

A large, thin, light-brown circular arc is positioned on the right side of the page, partially overlapping the title. In the top-left corner, there is a solid green rectangular area. A small yellow square is located at the bottom-right corner of this green area, with a thin grey line extending horizontally to the right and vertically downwards. Another yellow square is located at the bottom-right corner of the page, with a thin grey line extending horizontally to the left and vertically upwards, intersecting the circular arc.

# Flu and Pneumonia Survey

November 2007



# Flu and Pneumonia Survey

Data Collected by ICR  
Report Prepared by Teresa A. Keenan, Ph.D.

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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key Findings</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Summary and Conclusions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Detailed Findings</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Getting Flu and Pneumonia Shots</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Knowledge of Immunization Recommendations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Locations for Receiving Shots</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Preferred Sources of Information about Immunizations</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Caregiving Responsibilities</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Summary and Conclusions</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Appendix A: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix B: Annotated Questionnaire</b>	<b>12</b>

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1: Why did you not get a flu shot last year?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Figure 2: Where do you generally go to get a flu (or pneumonia) shot?</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Figure 3: How do you prefer to receive information about immunizations?</b>	<b>8</b>

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In September 2007, AARP Knowledge Management contracted with ICR of Media, Pennsylvania to field a telephone survey among adults ages 50 and older to learn more about their flu and pneumonia immunization histories and their preferred sources of information about immunizations. In this survey, respondents were asked if they received a flu shot this year or last year, if they received a pneumonia shots, their knowledge of the recommended age and frequency for a healthy adult to receive these immunizations, where they generally get the shots, and their preferred sources of information about immunizations such as these.

Interviews were conducted from September 28 to October 21, 2007. At the conclusion of the fielding period, interviews had been completed with 1,220 respondents. The sampling error is +/- three percentage points at the 95% confidence level. This means that in 95 out of 100 samples of this size, the results would fall in a range of no more than three percentage points of what would have been obtained if every person age 50 or older had been surveyed.

The results follow.

## **Key Findings**

### **Getting Flu and Pneumonia Shots**

When asked if they had a flu shot this year, more than eight in ten (85%) respondents said they had not. While the percentage of respondents who had not yet gotten the shot seems high, it may be reflective of the timing of the survey slightly prior to the start of flu season. Notably, when asked about the last year, nearly six in ten (56%) said they had received a flu shot while slightly more than four in ten (43%) had not.

Of those who did not get a flu shot in 2006, the largest percentage (38%) reported they didn't think they needed one. Far fewer said they were concerned about possible side effects (13%) or that they never get the flu (12%).

About half (53%) of the respondents said they have never had a pneumonia shot. Of those, about four in ten (39%) said they didn't think they needed one, and one-fifth (21%) said they never get pneumonia.

### **Knowledge of Immunization Recommendations**

When asked about the recommended age for a healthy adult to get a pneumonia shot, slightly more than one-quarter (27%) said age 65 or older, about one-fifth (19%) said between 55 and 64 years of age, and another fifth (20%) said between 45 and 54 years of age.

Ten percent of respondents thought the recommended age for a healthy adult to get a pneumonia shot was less than age 45. Notably, nearly one-quarter (23%) said they did not know the recommended age for receiving a shot for pneumonia.

When asked about the recommended frequency for receiving a pneumonia shot, about three in ten (28%) said once a year. In contrast, about one in six (16%) correctly said once in a lifetime.

### **Locations for Receiving Shots**

More than six in ten (62%) respondents who said they have ever received a flu or pneumonia shot said they got it at their doctor's office. About one in nine (11%) said they got the shot at their local health department, while about half as many said they received it at an employer-sponsored health fair (7%), at a local clinic / hospital / health center (7%), or at their local pharmacy (6%).

### **Preferred Sources of Information**

Nearly seven in ten (69%) respondents said their family doctor is their most trusted source of information about immunizations. None of the other sources of information were cited by more than one in twenty respondents.

When asked about how they prefer to receive information about immunizations, more than six in ten (61%) said from their doctor, while about one in seven (15%) said through printed materials. None of the remaining options were cited by more than one in fourteen (7%) respondents.

### Caregiving Responsibilities

When asked if they had been a caregiver in the past year or were currently one, slightly more than one-quarter (27%) said yes.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Flu season is right around the corner, but less than one in seven respondents ages 50 and older report having received their flu shot this year. Not thinking they needed the shot, being concerned about possible side effects, or saying they never get the flu are the primary reasons respondents cite for not getting immunized.

