A close-up photograph of an elderly person's face, focusing on the eye and the top of a teal surgical mask. The skin is wrinkled, and the eye is looking slightly to the side. The mask has white elastic straps and a white filter patch.

# 2020 Vaccine Survey Topline Overview

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January, 2021



# Methodology

**Main objective:** Evaluate COVID-19 vaccine 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 interviews with adults 50+ (CI: +/- 3.53)
  - 491 African American
  - 467 Hispanic/Latino
  - 721 White
  - 350 Family in nursing home
  - 312 Caregivers





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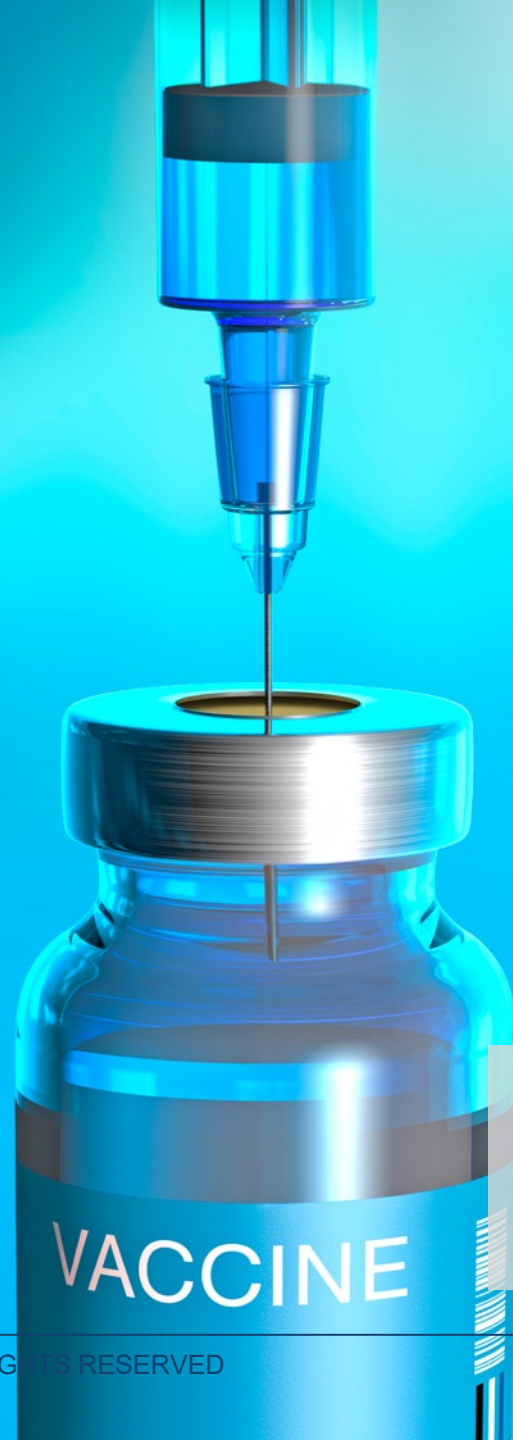
### Significance notation:

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

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.

# Executive Summary

- The majority of adults ages 50-plus have positive opinions when it comes to vaccines in general; however, there are significant differences depending on age and level of education.
- Overall, vaccine acceptance and compliance is higher among older adults 65+.
- While most 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.
- Those 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. Three quarters of older 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, adults 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.

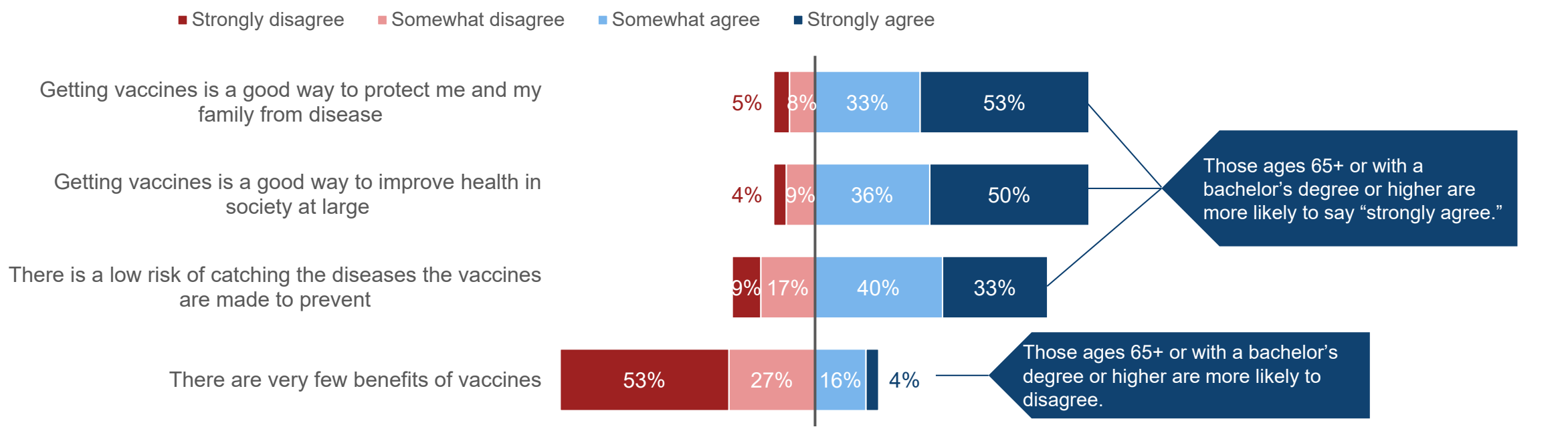


## VACCINES: OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE (GENERAL)

# Belief in the efficacy and value of vaccines are widely held, both at a personal and societal level.

Over four in ten (44%) believe vaccines are very safe. The vast majority believe vaccines are a good way to protect themselves and their family (86%) as well as society at large (86%). Most *agree* there is a low risk of catching a disease from the vaccine (73%) and most disagree that there are very few benefits of vaccines (80% disagree with the statement).

