

Public Perception of Influenza, Vaccination and Treatment Options

National Consumer Survey Sponsored by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID)

Recognizing Influenza Severity: Many Remain Complacent

- Less than half of survey respondents (48%) plan to be immunized against influenza this year.
 - Of the approximately 50% who do not plan to be immunized,[‡]
 - 43% do not think influenza is serious enough to warrant vaccination.
 - 38% feel they are not at risk for influenza and its related complications.
 - 37% are not concerned about getting influenza.
 - 26% are not concerned about spreading the influenza virus to a friend, family member or co-worker.
 - 23% believe that they still got influenza even after being immunized one year.
 - 19% worry that the vaccine is not effective.
 - 15% think that since they have been vaccinated before, they do not need to receive the vaccine again this season.

Preventing Influenza: Vaccination Often Underappreciated, Misunderstood

- Nearly half (46%) of survey participants incorrectly believe the influenza vaccine can cause influenza.
 - Annual vaccination is the safest and most effective way of preventing influenza infection.
- 30% think annual influenza immunization is not worth receiving because the vaccine only protects against three strains of the virus.
 - The influenza viruses change every year, which is why a new vaccine is produced in time for each season. This ensures that the strains predicted to be most predominant are included in the vaccine to help provide the best protection.
- More than half of those who plan to be immunized this season (53%) acknowledged learning about the value of immunization the hard way. They now make annual vaccination a priority after suffering from influenza and its severe symptoms during a previous season.
- Not as many respondents were aware of new Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations that all children from 6 months up to 5 years of age should be vaccinated each year (68%), in comparison to knowledge of the previous CDC recommendation for all children 6-23 months of age (73%).[†]
 - The new pediatric recommendations have been issued in time for the 2006-2007 season.
- In addition, less than half of the survey respondents (49%) thought that pregnant women should especially be vaccinated against influenza every year.
 - The CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination for all pregnant women.

[‡]Participants could provide more than one answer when they responded

[†]Participants could provide more than one recommended target group when they responded

Americans Unaware Vaccination Beneficial in December and Beyond

- While a large percentage accurately think they are most likely to get influenza in December (44%) and January (50%),* the majority indicated September through November as the best months to get an influenza immunization, and that by December it is too late to benefit from the vaccine.*
 - The influenza season typically does not peak until between January and March, meaning influenza vaccination should continue into December, January and beyond, even if disease begins to be seen in the area.

Available Treatment Options: Influenza is not the Common Cold

- Nearly all Americans (95%) would rest and drink plenty of fluids if they got influenza and 85% noted they would stay home in bed.‡
- More than half say they treat influenza like a cold, since they regard them as similar health problems.‡
 - Influenza, also called “the flu,” is a serious respiratory illness that is responsible for more than 200,000 hospitalizations and approximately 36,000 deaths in the U.S. each year.
- Only 58% would see their doctor about getting prescription antiviral medication.‡
 - Antiviral medications can be used in people who have been exposed to influenza to help contain the spread in certain settings, such as family members passing the flu to one another in a household, or in the workplace.
 - Antivirals can also be used in those patients who cannot receive a traditional influenza vaccine because of egg allergies.
 - As with vaccines, prescription antiviral medications will be in ample supply during the 2006-2007 influenza season in pharmacies across the U.S.

NFID National Influenza Consumer Survey

- Conducted by Opinion Research Corporation CARAVAN® Omnibus, on behalf of NFID.
- Results are based on telephone interviews conducted from August 31-September 3, 2006, among a representative sample (random digit dial) of 1,014 adults (503 men and 511 women) aged 18 and older, with a margin of error at a 95 percent confidence level, plus or minus 3.4 percentage points.

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*Participants were allowed to provide more than one month when they responded

‡Participants could provide more than one answer when they responded