## **Detailed Findings**

### **Getting Flu and Pneumonia Shots**

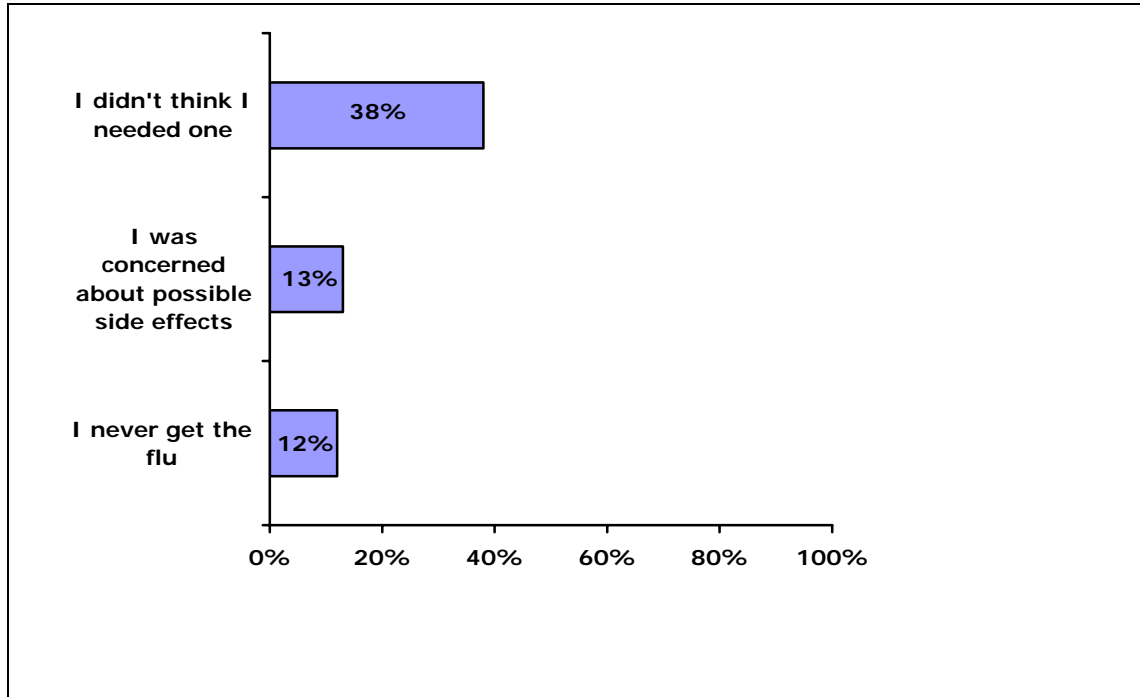
When asked if they had a flu shot this year, more than eight in ten (85%) respondents said they had not. But, when asked about the previous year, nearly six in ten (56%) said they had received a flu shot while slightly more than four in ten (43%) had not.

- Respondents ages 65 and older are more likely than those ages 50-54 or 55-64 to say they have received a flu shot this year (18% vs. 10% and 13%). They are also more likely than respondents in the other two age groups to say they received a flu shot last year (70% vs. 35% and 51%).
- White respondents are more likely than black respondents (58% vs. 44%) to say they received a flu shot in 2006.

Of those who did not get a flu shot in 2006, the largest percentage (38%) reported they didn't think they needed one (see Figure 1). Far fewer said they were concerned about possible side effects (13%) or that they never get the flu (12%). Responses such as believing you can get the flu from the shot (6%), their doctor not getting a recommendation from their doctor (3%), not trusting in the safety of the shot (3%), or believing the shot costs too much (2%) were mentioned by even smaller percentages of respondents.

- Women are twice as likely as men (18% vs. 9%) to say they didn't get a flu shot because they were concerned about possible side effects.

**Figure 1**  
**Why did you not get a flu shot last year?**  
(Those who did not get a flu shot in 2006, n=499)



Source: *Flu and Pneumonia Survey*, November 2007

About half (53%) of the respondents said they have never had a pneumonia shot. Of those, about four in ten (39%) said they didn't think they needed one, and one-fifth (21%) said they never get pneumonia. Their doctor not recommending the pneumonia shot (8%), not knowing a shot for pneumonia was available (5%), concern about possible side effects (2%), and not knowing where to get the shot (2%) were mentioned by fewer than one in ten respondents.

