vaccine-preventable disease

- More than one in five (22 percent) was *not at all concerned* about a family member or themselves getting a vaccine-preventable disease; 27 percent were *not very concerned*.
- Respondents were least concerned about diphtheria, pertussis and shingles, while they were most concerned about influenza, likely reflecting that influenza is the most discussed vaccine-preventable disease.
 - Percent who said they were *not concerned about* diphtheria (68), pertussis (64), shingles (58), HPV (52), tetanus (52), Hepatitis (50), pneumonia (42), influenza (30)

Consumers express less concern about vaccine cost, efficacy and convenience, more about vaccine safety

- About one in eight (13 percent) said they are too busy to get a vaccine.
- Just 14 percent believed that vaccines do not work.
- 22 percent said they would not get a vaccine if they had to pay for it and slightly more (26 percent) said vaccines were too expensive.
- 35 percent have heard that vaccines are not safe.

Interactions in physician offices are a key factor in vaccine delivery

- The vast majority of respondents (87 percent) said they are very or somewhat likely to get a vaccine if their doctor recommends it.
- More than half (55 percent) would not get a vaccine unless it was recommended by their doctor

Simply discussing vaccines appears to increase the likelihood consumers will consider vaccination

- At the end of the survey, 41 percent said they were likely to ask for a vaccine at their next doctor visit even if the doctor did not mention it.

About the NFID National Adult Immunization Consumer Survey

- The survey was conducted on behalf of NFID by Opinion Research Corporation CARAVAN[®] Omnibus.
- Results are based on telephone interviews conducted October 25–28, 2007, with a sample of 1,005 adults (504 men and 501 women). Interviews were weighted by age, sex, geographic region, and race to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. adult population.
- The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ for the entire sample.

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