Agreement with the following statements

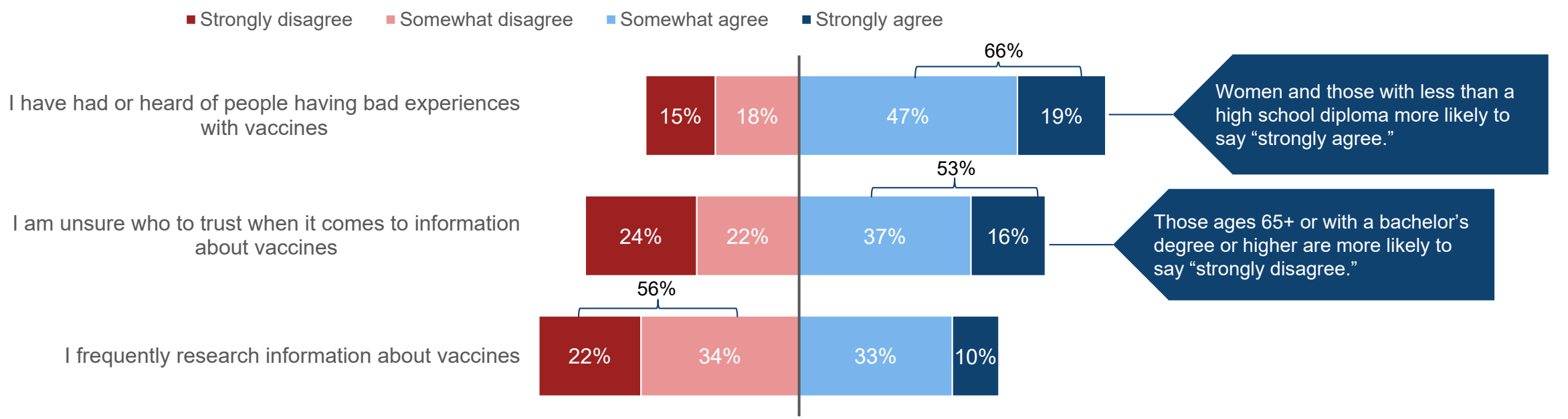


F2\_Q6 [STATEMENT.] Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722

# Lack of self-education and uncertainty of a trusted messenger are barriers to knowledge about vaccines.

Although two-thirds (66%) say they have heard of bad experiences related to vaccines, most don't search for information about vaccines (56% disagree with the statement), and over half (53%) say they don't know whom to trust when it comes to information about vaccines.

Agreement with the following statements

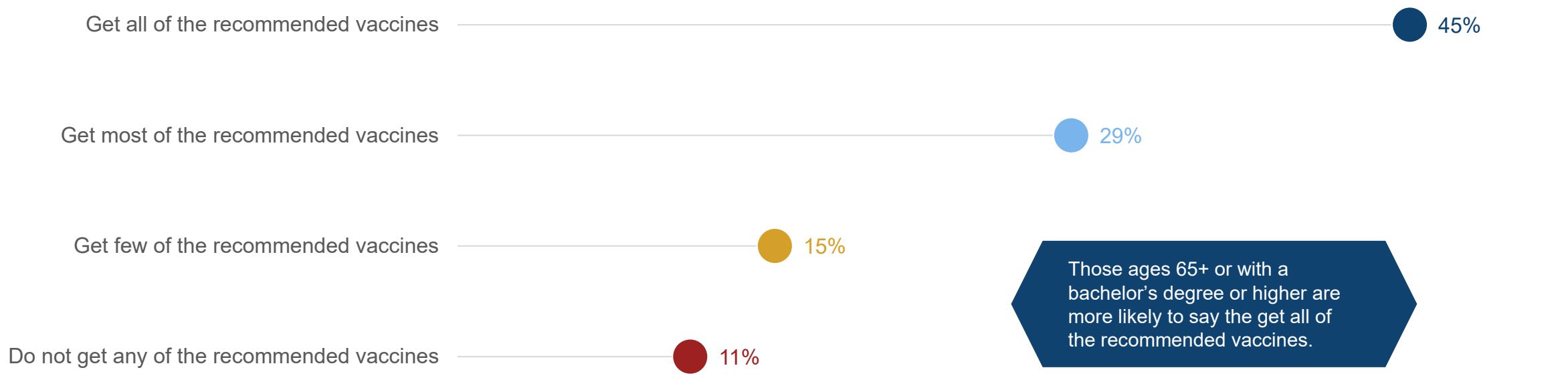


F2A\_Q6A [STATEMENT.] Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722

# Most older adults say they get the vaccines recommended by their doctors or other health care professionals.

Nearly half (45%) of all adults ages 50-plus report they get all of the vaccines their doctor or health care professional recommends, but a quarter (26%) say they only get a few or none of the recommended vaccines.