- Women are more likely than men (48% vs. 38%) to say they have received a shot for pneumonia.
- Additionally, respondents ages 65 and older are more likely than those younger than 65 years of age (65% vs. 23% for those 50-54 and 32% for those 55-64) to say they have received a pneumonia shot.
- Respondents with annual household incomes of less than \$25,000 are more likely than those with incomes above that level to say they have received a pneumonia shot (55% vs. 41% for those with incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999; 36% for incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999; and 30% for incomes of \$75,000 or more).

- Black respondents are more likely than white ones (28% vs. 19%) to say they didn't think they needed a pneumonia shot.

### Knowledge of Immunization Recommendations

When asked about the recommended age for a healthy adult to get a pneumonia shot, slightly more than one-quarter (27%) said age 65 or older, about one-fifth (19%) said between 55 and 64 years of age, and another fifth (20%) said between 45 and 54 years of age. Another ten percent of respondents thought the recommended age for a healthy adult to get a pneumonia shot was less than age 45. Notably, nearly one-quarter (23%) said they did not know the recommended age for receiving a shot for pneumonia.

- Respondents with annual household incomes of less than \$25,000 are more likely than respondents with incomes above that level to say they believe the recommended age for a healthy adult to receive a pneumonia shot is less than 45 years of age (15% vs. 9%, 7%, and 7%).
- Additionally, black respondents are more likely than white ones (20% vs. 9%) to say that the recommended age for a healthy adult to receive a pneumonia shot is less than 45 years of age.

When asked about the recommended frequency for receiving a pneumonia shot, about three in ten (28%) said once a year. In contrast, about one in six (16%) correctly said once in a lifetime.

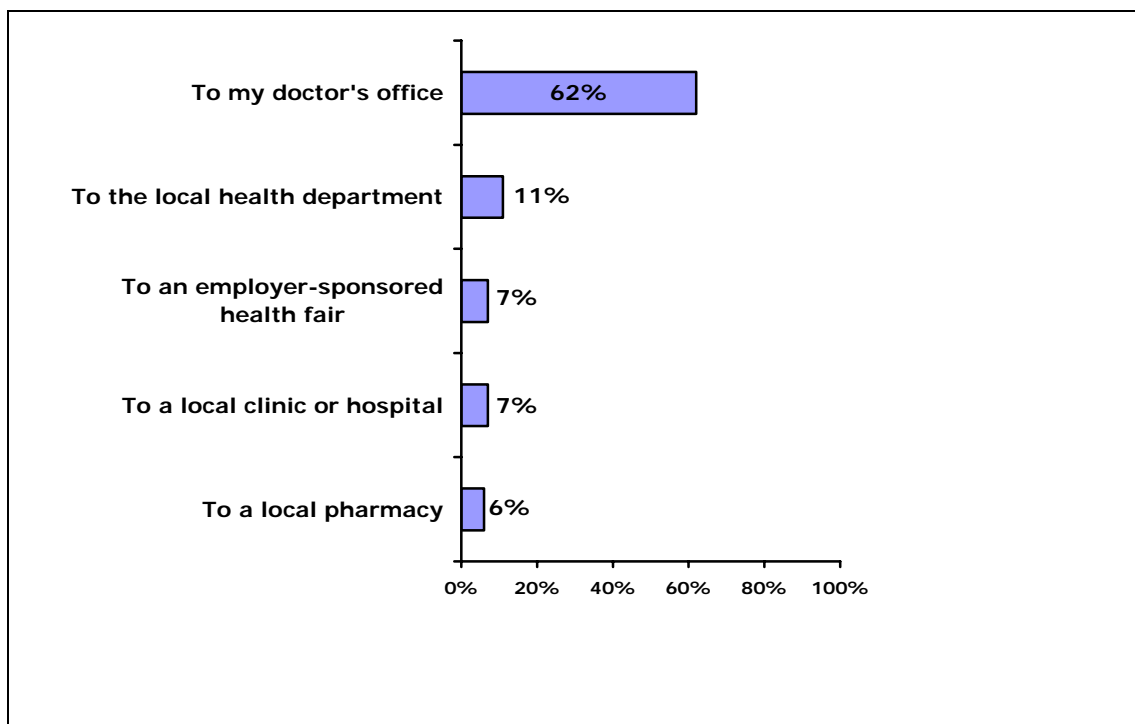
- Men are more likely than women (31% vs. 26%) to say an individual should receive a pneumonia shot once a year.
- Also, younger respondents are more likely than older ones to say that once a year is the recommended frequency for receiving a pneumonia shot (33% for those 50-54 and 31% for those 55-64 vs. 23% for those 65+).
- Black respondents are more likely than white respondents (47% vs. 26%) to say that once a year is the recommended frequency for receiving a pneumonia shot.
- Finally, respondents ages 50-54 are twice as likely as respondents in the other two age groups (12% vs. 6%) to say a healthy adult should get a pneumonia shot when they are sick.

