

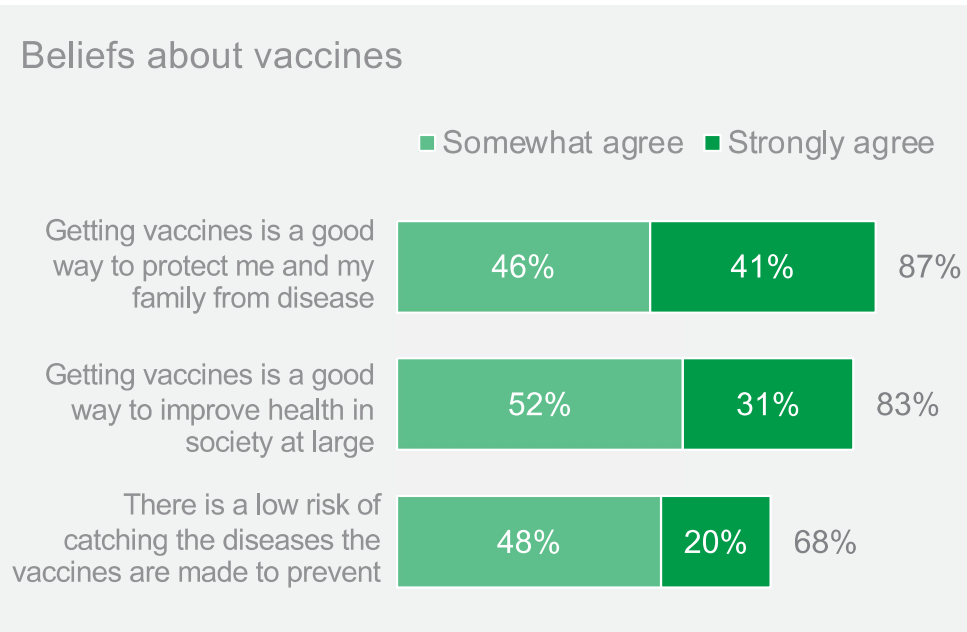
Honest, factual information is key: A look at how African American/Black older adults view vaccinations

2020 AARP Vaccine Survey of Adults
Ages 50 and Older



Most older African American/Black adults believe vaccines are generally safe.

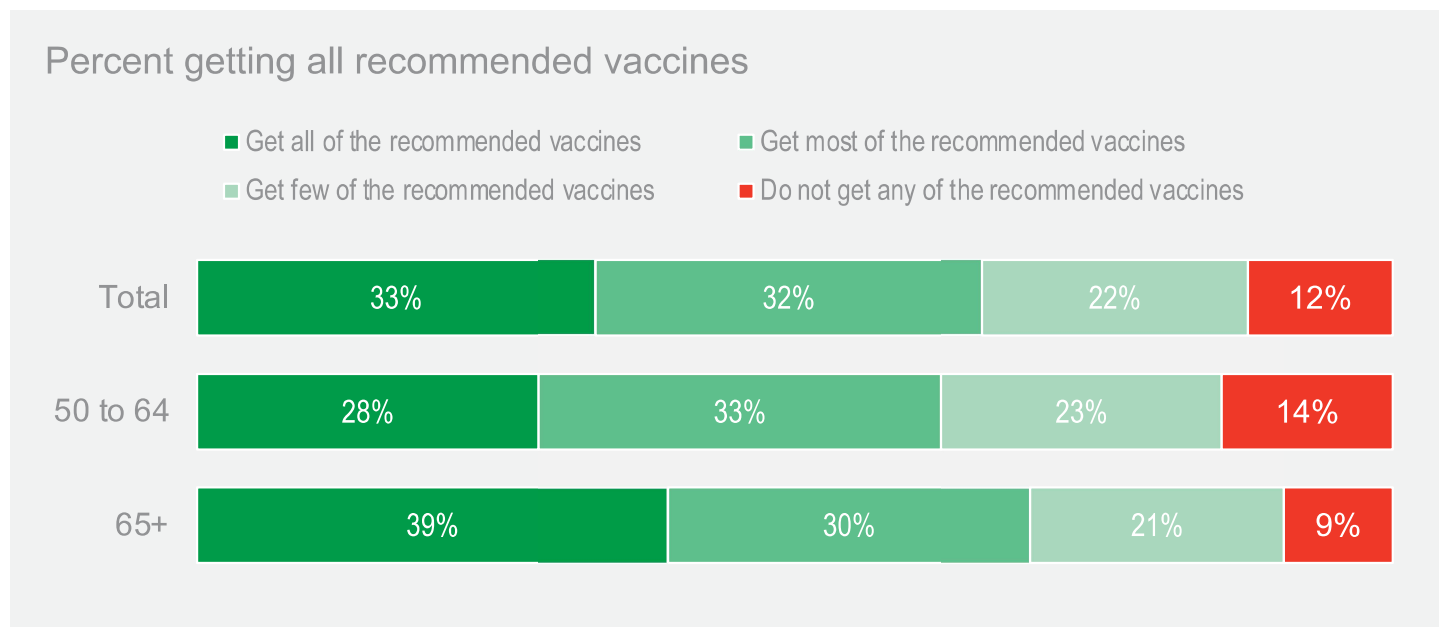
More than eight in 10 (85%) older African American/Black adults say that vaccines in general are safe (somewhat safe, 65%; very safe, 20%), especially those with higher levels of education (a bachelor’s degree or higher). Additionally, these older adults believe vaccines are a good way to protect themselves and their family (87%) as well as society at large (83%), and they believe they have a low risk of catching the disease from the vaccine itself (68%).