Percentage getting recommended vaccines



F3\_Q7 Which statement comes closer to your own view?  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722



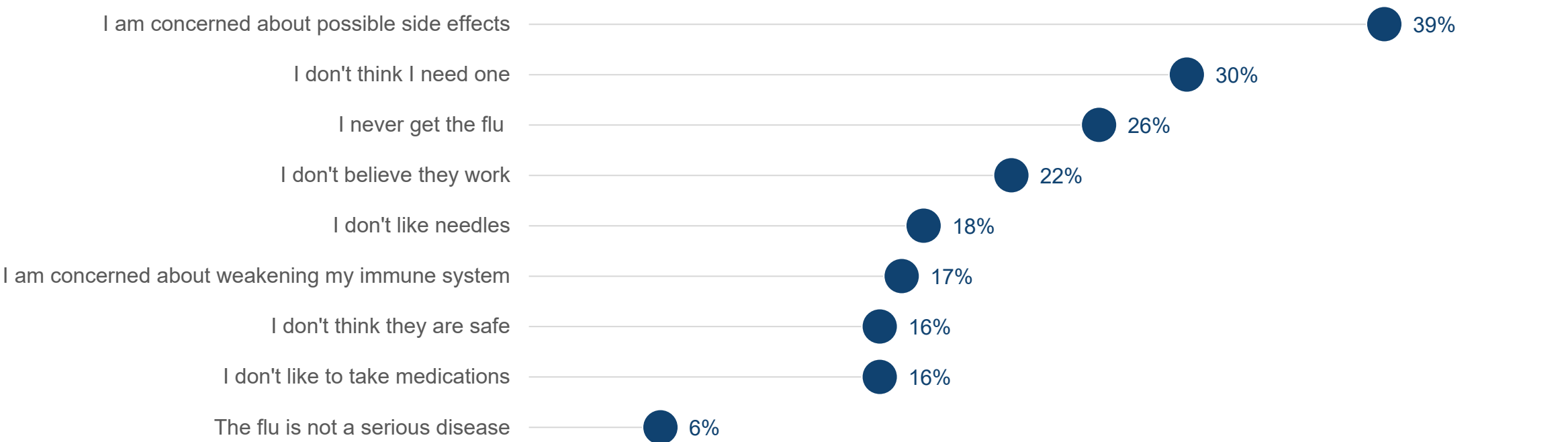


## FLU VACCINE OPINIONS AND EXPERIENCE

# Among those who do not regularly get a flu shot, most say they don't because they are concerned about possible side effects.

Six in 10 (61%) say they get a flu shot every year or almost every year, with nearly two in five (38%) reporting they sometimes, rarely, or never get a flu shot. When asked why they sometimes, rarely, or never get a flu shot, two in five (39%) report they are concerned about possible side effects and three in ten (30%) say they don't think they need a flu shot.

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

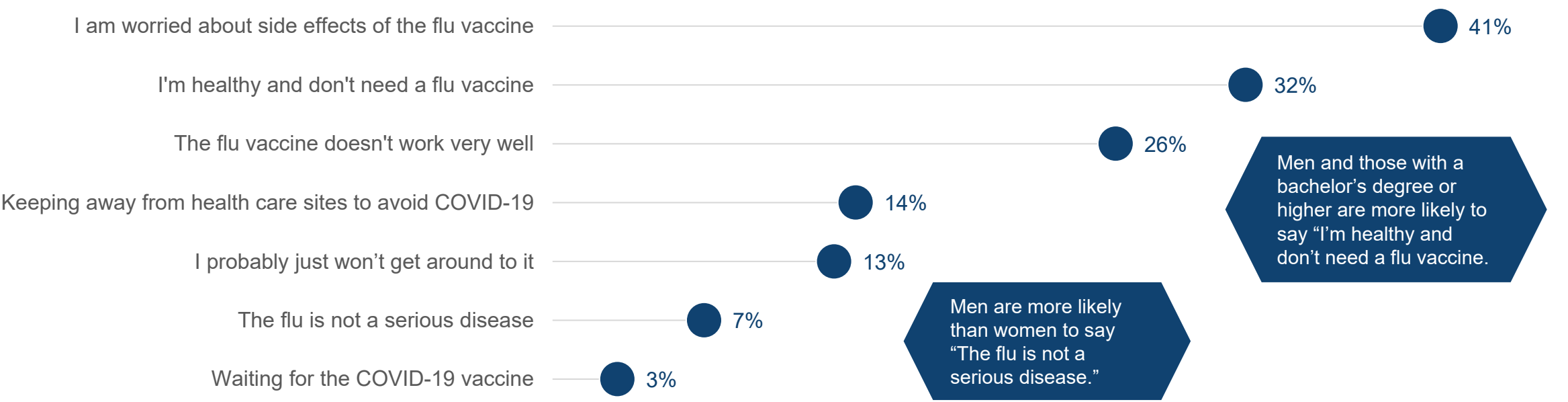


F5\_Q9 Why do you [sometimes-rarely-never] get a flu shot  
Base: Sometimes, rarely of never get a flu shot; n = 691

# Among those who say it is unlikely they will get a flu shot this year, they 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, four in 10 (41%) say they are concerned about possible side effects. This is particularly notable given the long history with the flu vaccine. Additionally, nearly one-third (32%) say they are healthy and don't need a flu shot, and a quarter (26%) say the flu vaccine doesn't work very well.