## Locations for Receiving Shots

More than six in ten (62%) respondents who said they have ever received a flu or pneumonia shot said they got it at their doctor's office (see Figure 2). About one in nine (11%) said they got the shot at their local health department, while about half as many said they received it at an employer-sponsored health fair (7%), at a local clinic / hospital / health center (7%), or at their local pharmacy (6%).

- Women are more likely than men (67% vs. 54%) to say they got their flu or pneumonia shot at their doctor's office.
- Respondents ages 65 and older are more likely than respondents ages 50-54 (66% vs. 53%) to say they received their shot at their doctor's office.
- Younger respondents are more likely than those ages 65 and older (16% and 13% vs. 1%) to say they received their shot at an employer-sponsored health fair. This is not surprising given that younger respondents are more likely than older ones to still be employed, with access to employer benefits.

**Figure 2**  
**Where do you generally go to get a flu (or pneumonia) shot?**  
**(Among those who have gotten a shot of either type, n=825)**



Source: *Flu and Pneumonia Survey*, November 2007

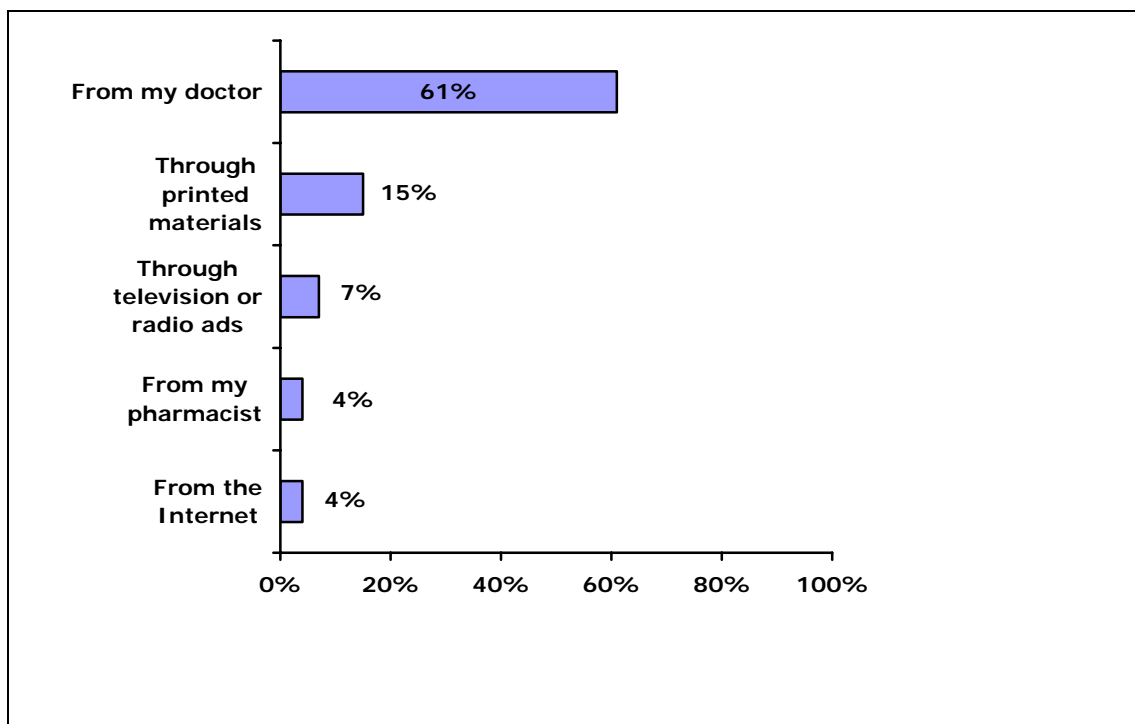
## Preferred Sources of Information about Immunizations

Nearly seven in ten (69%) respondents said their family doctor is their most trusted source of information about immunizations. None of the other sources of information were cited by more than one in twenty respondents.

