2020 Vaccine Survey
African American/Black Overview
March 2021
Methodology

Main objective: Evaluate COVID-19 vaccine acceptance/hesitancy among adults 50-plus.

- Conducted September 28 – October 12, 2020
- 20-minute online survey (augmented by phone)
- English and Spanish
- National probability-based sample
- 1,722 50+ interviews
  - 491 African American (CI: +/- 5.51)
  - 467 Hispanic/Latino
  - 721 White
  - 350 Family in nursing home
  - 312 Caregivers
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Survey conducted September 28 – October 12, 2020 (pre-COVID-19 vaccine authorization)

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**Significance notation:**

Questions with compelling differences among groups are noted in a blue hexagon (as seen on the left). The notation indicates how a section of a group (i.e., education) is different than the other sections within that group. For example, the notation on the left means compared to the other education groups (i.e., high school diploma, no high school diploma, etc.), those with a bachelor’s degree or higher are significantly more likely to say vaccines are safe.

Those with a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to say vaccines are safe.
Executive Summary

• The majority of African American/Black adults have positive opinions when it comes to vaccines in general. However, significant differences emerge depending on educational attainment and age cohort.

• Overall, vaccine acceptance and compliance is higher among older African American/Black adults ages 65+.

• While most African American/Black adults ages 50-plus get a flu shot, the majority of those who do not cite concern about possible side effects as a reason, and nearly a third say they simply don’t think they need a flu shot.

• African American/Black adults ages 65-plus are significantly more likely to say they follow their doctor or health care professional’s recommendations regarding vaccinations and/or have or plan to get several recommended vaccines. One in 10 adults ages 50 to 64 say they do not follow their doctor or health care professional’s recommendations on vaccines nor do they plan to get the vaccines listed.

• Trust in information regarding vaccines and immunizations is key to reducing vaccine hesitancy. Nearly three-quarters of older African American/Black adults say they trust their doctor or health care professional for information about adult immunizations, and those ages 65-plus are significantly more likely to say they trust their doctor or health care professionals.

• For information about COVID-19, most African American/Black adults ages 50+ look to medical professionals rather than government officials, and the majority say they trust their doctor or health care professional to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine.
VACCINES OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE (GENERAL)
Beliefs in the efficacy and value of vaccines are widely held, both at a personal and societal level.

The vast majority of African American/Black adults ages 50-plus believe vaccines are a good way to protect themselves and their family (87%) as well as society at large (83%). Most agree that the risk in catching a disease from the vaccine is low (68%) and most disagree that vaccines have few benefits (70%).

Agreement with the following statements

Getting vaccines is a good way to protect me and my family from disease

- Strongly disagree: 5%
- Somewhat disagree: 3%
- Somewhat agree: 46%
- Strongly agree: 41%

Getting vaccines is a good way to improve health in society at large

- Strongly disagree: 5%
- Somewhat disagree: 10%
- Somewhat agree: 52%
- Strongly agree: 31%

There is a low risk of catching the diseases the vaccines are made to prevent

- Strongly disagree: 6%
- Somewhat disagree: 24%
- Somewhat agree: 48%
- Strongly agree: 20%

There are very few benefits of vaccines

- Strongly disagree: 30%
- Somewhat disagree: 40%
- Somewhat agree: 23%
- Strongly agree: 6%

F2_Q6 [STATEMENT.] Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.
Base: Total respondents n=491

Those ages 65-plus or who have a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to say “strongly agree.”

Those with a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to say “strongly agree.”

Men or those with a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to strongly or somewhat disagree.
Lack of self-education and uncertainty about whom to trust to provide information are barriers to knowledge about vaccines.

Although three-quarters (74%) say they have had or have heard of bad experiences related to vaccines, half do not conduct research on vaccines (50%). Three in five (61%) African American/Black adults ages 50-plus say they don’t know who to trust when it comes to information about vaccines.

Agreement with the following statements:

- I have had or heard of people having bad experiences with vaccines
  - Strongly disagree: 5%
  - Somewhat disagree: 19%
  - Somewhat agree: 47%
  - Strongly agree: 27%

- I am unsure who to trust when it comes to information about vaccines
  - Strongly disagree: 11%
  - Somewhat disagree: 26%
  - Somewhat agree: 40%
  - Strongly agree: 21%

- I frequently research information about vaccines
  - Strongly disagree: 50%
  - Somewhat disagree: 34%
  - Somewhat agree: 35%
  - Strongly agree: 13%

Women are more likely to agree. Women and those with income less than $30,000 are more likely to agree.
Most older African American/Black adults say they get at least some vaccines recommended by their doctor or other health care professional.

While one-third (33%) of all African American/Black adults ages 50-plus report they get all the vaccines suggested by their doctor or other health care professional, one-third (34%) say they only get a few or none of the recommended vaccines.

**Percentage getting recommended vaccines**

- **Get all of the recommended vaccines**: 33%
- **Get most of the recommended vaccines**: 32%
- **Get few of the recommended vaccines**: 22%
- **Do not get any of the recommended vaccines**: 12%

*F3_Q7 Which statement comes closer to your own view?  
Base: Total respondents n=491*
FLU VACCINE OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE
Those who do not regularly get a flu shot most often cite concern about possible side effects as the reason.

