



H1N1 Swine Flu Poll Reveals Problems

An ABC News/Washington Post poll showed that nearly half of parents don't plan on having their children vaccinated for the H1N1 swine flu. More than half of those who do plan to vaccinate are encountering supply problems.

The poll of 1,001 random American adults was conducted by phone November 12-15. It revealed that one third of adults are not confident in the vaccine's safety, up from 30 percent last month, and about two thirds don't plan to have themselves vaccinated, an increase from 62 percent.



Fourteen percent of parents have had their children vaccinated, a 10-point jump from October, but 45 percent have no plans to vaccinate them, up from 39 percent last month. The lack of available vaccine has been a factor. Fifty-two percent of parents who intend to vaccinate their children have been unable to do so because of the limited supply of vaccine.

Only 24 percent of parents are very confident about the vaccine's safety. FDA Commissioner Margaret Hamburg sought to improve upon this by sending a letter to every physician in America pointing out that the swine flu vaccine is prepared just like the seasonal flu version and is just as safe.

Despite Hamburg's effort, concern about the swine flu vaccine is greater than it is for regular vaccines. While 10 percent of adults have concerns about the safety of all vaccines, 23 percent are only concerned specifically about the H1N1 vaccine.

There are variations in acceptance of the vaccine among those with different levels of age, education, and insurance availability. Seventy-two percent of adults age 18-29 plan not to vaccinate, while 65 percent of those age 30 or older will not vaccinate. Among those with postgraduate education, 51 percent are not going to vaccinate versus 68 percent of those with less education. Of those who have health insurance, 63 percent have no plans to vaccinate, but 81 percent of those who do not have health insurance are not going to vaccinate.

While 62 percent of Americans do not believe the government has exaggerated the danger of swine flu, those who do think the government blew things out of proportion are only half as likely to get vaccinated as those who don't think so. Those who think the vaccine is safe are nine times more likely to be vaccinated, and they are five times likelier to vaccinate their children.

So it is that problems persist for the government's swine flu vaccination program. Many Americans are not even planning to be vaccinated, and are not planning to vaccinate their children. Even those who want the vaccine are finding it difficult to obtain a shot due to shortages. The government's effort itself appears to be somewhat sickly, and it is no wonder the public lacks confidence in it.

Photo: AP Images

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