- Women are more likely than men (72% vs. 65%) to say their family doctor is their most trusted source of information about immunizations.
- Respondents ages 65 and older are more likely than those younger than age 65 (76% vs. 62% for those 50-54 and 65% for those 55-64) to say their family doctor is their most trusted source.

When asked how they prefer to receive information about immunizations, more than six in ten (61%) said from their doctor, while about one in seven (15%) said through printed materials (see Figure 3). None of the remaining options were cited by more than one in fourteen (7%) respondents.

**Figure 3**  
**How do you prefer to receive information about immunizations?**  
(n=1,220)



Source: *Flu and Pneumonia Survey*, November 2007

## Caregiving Responsibilities

When asked if they had been a caregiver in the past year or were currently one, slightly more than one-quarter (27%) said yes.

- Women are more likely than men (32% vs. 23%) to say they are now or have been a caregiver in the past year.
- Likewise, respondents between ages 50 and 54 are more likely than those ages 55 or older to say they are now or have been caregivers in the past year (34% vs. 29% and 23%).

## Summary and Conclusions

Flu season is right around the corner, but less than one in seven respondents ages 50 and older report having received their flu shot this year. Not thinking they needed the shot, being concerned about possible side effects, or saying they never get the flu are the primary reasons respondents cite for not getting immunized.

## Appendix A

### Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

## **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

- Roughly one-fifth (22%) of respondents are between 50 and 54 years of age, nearly four in ten (37%) are between 55 and 64 years of age, and more than four in ten (41%) are ages 65 and older.
- More than half (54%) the respondents are female, with slightly less than half (46%) male.
- Slightly less than half (45%) are AARP members.
- More than half (52%) are married, one-fifth (21%) are widowed, and one in eight (13%) are divorced. Ten percent are single, while two percent report being separated.
- Less than one-fifth have less than a high school education (17%), one-third (33%) are high school graduates, and about one-fifth (21%) have some college education. About one in seven (14%) respondents are college graduates, and one in nine (11%) have a post-graduate or professional degree.
- More than four in ten (42%) respondents are retired and not working, while a similar figure (43%) are either employed full-time (33%) or part-time (10%).
- More than eight in ten (83%) respondents are white, while nine percent are black/African American and eight percent are Hispanic.
- About one-quarter (24%) of respondents reported annual household incomes of less than \$20,000, while about three in ten (29%) reported incomes between \$20,000 and \$49,999. Roughly three in ten (29%) reported incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999 (12%) and \$75,000 or more (17%).

**Appendix B**  
**Annotated Questionnaire**

## Survey on Flu and Pneumonia Annotated Questionnaire

*The study was conducted for AARP by ICR, an independent research company. Interviews were conducted from September 28, 2007 – October 21, 2007 among a nationally representative sample of 1220 respondents age 50 and older. Included within that number, we interviewed 127 African-American respondents and 102 Hispanics. More information about ICR can be obtained by visiting [www.icrsurvey.com](http://www.icrsurvey.com)*

FP-1 Have you had a flu shot this year?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
10/21/07	15	85	*	*

FP-2 Did you get a flu shot last year?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
10/21/07	56	43	1	*

**(Asked of total who did not get a flu shot last year; n=499)**

FP-3 Why did you not get a flu shot last year?

10/21/07	
I didn't think I needed one	38
I was concerned about possible side effects	13
My doctor didn't recommend one	3
It costs too much	2
I don't know where to get the shot	1
I never get the flu	12
Don't like to take medications	1
Did not have the time	2
Just didn't want one	3
Not available/ran out of shots	4
Just never had one/didn't think of it/forgot/didn't bother	5
Do not trust/believe in them (not safe)	3
Get the flu from shot	6
I was sick at the time	2
Don't like needles	*
Other	2
Don't know	3

**FP-2/FP-3 Combo Table****Base= Total Respondents**

Why did you not get a flu shot last year?

10/21/07	
Did not get a flu shot last year	43
I didn't think I needed one	17
I was concerned about possible side effects	6
My doctor didn't recommend one	1
It costs too much	1
I don't know where to get the shot	1
I never get the flu	5
Don't like to take medications	*
Did not have the time	1
Just didn't want one	1
Not available/ran out of shots	2
Just never had one/didn't think of it/forgot/didn't bother	2
Do not trust/believe in them (not safe)	1
Get the flu from shot	2
I was sick at the time	1
Don't like needles	*
Other	1
Got a flu shot in last year	56
Don't know	1
Refused	*

FP-4 Have you ever had a shot for pneumonia?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
10/21/07	44	53	3	*

**(Asked of total who have never had a shot for pneumonia; n=634)**

FP-5 Why haven't you ever had a shot for pneumonia?