Reasons for not getting a flu shot this year



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 =513





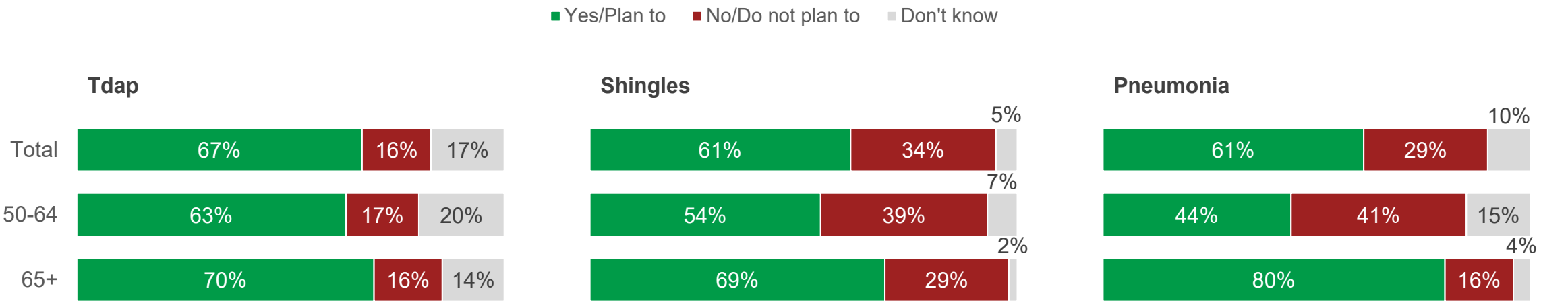
## **AGE-RELATED VACCINE EXPERIENCE AND ACCEPTANCE**



# Some older adults are hesitant to receive commonly recommended vaccinations.

While about six in 10 older adults say they have received or plan to receive vaccinations for Tdap (66%), shingles (61%), and/or pneumonia (61%), about three in 10 say they do not plan to get vaccinated for pneumonia or shingles. As may be expected, adults 65+ are significantly more likely to say they have gotten these vaccinations. However, a substantial portion of this age group say they do not plan to get some of the vaccinations listed.

Tdap, shingles, and pneumonia vaccine plans



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?

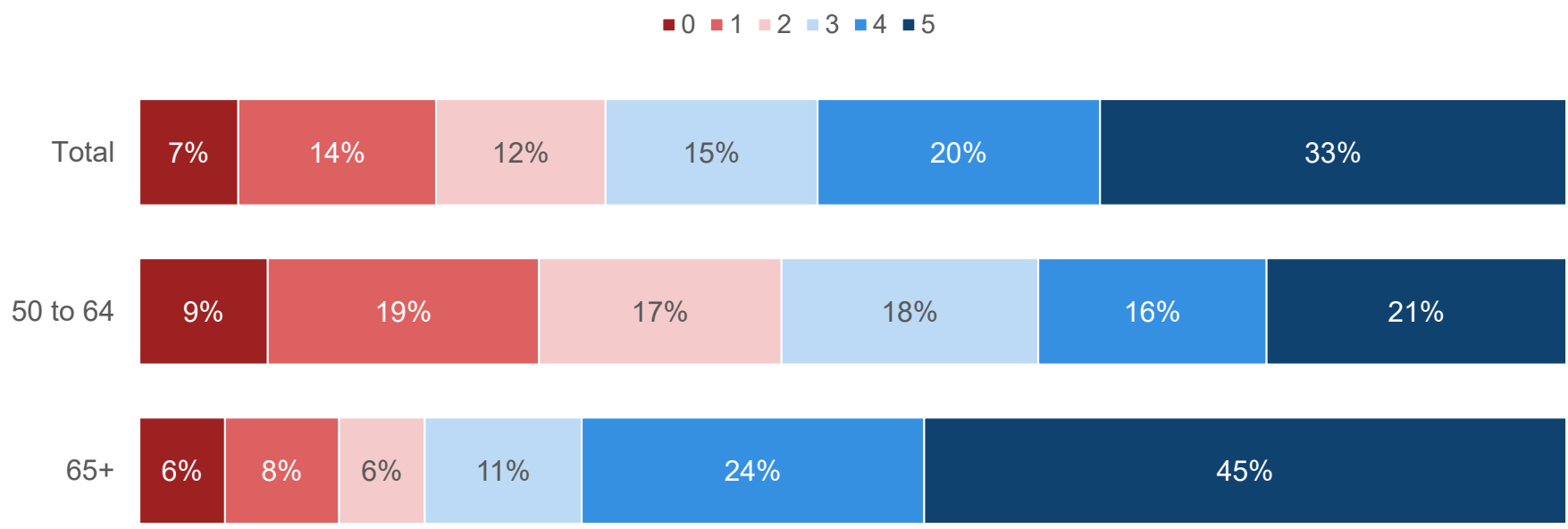
F13\_Q17 Have you ever had a shot for shingles?

Base: Total respondents n=1,722

# Vaccine compliance is higher among adults ages 65+.

This vaccine compliance scale comprises several questions related to reported actions regarding vaccines like flu and pneumonia. Older adults ages 65+ are significantly more likely to say they follow their doctor or health care professional’s recommendations on vaccines and/or have or plan to get several recommended vaccines (a score of 4 or 5 out of 5 on the scale). Interestingly, nearly one in 10 (9%) of those ages 50 to 64 do not follow their doctor or health care professional’s recommendations on vaccines nor do they plan to get the vaccines listed (0 on the scale).

