Healthcare Providers: Older adults' most trusted messengers for vaccine information

2020 AARP Vaccine Survey of Adults
Ages 50 and Older

Though most older adults believe vaccines are generally safe, they don't have enough information and a trusted messenger.

Nine in 10 (91%) older adults ages 50-plus say vaccines in general are safe, but less than half (45%) say they get all the vaccines their doctor or health care provider recommends. Furthermore, most (56%) don't search for information on vaccines on their own, and over half (53%) say they don't know whom to trust to provide accurate information on vaccines. Adults who are ages 65 or older or who have at least a bachelor's degree are more likely to identify a trusted source of information.

A recent survey shows for older adults ages 50-plus, **a trusted messenger regarding vaccinations is vital.** This insight could be useful when developing strategies to **help adults 50-plus make informed decisions about getting vaccinated.**

When prompted, most older adults say they trust their health care provider for information on vaccinations.

When prompted with a list, most (74%) older adults say their doctor or health care provider is their most trusted source for information about adult immunizations. A notably distant second is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Nearly one in 10 (8%) say the CDC is their most trusted source for adult immunization information, and one in 20 (5%) say they don't trust any source, especially for the younger age group. When looking at age groups individually, one in 10 (9%) adults ages 50 to 64 say they do not trust anyone on the topic of adult immunizations compared to only one percent of those ages 65-plus.

Adults ages **65-plus** are more likely than those ages 50 to 64 to say they trust their **doctor or health care provider**.

Men are more likely than women to say they trust **friends/family**.

Those with **less than a high school diploma** are more likely than those with a high school diploma or additional higher education to say they trust **news media**.

Adults ages 50 to 64 are more likely than those ages 65-plus to say they do not trust anyone to provide accurate information about adult immunizations.

Most trusted source for information about vaccinations?

Other trusted messengers about vaccinations

Naturalists/Homeopathic specialists 	Medical journals/websites
Veterans Administration 	Nutritionist

Personal health care providers also top the list of highly trusted individuals to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine, followed by Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Seven in 10 (71%) older adults rate their personal health care provider an 8, 9 or 10 out of 10 on a trust scale when it comes to trust in providing honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine. Similarly, nearly six in 10 (56%) say they highly trust Dr. Fauci. About half of older adults say they highly trust local hospitals (52%) and the CDC (48%).

% Highly trust (8, 9, or 10 out of 10)

Scale: (1=no trust at all to 10=complete trust)

Percent of older adults who say if their health care provider says the COVID-19 vaccine is safe, they would be more likely to get a vaccine.

Trust is also a pivotal issue for those considering whether to get a COVID-19 vaccine. At the time of the survey (September/October 2020), nearly half (47%) of older adults ages 50-plus who said it was unlikely they would get a COVID-19 vaccine cited a lack of trust in the government as a reason for vaccine hesitancy.

Top three reasons cited why unlikely to get the COVID-19 vaccine (among those who say it is unlikely they will get the vaccine)

Some older adults say they highly trust community leaders and their family/friends to provide information about the COVID-19 vaccine.

One in five (21%) older adults say they highly trust their family/friends to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine (8, 9, or 10 on a 10-point trust scale, where 10 = complete trust). About one in six (17%) highly trust their clergy/faith leaders. Additionally, among Black/African American (B/AA) and Hispanic/Latino (H/L) older adults, three in 10 (31%) Black and one in five (19%) Latino older adults strongly trust their community leaders (8, 9, or 10 on the trust scale).

% Highly trust (8, 9 or 10 out of 10)

Scale: (1=no trust at all to 10=complete trust)

Implications

Though most older adults have positive attitudes towards vaccinations, many do not get the recommended vaccines and are unsure whom to trust to provide accurate and honest information about adult immunizations. Notably, among those who say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine, half say one reason is because they do not trust the government.

Most older adults cite their personal health care provider as their most trusted source for information about vaccines in general, and most adults ages 50-plus say they trust their health care provider to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine specifically. Some older adults also trust other sources for vaccine information (e.g., the CDC, Dr. Fauci, community leaders). To ensure older adults make informed decisions regarding vaccines, public health officials should capitalize on these trusted sources — especially personal health care providers — to develop strategies to ensure the 50-plus receives the information needed to make informed decisions about vaccinations.

Methodology

This AARP Vaccine survey was conducted online from September 28 through October 12, 2020 with a total sample of 1,722 adults ages 50-plus. This national survey was conducted using NORC at the University of Chicago's AmeriSpeak probability-based sample. AmeriSpeak is designed to be representative of the U.S. household population. All data are weighted by age, gender, and race according to the most recent Census population statistics. The margin of error for the national survey is ± 3.53 percent.

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