

Demand May Outstrip Initial Supply for Swine Flu Vaccine This Fall

Public demand for the swine flu vaccine may outstrip the initial supply, with nearly two-thirds of Americans saying they or a household member would get the vaccination if their doctor recommended it. Still, concern about catching the virus remains muted – and confidence in health authorities to handle it is high.

Fifty-five percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll say they'll get the vaccine when it's available, rising to 65 percent if their doctor recommends it. Initial availability may be an issue, though: Blaming production delays, [federal officials](#) Monday cut the number of doses expected to be available by mid-October by two-thirds, to 45 million, with 20 million a week to follow.

Authorities said there'd still be enough vaccine initially available for the target groups of pregnant women, children under four and public health workers. Separately, a trio of Cabinet officials – the secretaries of commerce, health and human services and homeland security – were to hold a news conference today announcing flu-season guidelines for employers and businesses.

WORRY and CONFIDENCE – While interest in vaccinations is high, worry is not. Thirty-nine percent of Americans are very or somewhat worried that they or someone in their household will catch the swine flu virus, also known as H1N1; that includes just 13 percent worried “a great deal.” Sixty-one percent, instead, express little or no worry about catching the virus.

That's very similar to the level of concern about contracting bird flu in 2006 (41 percent worried, including 13 percent very worried), and SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, in 2003 (a peak of 38 percent worried, 11 percent very worried). Views on swine flu may be informed by the fact that these other recent threats ultimately did not affect large numbers of Americans.

Past experience also may be bolstering confidence in the ability of the health care system to respond: Eighty-two percent in this poll express confidence in their local hospitals and health agencies to respond effectively to a swine flu outbreak; 73 percent express confidence in a federal response. Both these are much higher (by 18 and 14 points, respectively) than the levels of confidence in response to a possible bird flu outbreak in 2006.

Fewer – 33 percent and 23 percent, respectively – are “very” confident in the local or federal response. But these, too, are higher than in 2006.

GROUPS – Expectedly, worried people are far more apt to say they or someone in the household will get vaccinated – 74 percent, vs. 43 percent of those who aren’t worried about catching the flu. A doctor’s recommendation would not significantly affect the rate among worried people, but would sharply boost it, to 58 percent, among those now unworried about swine flu.

Seniors are far more apt than others to say they’d get vaccinated, whether there’s a doctor’s recommendation or not. Women are more apt than men to say someone in the household will get a vaccination, 59 percent vs. 50 percent, but that rises to about two-thirds of women and men alike if their doctor recommends it.

Worry about getting the flu, for its part, peaks among women (46 percent, vs. 30 percent of men); those 40 and older (45 percent worried, vs. 26 percent of those under 30); and less-educated adults (46 percent of those who haven’t gone beyond high school, vs. 33 percent of others). Worry’s no higher, though, among people who have a child under 18 at home.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Aug. 13-17, 2009, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results for the full sample have a 3.5-point error margin. Click [here](#) for a detailed description of sampling error. Sampling, data collection and tabulation by TNS of Horsham, PA.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>

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Full results follow (*= less than 0.5 percent).

1-30 held for release.

31. On another subject, how concerned are you that you or someone in your immediate family might catch the H1N1 virus known as swine flu - is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not too much or not at all?

	----- Worried -----			----- Not worried -----			No
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat	NET	Not too	At all	opinion
8/17/09	39	13	26	61	30	31	*
Compare to:							
Bird flu:							
3/5/06	41	13	28	59	36	23	*
SARS virus:							
4/27/03	33	11	22	67	34	33	1
4/3/03	38	11	27	62	37	24	3

32. How confident are you in (ITEM)'s ability to respond effectively to an outbreak of swine flu in the United States - very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

8/17/09 - Summary Table

	---- Confident --			--- Not confident ---			No
	NET	Very	Smwt.	NET	Not so	At all	op.
a. The federal government	73	23	50	26	18	9	1
b. Your local hospitals and health agencies	82	33	48	18	12	5	1

Trend:

a. The federal government

	----- Confident -----			----- Not confident -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	opinion
8/17/09	73	23	50	26	18	9	1

Compare to bird flu:

3/5/06	59	16	44	40	25	15	*
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b. Your local hospitals and health agencies

	----- Confident -----			----- Not confident -----			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all	opinion
8/17/09	82	33	48	18	12	5	1

Compare to bird flu:

3/5/06	64	21	42	36	22	13	1
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33. (HALF SAMPLE) Do you think you or someone in your household will get a swine flu vaccination when it becomes available, or not?

	Will	Will not	No opinion
8/17/09	55	41	4

34. (HALF SAMPLE) Assuming your doctor recommends it, do you think you or someone in your household will get a swine flu vaccination when it becomes available, or not?

	Will	Will not	No opinion
8/17/09	65	32	3

END