Likelihood of following recommendations on vaccines  
*Vaccine compliance 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

Women are more likely than men to score high (4 or 5 out of 5) on the scale.

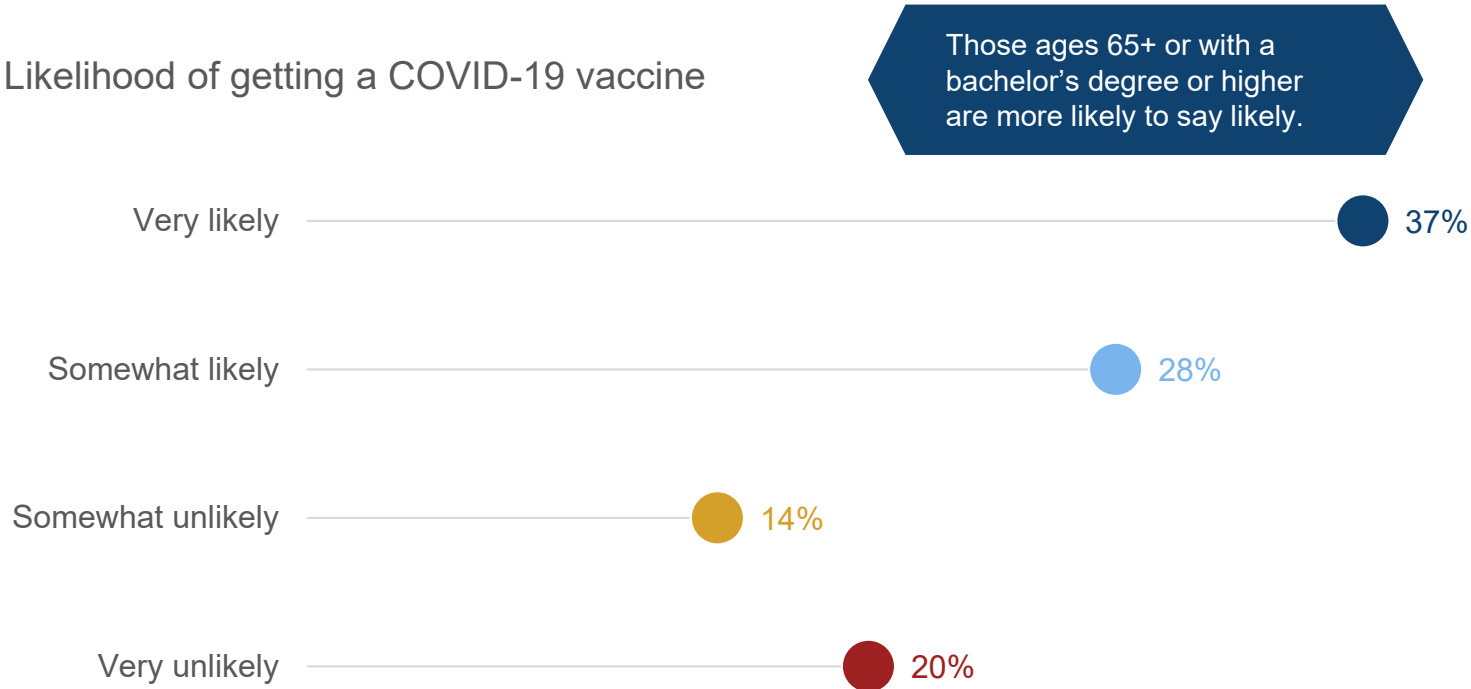
Base: Total respondents n=1,722



## COVID-19 VACCINE OPINIONS & ACCEPTANCE

# A majority of older adults are at least somewhat likely to get vaccinated regardless of whether they are worried about the virus.

At the time of the survey (September/October 2020), nearly four in ten (37%) older adults said they are **extremely likely** to get vaccinated against COVID-19, and another three in 10 (28%) said they are **somewhat likely** to do so. One-third (34%) said they are either **somewhat** (14%) or **very** (20%) unlikely to be vaccinated. A little over half (54%) of those who said they aren't worried about getting COVID-19 still said they will most likely get the vaccine.



Worried about getting COVID-19?	Likely to get COVID-19 vaccine?	
	Yes	No
Yes	73%	27%
No	55%	45%

Q30. Assuming no cost, when a COVID-19 vaccine is available, how likely are you to get vaccinated?  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722