10/21/07	
I didn't think I needed one	39
I was concerned about possible side effects	2
My doctor didn't recommend one	8
It costs too much	1
I don't know where to get the shot	2
I never get pneumonia	21
Didn't know it was available/never heard of it	5
Never was asked to have one	1
Don't like to take medications	1
It is for older people	2
Do not have the time	*
Just don't want one	1
Not available/ran out of shots	*
Just never had one/didn't think of it/forgot/didn't bother	3
Do not trust/believe in them (not safe)	1
I was sick at the time	*
Don't like needles	1
Haven't gotten it yet	1
Other	1
Don't know/not sure	12
Refused	*

**FP-4/FP-5 Combo Table**

**Base = Total Respondents**

Why haven't you ever had a shot for pneumonia?

10/21/07	
Has never gotten a shot for pneumonia	53
I didn't think I needed one	21
I was concerned about possible side effects	1
My doctor didn't recommend one	4
It costs too much	*
I don't know where to get the shot	1
I never get pneumonia	11
Didn't know it was available/never heard of it	3
Never was asked to have one	*
Don't like to take medications	*
It is for older people	1
Do not have the time	*
Just don't want one	1
Not available/ran out of shots	*
Just never had one/didn't think of it/forgot/didn't bother	1
Do not trust/believe in them (not safe)	1
I was sick at the time	*
Don't like needles	*
Haven't gotten it yet	*
Other	1
Has ever gotten a shot for pneumonia	44
Don't know/not sure	3
Refused	*

FP-6 What do you think is the recommended age for a healthy adult to get a pneumonia shot? Would you say...?

	Less than 45 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+	Don't know/not sure	Refused
10/21/07	10	20	19	27	23	1

FP-7 How often do you think a healthy adult should get a pneumonia shot? Would you say ...?

	Every six months	Once a year	Every other year	When you're sick	Once in a lifetime	Never	Don't know/not sure	Refused
10/21/07	1	28	16	8	16	3	28	1

**(Asked of total who have gotten a flu shot this year, got a flu shot last year or have ever gotten a shot for pneumonia; n=825)**

FP-8 Where do you generally go to get a flu shot (or a pneumonia shot)?

10/21/07	
To my doctor's office	62
To the local health department	11
To the local pharmacy	6
At an employer-sponsored health fair	7
Local clinic/hospital/health center	7
To the local grocery store	1
Other community center	2
Other	3
Don't know/not sure	2
Refused	--

**FP-1/FP-2/FP-4/FP-8 Combo Table**  
**Base = Total Respondents**

10/21/07	
Have gotten a flu shot in the last two years or have ever gotten a shot for pneumonia	66
Generally go to my doctor's office	41
Generally go to the local health department	7
Generally go to the local pharmacy	4
Generally go at an employer-sponsored health fair	5
Generally go to local clinic/hospital/health center	5
Generally go to the local grocery store	1
Generally go to other community center	1
Generally go somewhere else	2
Don't know/not sure	1
Have not gotten a flu shot in the last two years or have ever gotten a shot for pneumonia	34

FP-9 Who is your most trusted source of information about immunizations, such as the flu or pneumonia shots?

10/21/07	
My family doctor	69
The local health department	3
My local television or radio station	4
Pharmacist/local pharmacy	2
A friend or family member	4
AARP	*
My employer	1
I have more than one trusted source	2
Newspaper/magazine article	2
Nurse	1
Internet	1
Just me	2
No one	1
Other	3
Don't know / not sure	6
Refused	*

FP-10 How do you prefer to receive information about immunizations? Would you say...?

10/21/07	
Through printed materials	15
From the Internet	4
From my doctor	61
From my pharmacist	4
Through television or radio advertisements	7
From my employer	1
From family members/friends	1
Combination of preferred places	1
Some other way	2
Don't know / not sure	3
Refused	1

FP -11 Are you currently (or have you been in the last year) a caregiver for a family member or friend?

	Yes	No	Don't know	Refused
10/21/07	27	72	*	*