When asked why they sometimes, rarely, or never get a flu shot, more than half (52%) of older African American/Black adults report they are concerned about possible side effects, while half say they never get the flu (25%) and/or they are concerned about weakening their immune system (25%).

Reasons for sometimes, rarely, or never getting a flu shot

- I am concerned about possible side effects (52%)
- I am concerned about weakening my immune system (25%)
- I never get the flu (25%)
- I don’t like needles (22%)
- I don’t think I need one (21%)
- I don’t believe they work (18%)
- I don’t think they are safe (17%)
- I don’t like to take medications (10%)
- The flu is not a serious disease (6%)

Those with less than a bachelor’s degree are more likely to say they are concerned about possible side effects of the flu vaccine. Those ages 65-plus are more likely to say flu is not a serious disease.
Those who say they are unlikely to get a flu shot this year most often cite concern about possible side effects as the reason.

When asked why they are not likely to get a flu vaccine this year, more than half (52%) say they are concerned about possible side effects, which is notable given the long history with the flu vaccine. One-fifth (20%) say they are keeping away from health care sites to avoid COVID-19, and nearly one-fifth (17%) say the flu vaccine doesn't work very well.

Reasons for not getting a flu shot this year

- I am worried about side effects of the flu vaccine: 52%
- Keeping away from health care sites to avoid COVID-19: 20%
- The flu vaccine doesn't work very well: 17%
- I'm healthy and don't need a flu vaccine: 16%
- I probably just won't get around to it: 13%
- The flu is not a serious disease: 8%
- Waiting for the COVID-19 vaccine: 6%

$F9_Q13 Why are you not likely to get a flu vaccine this year?
Base: Somewhat or very unlikely to get a flu shot this year; n =151
AGE-RELATED VACCINE EXPERIENCE AND COMPLIANCE
Some older African American/Black adults are hesitant to receive commonly recommended vaccinations.

About six in 10 African American/Black older adults say they have received or plan to receive vaccinations for Tdap (59%) and pneumonia (57%), and just under half (47%) say they have gotten or plan to get vaccinated for shingles. As may be expected, the 65-plus cohort is significantly more likely to say they have gotten these vaccinations. A substantial portion of those 50–64 say they do not plan to get some of the vaccinations listed.

Tdap, shingles, and pneumonia vaccine plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes/Plan to</th>
<th>No/Do not plan to</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>50-64</strong></td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>65+</strong></td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

F11_Q15 As an adult, have you ever gotten a Td or Tdap vaccination, which is for protection against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis (also known as whooping cough)?
F12_Q16 Have you ever had a shot for pneumonia?
F13_Q17 Have you ever had a shot for shingles?
Base: Total respondents n=491
Vaccine compliance is higher among adults ages 65-plus.

This vaccine compliance scale comprises several questions related to attitudes and actions regarding vaccines like the flu and pneumonia. Older African American/Black adults ages 65-plus are significantly more likely to say they follow their doctor’s recommendations on vaccines and have or plan to get several recommended vaccines (a score of 5 out of 5 on the scale, where 5 = most likely). Interestingly, one in 10 (10%) of those ages 50–64 scored a zero on this vaccine acceptance scale, meaning they do not follow their doctor’s recommendations on vaccines nor do they plan to get the vaccines listed.

Likelihood of following doctor’s recommendations on vaccines
Vaccine acceptance scale scores (0 = least likely, 5 = most likely)

Vaccine compliance scale (1 point each for):
- Get flu shot every year
- Get all/most vaccines rec. by dr.
- Have/plan to get vac: shingles, pneumonia, Tdap

Those with a bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to comply with all of their doctor’s recommendations on vaccines.

Base: Total respondents n=491
COVID-19 VACCINE OPINIONS AND ACCEPTANCE

Survey conducted September 28 – October 12, 2020 (pre-COVID-19 vaccine authorization)
Many African American/Black adults ages 50+ are at least somewhat likely to get vaccinated regardless of whether they are worried about the virus.

Nearly one in five (18%) Black older adults say they are extremely likely to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and another third (32%) say they are somewhat likely to do so. Nearly half (46%) of those who say they aren’t worried about getting COVID-19 still say they will most likely get the vaccine.

Likelihood of getting a COVID-19 vaccine

- Very likely: 18%
- Somewhat likely: 32%
- Somewhat unlikely: 22%
- Very unlikely: 26%

Men are more likely to say they will get vaccinated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Worried about getting COVID-19?</th>
<th>Likely to get COVID-19 vaccine?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COV10_Q30. Assuming no cost, when a COVID-19 vaccine is available, how likely are you to get vaccinated?
Base: Total respondents n=491

COV1_Q20 How worried, if at all, are you about getting COVID-19?
Base: Total respondents n=491
Among those who say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine, distrust in the government is the top reason.