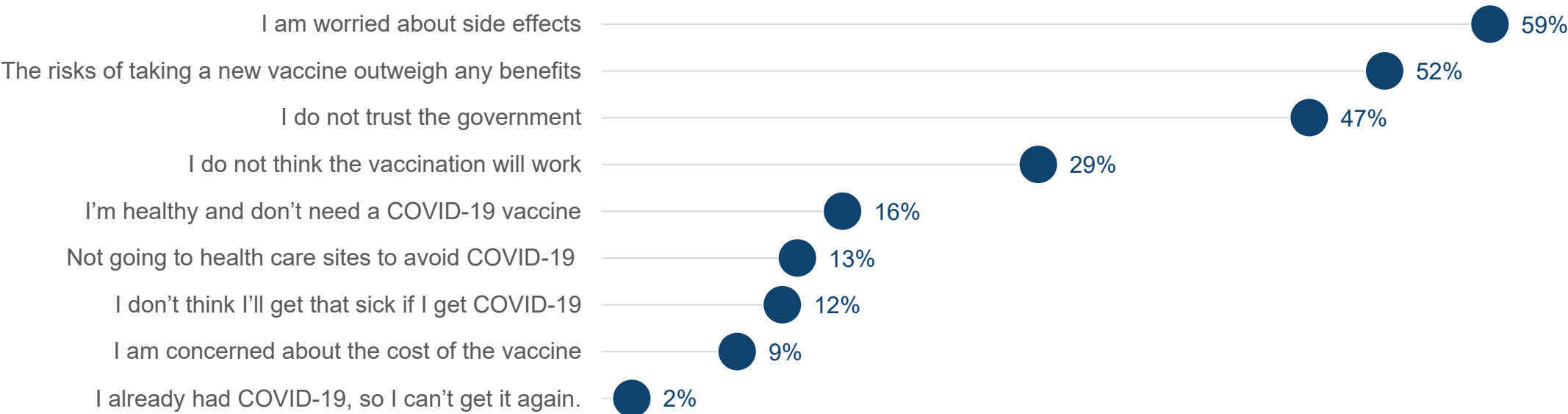
COV1\_Q20 How worried, if at all, are you about getting COVID-19?  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722



# Of those who say it is unlikely they will get a COVID-19 vaccine, concern about possible side effects is the top reason.

Most of those 50+ who say they are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine cite concern about possible side effects (59%) and the belief that risks associated with taking a new vaccine outweigh the possible benefits (52%). Additionally, nearly half (47%) say they probably will not get the vaccine because they do not trust the government.

Reasons for being unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine  
*Among those who say it is unlikely they will get a COVID-19 vaccine*

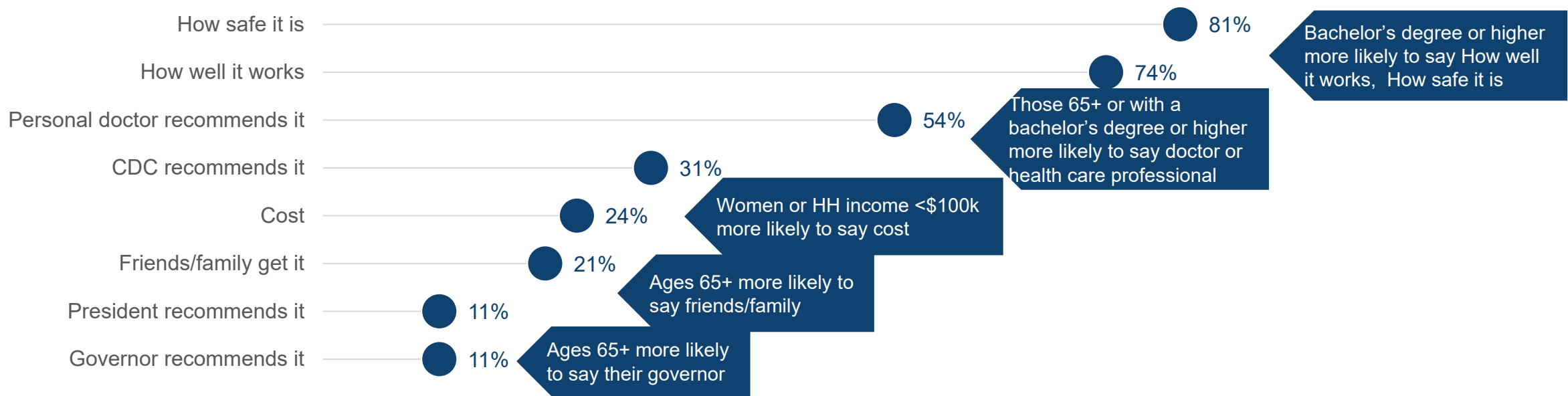


COV14\_1\_Q33: [If somewhat unlikely or very unlikely to get COVID-19 vaccine] What are some reasons why you are unlikely to get a COVID-19 vaccine? Select all that apply  
Base: Somewhat/Very unlikely to get COVID-19 vaccine; n = 674

# Safety and effectiveness are the most important factors when deciding whether to get a COVID-19 vaccine.

The majority (81%) of older adults say the safety of the COVID-19 vaccine will be very important in their decision to get it. Similarly three-quarters (75%) 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, only about half (54%) say a doctor or health care professional’s recommendation will be very important in their decision on whether to get a vaccine.