A recent survey on vaccinations illustrates **variations in beliefs among African American/Black adults 50-plus**. This understanding may provide insight on **possible strategies to help this population make informed decisions regarding vaccine acceptance.**

While most African American/Black older adults say vaccines are safe, some do not get the vaccines recommended by their doctor or health care provider.

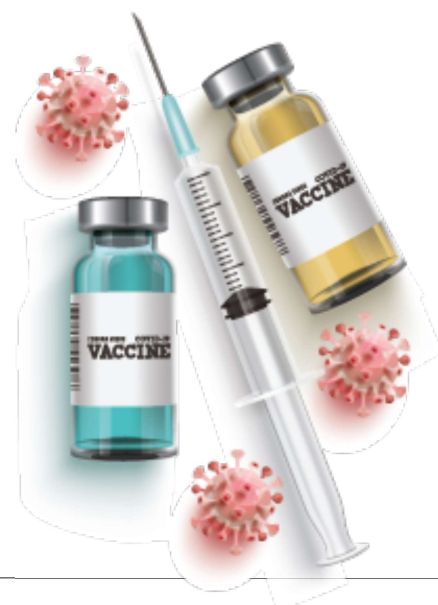
One-third (33%) of African American/Black adults ages 50-plus report that they get all of the vaccines suggested by their doctor or health care provider, and another third (34%) say they get a few (22%) or none (12%) of the recommended vaccines. Those ages 65-plus are significantly more likely than those ages 50–64 to say they get all of the vaccines their doctor or health care provider recommends (39% vs. 28%).



When prompted with a list, most African American/Black adults 50-plus say they trust their health care provider to give them accurate information about adult immunizations.

Six in 10 (61%) older African American/Black adults say they don't know whom to trust when it comes to information about adult immunizations. However, when prompted with a list, the majority (73%) say their most trusted source for information is their doctor or health care provider. Interestingly, one in 10 (11%) say the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is their most trusted source. Only 2% say they do not trust anyone on this topic.

	Total	50-64	65+
Your doctor or health care provider or other healthcare professional	73%	70%	78%
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)	11%	12%	10%





Most African American/Black adults ages 65-plus say they get a flu shot every year. However, nearly one-third ages 50–64 say they never get one.

Six in 10 (60%) African American/Black adults ages 50-plus say they get a flu shot every year or almost every year, but the frequency depends on age. For example, about half (52%) of those ages 50–64 report getting a flu shot every year compared to seven in 10 (71%) those ages 65-plus. Notably, a sizable portion of older African American/Black adults do not get a flu shot. A quarter (26%) of those ages 50–64 say they never get a flu shot, and about one in seven (15%) of those ages 65-plus skip the shot altogether.

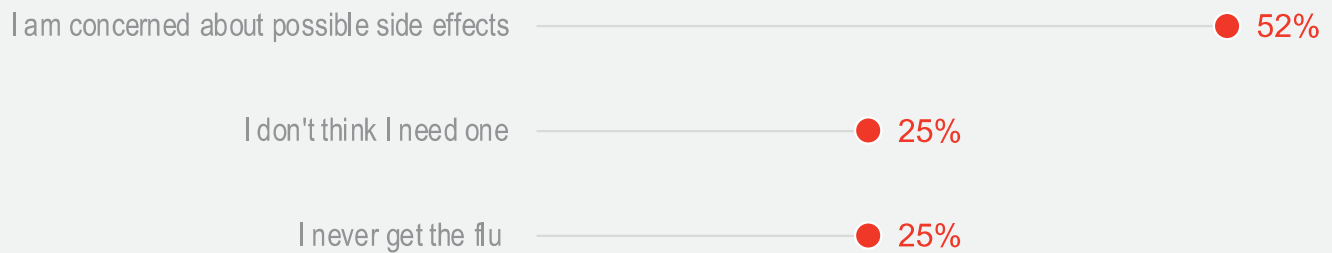
	Total	50-64	65+
Get a flu shot every year or almost every year	60%	52%	71%
Get a flu shot some years but not others	9%	10%	8%
Rarely get a flu shot	10%	13%	6%
Never get a flu shot	21%	26%	15%

African American/Black adults ages 50-plus cite concern about possible side effects as the top reason for flu vaccine hesitancy.