Most of the 50+ African American/Black adults who say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine cite distrust in government (67%), concern about possible side effects (63%), and the belief that risks associated with taking a new vaccine outweigh the possible benefits (47%). Additionally, three in 10 (30%) say they do not think the vaccination will work to protect them from infection.
Safety and effectiveness are the most important factors when deciding whether to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

The majority (77%) of older African American/Black adults say the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine will be very important in deciding whether to get it. Similarly, seven in 10 (70%) say how well the vaccine works will be very important. Interestingly, while the vast majority say their personal physician is the most trusted messenger about the vaccine, less than half (45%) say a doctor’s recommendation will be very important in deciding whether to get a vaccine.

Percent who consider the following "very important" in deciding to get a COVID-19 vaccine

- How safe it is: 77%
- How well it works: 70%
- Personal doctor rec.: 45%
- CDC rec: 34%
- Cost: 33%
- Friends/family get it: 24%
- Governor rec: 15%

COV16_Q34: How important, if at all, will the following factors be in your decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine?
Base: Total respondents n=491
Personal health care providers’ recommendation may also increase the chances of getting a COVID-19 vaccine.

Three out of five (59%) older African American/Black adults ages 50+ say if their doctor says the COVID-19 vaccine is safe, they would more likely get the vaccine. About one-third (31%) are more likely to get the vaccine if they could get a fast, easy, affordable COVID-19 test that they could do at home and get quick results.

How would the following developments impact your likelihood of getting a COVID-19 vaccine?

- **Your doctor or health care professional says the vaccine is safe.**
  - More likely: 59%
  - No impact: 31%
  - Less likely: 8%

- **If there was a fast, easy, affordable COVID-19 test you could do at home and get quick results.**
  - More likely: 31%
  - No impact: 44%
  - Less likely: 23%

*See notes section for significant differences

COV17_Q35: How would the following developments impact the likelihood you would get a coronavirus/COVID-19 vaccine, if at all?

Base: Total respondents n=491
Misinformation about some aspects of the COVID-19 vaccine persists.

One-third (33%) of African American/Black older adults either strongly or somewhat agree that they will be safe from getting COVID-19 because other people will be vaccinated. Similarly, one in seven (14%) agree that if you get a flu vaccine you do not need a COVID-19 vaccine.

Agreement with the following statements about COVID-19 vaccines

- **I am concerned about serious side effects of a COVID-19 vaccine.**
  - Strongly disagree: 4%
  - Somewhat disagree: 8%
  - Somewhat agree: 33%
  - Strongly agree: 54%

- **Getting the COVID-19 vaccine would mean my life could go back to normal, like it was before the pandemic.**
  - Strongly disagree: 19%
  - Somewhat disagree: 26%
  - Somewhat agree: 37%
  - Strongly agree: 16%

- **So many people will be vaccinated for COVID-19 that I will be safe from COVID-19 even if I do not get vaccinated myself.**
  - Strongly disagree: 34%
  - Somewhat disagree: 32%
  - Somewhat agree: 23%
  - Strongly agree: 10%

- **I am willing to get a COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of how effective it is.**
  - Strongly disagree: 57%
  - Somewhat disagree: 27%
  - Somewhat agree: 10%
  - Strongly agree: 6%

- **If someone gets a flu vaccine, they won't need a COVID-19 vaccine.**
  - Strongly disagree: 57%
  - Somewhat disagree: 26%
  - Somewhat agree: 9%
  - Strongly agree: 5%

*COV18_Q36: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements*

*Base: Total respondents n=491*
Personal health care professionals are highly trusted to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine, followed by Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Nearly seven in 10 (68%) older African American/Black adults rate their personal health care provider an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10 on a trust scale (where 10 = complete trust) to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine. Similarly, six in 10 (61%) say they highly trust Dr. Anthony Fauci. Half say they highly trust local hospitals (51%) and the CDC (50%) to provide honest and factual information.

Trust in the following to provide honest and factual information about COVID-19 vaccines
1 = no trust at all, 10 = complete trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust Level</th>
<th>Your health care provider</th>
<th>Dr. Anthony Fauci</th>
<th>Local hospitals or health officials</th>
<th>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</th>
<th>Food and Drug Administration (FDA)</th>
<th>World Health Organization (WHO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 3</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 7</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 to 10</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
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</table>

COV19_Q37: Using a 10-point scale, with 1 meaning no trust at all and 10 meaning complete trust, how much do you trust the following individuals and organizations to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Base: Total respondents n=491
Fewer say they highly trust community leaders and high-level public officials to provide accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Nearly three in 10 (28%) of older African American/Black adults rate their community leaders an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10 on a trust scale to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine. About a quarter rate their governor (26%) and family or friends (26%) an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10.

Trust in the following to provide honest and factual information about COVID-19 vaccines
1 = no trust at all, 10 = complete trust

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual/Organization</th>
<th>1 to 3</th>
<th>4 to 7</th>
<th>8 to 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B/AA community leaders</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your governor</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friends</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy/Faith leaders</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former President Trump</td>
<td></td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>5%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

COV19_Q37: Using a 10-point scale, with 1 meaning no trust at all and 10 meaning complete trust, how much do you trust the following individuals and organizations to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Base: Total respondents n=491
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This research was designed and executed by AARP Research