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

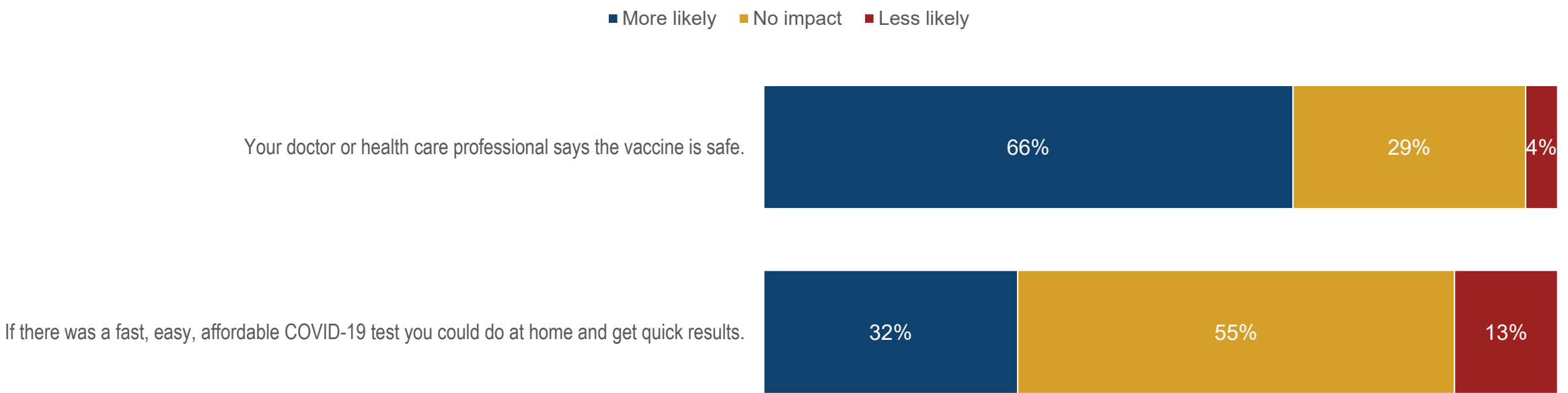


COV16\_Q34: How important, if at all, will the following factors be in your decision to get the COVID-19 vaccine?  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722

# Personal health care professional's recommendation may also increase the chances of getting a COVID-19 vaccine

Two-thirds (66%) of older adults say that if their doctor or health care professional says the COVID-19 vaccine is safe, they would be more likely to get a vaccine. One-third (32%) say if there was a fast, easy, affordable COVID-19 test they could do at home with quick results, they would be more likely to get a vaccine.

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

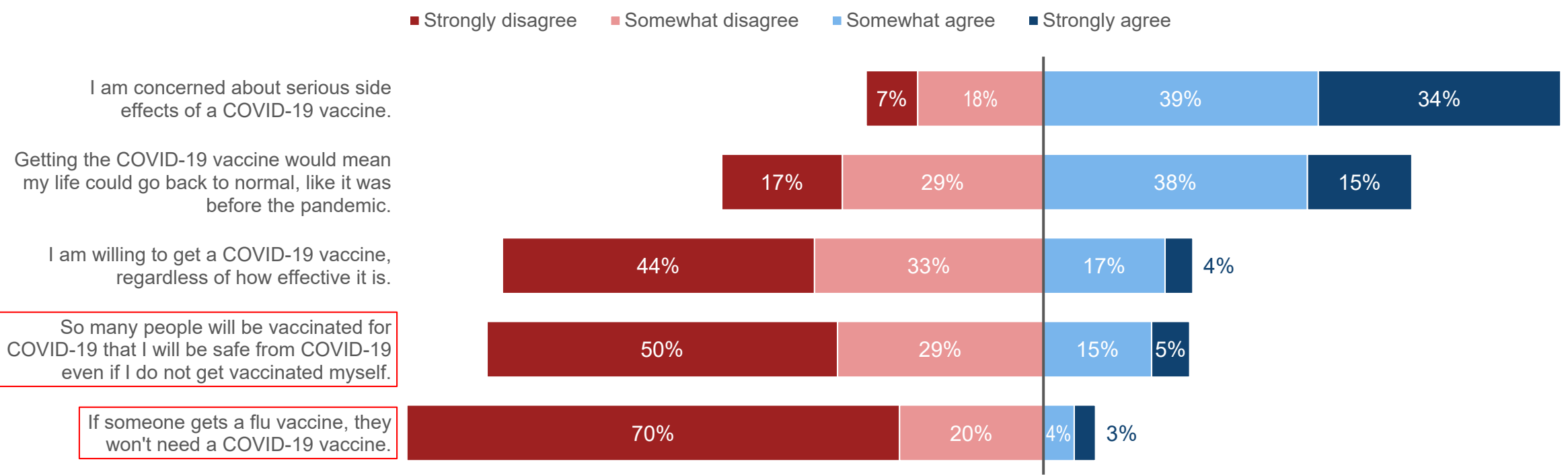


COV17\_Q35: How would the following developments impact the likelihood you would get a coronavirus/COVID-19 vaccine, if at all?  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722

# Misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine exists in pockets.

One in five (21%) either *strongly or somewhat agree* that they will be safe from getting COVID-19 because other people will be vaccinated. Similarly, nearly one in ten (7%) *agree* if you get a flu vaccine you do not need a COVID-19 vaccine.

Agreement with the following statements about COVID-19 vaccines



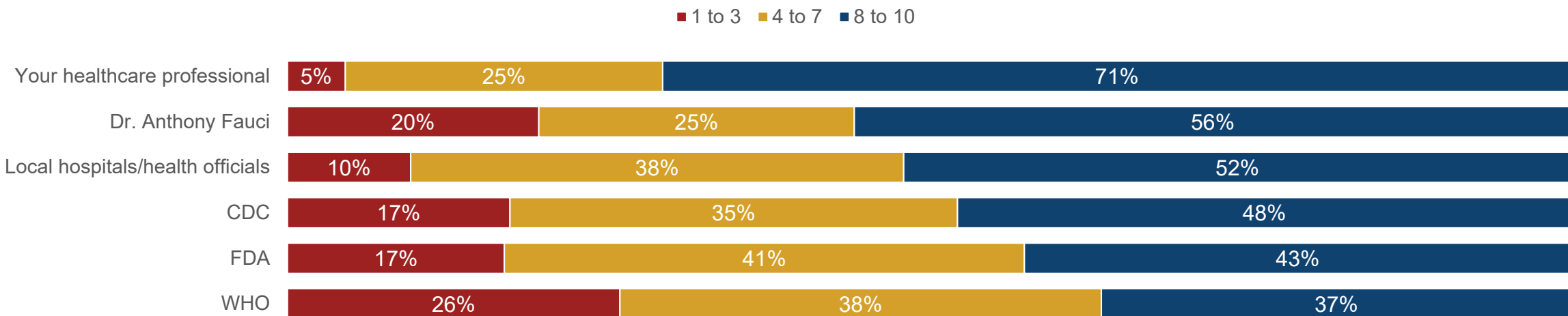
COV18\_Q36: Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722