Among those who do not regularly get a flu shot, half (52%) say they don't because they are concerned about possible side effects, which is particularly notable given the long history with the flu vaccine. A quarter say they don't get flu shots because they never get the flu (25%) and/or they are concerned about weakening their immune system (25%).

Concerns about possible side effects is the top reason cited for flu vaccine hesitancy.

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



African American/Black adults ages 50-plus cite a lack of trust in the government as the top reason for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

Lack of trust in the government is the top reason cited for COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy.

Among those ages 50-plus who say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine, nearly seven in 10 (67%) say they are unlikely to get it because they do not trust the government. Similar to flu vaccine hesitancy, the majority (63%) of these adults who they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine also cite concern about possible side effects as a reason for hesitancy.

Reasons for being unlikely to get the COVID-19 vaccine



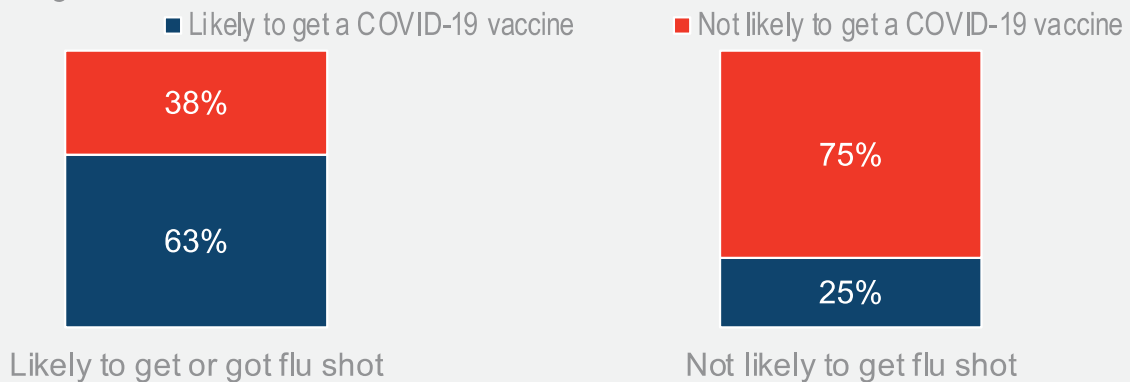
A tendency to forgo the flu vaccine may explain why some say they will not get the COVID-19 vaccine.



Many who are unlikely to get a flu shot are also unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Hesitancy toward vaccines in general may explain why some older African American/Black adults say they will not get the COVID-19 vaccine. Three-quarters (75%) who say they are unlikely to get a flu vaccine this year also say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine. Still, some who got or plan to get the flu vaccine this year have some additional hesitancy about the COVID-19 vaccine. Nearly four in 10 (38%) older African American/Black adults who say they are likely to get (or already got) a flu shot say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

Likelihood of getting COVID-19 vaccine
By likelihood to get flu shot



Some older African American/Black adults do not get commonly recommended vaccinations. Overall vaccine compliance is highest among those ages 65-plus.

Using a vaccine compliance scale that comprises several questions related to reported actions regarding vaccines like flu and pneumonia, we see African American/Black adults ages 65-plus are significantly more likely to say they have gotten or plan to get several recommended vaccines (a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 on the scale). Three in 10 (30%) of those ages 50–64 scored a 0 or 1 on this scale, meaning they either do not follow their doctor or health care provider’s recommendations on vaccines, and/or they do not plan to get most (if any) of the vaccines listed. Comparatively, about one in five (19%) of those ages 65-plus scored a 0 or 1 on the scale.

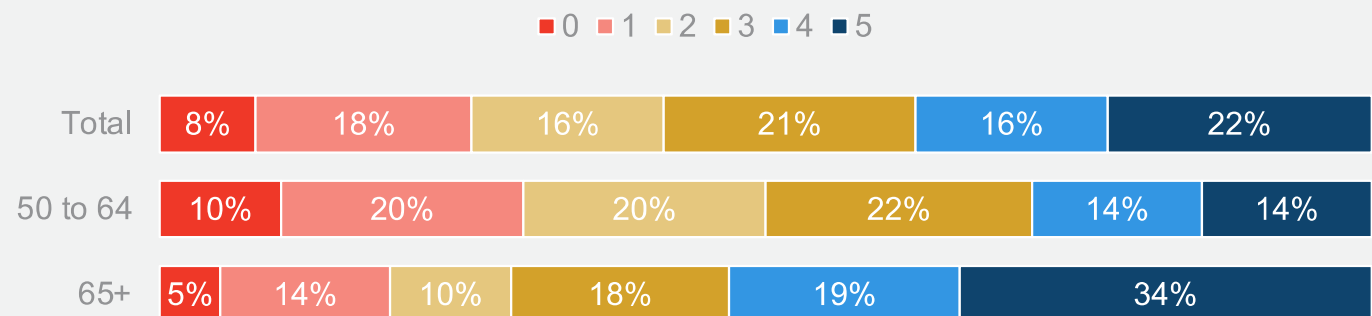


Vaccine Compliance Scale (1 point each)

- ✓ Get a flu shot every year
 - ✓ Get all/most vaccines recommended by doctor or health care provider
- Have gotten/plan to get vaccines for
- ✓ shingles
 - ✓ pneumonia
 - ✓ Tdap

*Scale created by AARP Research

Vaccine compliance scale



Although some African American/Black adults ages 50-plus are reluctant to get vaccines, they see the merits of vaccinations in general.



High beliefs, but low actions: Vaccine attitudes and beliefs do not necessarily correspond to reported actions, especially for African American/Black adults ages 50–64.

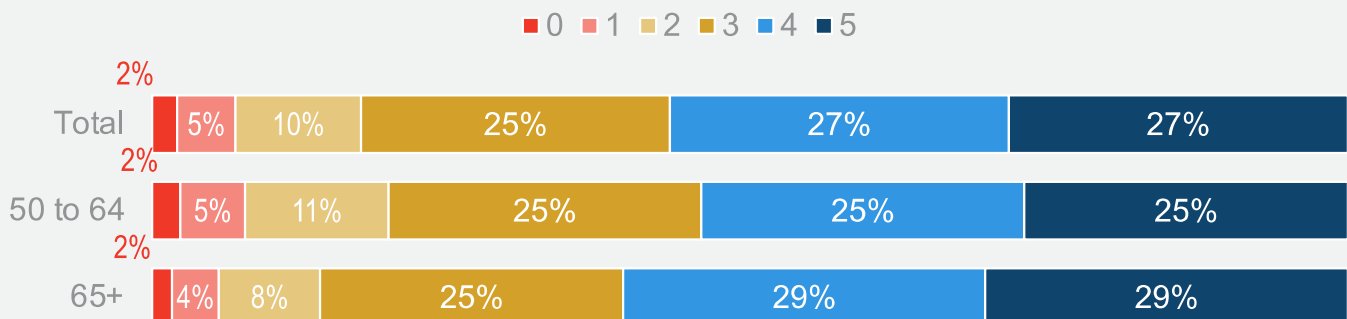
This vaccine attitude scale comprises several questions related to attitudes about vaccines in general as well as the future COVID-19 vaccine (asked September/October 2020). Unlike the vaccine compliance scale, this scale reveals little difference between age cohorts. Generally, a little over half of this population scored high (4 or 5 out of 5) on this vaccine attitude scale. This result suggests that while some African American/Black adults ages 50-plus are reluctant to get vaccinated, they see the merits of vaccinations in general.

Vaccine Attitude Scale (1 point each)

- ✓ Vaccines are safe
- ✓ Vaccines protect me and my family
- ✓ COVID-19 vaccine will be effective
- ✓ Vaccines provide few benefits' (disagree=1)
- ✓ Not sure who to trust when it comes to vaccines (disagree = 1)

*Scale created by AARP Research

Vaccine attitude scale





Implications

Though most older African American/Black adults have positive attitudes toward vaccines, many do not get the recommended vaccines and are unsure whom to trust to provide accurate and honest information about them. In fact, most African American/Black adults ages 50-plus who are hesitant about getting a flu vaccine are also hesitant about getting a COVID-19 vaccine. Those who are hesitant largely say the reason is that they do not trust the government and they are concerned about possible side effects. The information in this study could help health care providers develop strategies to encourage the African American/Black 50-plus population to get the recommended vaccines.

To ensure that older African American/Black adults make informed decisions regarding vaccines, health care providers — the most trusted source for vaccine information — can play an important role in providing comprehensive and straightforward information about vaccine benefits, safety, effectiveness, and possible side effects.

Methodology

This AARP vaccine survey was conducted online September 28–October 12, 2020 with a total sample of 1,722 adults ages 50-plus. The total sample included an oversample of 491 African American/Black (non-Hispanic) respondents. 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 Black/African American (non-Hispanic) sample is ± 5.51 percent.



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