# Personal physicians are highly trusted to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine, followed by Dr. Fauci.

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



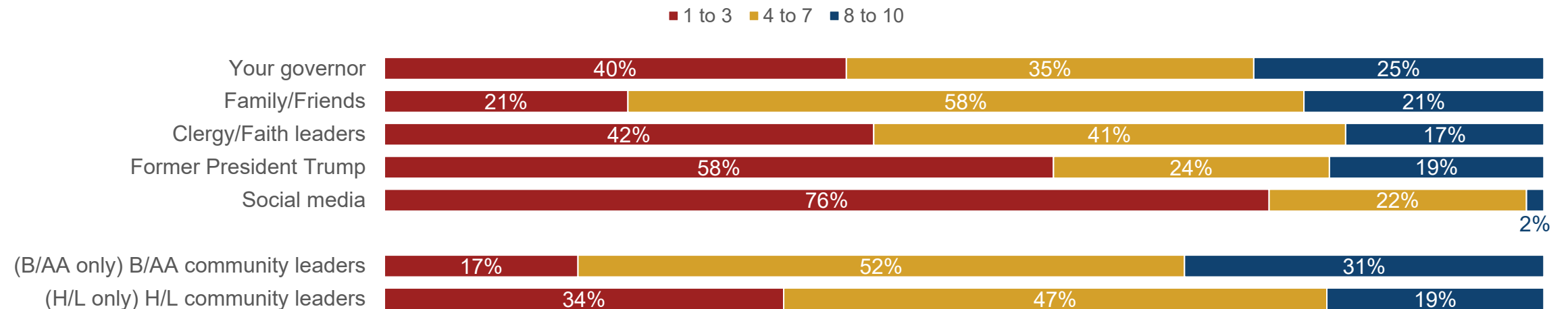
COV19\_Q37: Using a 10-point scale, with 1 meaning no trust at all and 10 meaning complete trust, how much do you trust the following individuals and organizations to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine.  
Base: Total respondents n=1,722

# Fewer say they highly trust community leaders and high-level public officials to provide accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccine.

One-quarter of older adults rate their governor (25%) and one in five (19%) rate former President Trump an 8, 9, or 10 out of 10 on a trust scale to provide honest and factual information about the COVID-19 vaccine. Black/African American (B/AA) and Hispanic/Latino (H/L) older adults were also asked to rate their respective community leaders on the trust scale. Three in 10 (31%) Black and one in five (19%) Latino older adults rated their community leaders 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



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=1,722. \*Black/African American respondents n=491 (only asked of B/AA respondents). \*\*Hispanic/Latino respondents n=494 (only asked of H/L respondents).

## Discussion

- The majority of adults ages 50-plus have positive opinions when it comes to vaccines in general; however, there are significant differences depending on age and level of education.
- The vast majority of adults ages 50-plus agree with positive statements about vaccines; however, those **ages 65-plus** and those with a **bachelor's degree or higher** are significantly more likely to say they strongly agree vaccines are a good way to protect them and their family members from disease and to improve health in society at large.
- Slightly more than half of older adults say they get a **flu shot every year** with those ages **65+ significantly more likely** to say they get a shot every year. Of those older adults who do not get regular flu shots, they cited **concern about possible side effects as a reason**, and nearly a third say they simply don't think they need a flu shot.
- Using a scale that comprises several questions related to the attitudes and actions regarding vaccines like the flu and pneumonia, those **ages 65+ are significantly more likely** to say they **follow their doctor or health care professional's recommendations** and/or have or plan to get several recommended vaccines.
  - Interestingly, 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. Three quarters of older 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.
- Older adults first **look to medical professionals to provide information about the COVID-19 vaccine**. For information about the COVID-19 vaccine, most say they highly trust the following sources (in order): their doctor or health care professional, Dr. Fauci, local hospitals and public officials, and the CDC.
- Of those who say they do not plan to get a COVID-19 vaccine, concern about **possible side effects tops the list** of reasons for hesitancy. The second reason cited is the belief that the **risks** associated with a new vaccine **outweigh** the possible **benefits**.



Cheryl Lampkin (Lead), AARP Research,  
[clampkin@aarp.org](mailto:clampkin@aarp.org)

Tenesha Hill, AARP Research,  
[tehill@aarp.org](mailto:tehill@aarp.org)

Angela Houghton, AARP Research,  
[ahoughton@aarp.org](mailto:ahoughton@aarp.org)

Apoorva Sharma, AARP Research,  
[ajsharma@aarp.org](mailto:ajsharma@aarp.org)

This research was designed and executed by AARP Research