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U.S. Public Opinion on Vaccines

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Survey Methods

Gallup Poll Social Series

Survey Methods

- Questions asked on the Gallup Poll Social Series Survey.
- Conducted December 2-15, 2019.
- Random sample of 1,025 U.S. adults, aged 18 or older.
- Margin of sampling error is ± 4 percentage.
- Two questions were asked of half samples.
 - Form A had a sample size of 489 U.S. adults, with a margin of sampling error of ± 5 percentage points.
 - Form B had a sample size of 536 U.S. adults, with a margin of sampling error of ± 5 percentage points.
- Survey was conducted via telephone, 70% cell phone, 30% landline.
- Interviewing was conducted in English and Spanish.
- Weighted to match national demographics of gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, population density, and phone status, based on the March 2018 Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older U.S. population.

Survey Questions on Vaccine Opinions

Six questions covering basic attitudes toward and perceptions of information concerning vaccines

Question 1

- Now turning to something different, how important is it that parents get their children vaccinated -- extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

Question 1 Responses

Americans Continue to Be Less Likely to Say Parents Vaccinating Their Children Is Important Than They Were in 2001

	2001	2015	2019
	%	%	%
All Americans	94	84	84
Gender			
Male	91	81	82
Female	96	88	85
Age			
18-29	94	72	83
30-49	92	87	80
50-64	94	86	85
65+	96	90	91
Education			
Postgrad	92	92	90
College grad only	94	79	89
Some college	93	86	77
HS grad or less	93	82	84
Parental status			
Americans with children under 18	92	85	77
Americans with no children under 18	94	90	87

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- Asked three times, in 2001, 2015 and 2019.
- Decline between 2001 and 2015, since then attitudes have been fairly flat.
- Only among Americans with post-graduate degrees has support not fallen.
- Substantial declines since 2001 have occurred among the following groups:
 - Americans with children under 18 – 15 percentage points
 - Those with some college education – 16 points
 - Those aged 18-20 – 11 points
 - Those 30-49 – 12 points
 - Women – 11 points

Question 2

- How much have you, personally, heard about the advantages of vaccinations for children -- a great deal, fair amount, only a little, or nothing at all?

Question 2 Responses

- Again, asked in 2001, 2015 and 2019.
- Overall, more Americans say they have heard a “great deal” or “fair amount” about the advantages of vaccines.
- Climbed from 73% in 2001 to 89% in 2019.
- Among those with graduate or undergraduate degrees, 94% have heard a great deal or fair amount.
- 91% of Americans with children under 18 have, as well.
- Above 90% for all age groups, except those 18-20.

MORE AMERICANS HAVE HEARD OF THE ADVANTAGES OF VACCINATION

%Great deal/Fair amount

	2001	2015	2019
	%	%	%
Overall	73	83	89
Gender			
Male	71	79	89
Female	76	87	90
Age			
18-29	72	77	80
30-49	78	82	90
50-64	67	87	92
65+	71	85	90
Education			
Postgrad	83	94	94
College grad only	77	83	94
Some college	74	84	91
HS grad or less	69	78	83
Parental status			
Americans with children under 18	78	86	91
Americans without children under 18	71	86	89

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Question 3

How much have you, personally, heard about the possible disadvantages of vaccinations for children -- a great deal, fair amount, only a little, or nothing at all?

Question 3 Responses

MORE AMERICANS REPORT HEARING ABOUT THE DISADVANTAGES OF VACCINATION

% Great deal/Fair amount

	2001	2015	2019
	%	%	%
Overall	39	73	79
Gender			
Male	29	71	78
Female	49	74	81
Age			
18-29	42	56	76
30-49	46	76	85
50-64	36	85	80
65+	28	65	76
Education			
Postgrad	56	88	88
College grad only	29	82	86
Some college	38	70	75
HS grad or less	38	65	76
Parental status			
Americans with children under 18	49	78	86
Americans without children under 18	35	74	77

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- Asked in 2001, 2015 and 2019.
- Increasing percentages of Americans report hearing of the disadvantages.
- Overall increase from 39% in 2001 to 79% in 2019.
- For those with children under 18, this has climbed from 49% in 2001 to 86% last year.
- Among those age 65+, this has climbed from 28% in 2001 to 76% most recently.
- For those age 18-29, this has jumped from 42% in 2001 to 76% in 2019.

Question 4

Do you think vaccines are more dangerous than the diseases they are designed to prevent, or not?

Question 4 Responses

- Asked in 2001, 2015 and 2019.
- Roughly one in 10 Americans now say vaccines are more dangerous than the diseases they prevent.
- Up from 6% in 2001.
- Among Americans with children under the age of 18, this has risen from 6% in 2001 to 16% in 2019.
- For those with some college education, it has risen from 4% in 2001 to 15%, last year.
- Among those age 18-29, there has been a seven-percentage-point rise.

ONE IN 10 AMERICANS SAY VACCINES ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE DISEASES THEY PREVENT

% Yes, more dangerous

	2001	2015	2019
	%	%	%
Overall	6	9	11
Gender			
Male	7	8	12
Female	5	9	11
Age			
18-29	3	11	10
30-49	6	8	14
50-64	6	9	13
65+	8	8	7
Education			
Postgrad	4	5	6
College grad only	2	6	4
Some college	4	11	15
HS grad or less	9	9	14
Parental status			
Americans with children under 18	6	11	16
Americans without children under 18	6	8	9

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Question 5

From what you have read or heard, do you personally think certain vaccines do -- or do not -- cause autism in children, or are you unsure?

Question 5 Responses

Uncertainty Among Americans on Vaccines and Autism

	Yes, do cause autism	No, do not	Unsure
	%	%	%
All Americans	10	45	46
Gender			
Male	12	44	47
Female	7	45	47
Age			
18-29	11	55	34
30-49	13	44	43
50-64	8	37	55
65+	5	46	49
Education			
Postgrad	5	73	22
College grad only	6	61	32
Some college	11	42	47
HS grad or less	12	28	60
Parental status			
Americans with children under 18	15	42	43
Americans with no children under 18	7	46	46

GALLUP, DEC. 2-15, 2019

- Asked in 2015 and 2019.
- Only modest changes between 2015 and 2019.
- In 2015, 6% said yes, compared with 10% in 2019.
- 41% of Americans said no in 2015, compared with 45% now.
- 52% were unsure in 2015, while 46% say the same now.
- Those with a high school diploma or less continue to be among the most likely to be unsure, 64% in 2015 and 60% in 2019.

Question 6

Do you think the government should require all parents to have their children vaccinated against contagious diseases such as measles, or do you think that's something the government should stay out of?

Question 6 Responses

- Asked by Gallup in 2015, the question was also previously asked in 1991 Princeton Survey Research Poll.
- Support for requiring vaccinations has declined from 81% in 1991 to 62% in 2019.
- Americans without children under 18 are more likely to support requiring vaccination than those with children, 65% vs. 58%.
- Older Americans also tend to support required vaccination, with 66% of those 50-64 and 68% of those 65+ saying so.
- Americans with graduate degrees are also among the most supportive with 72% in favor.

Six in 10 Americans Support Government Required Vaccination

	Yes	No
	%	%
Overall	62	35
Gender		
Male	60	37
Female	64	33
Age		
18-29	57	40
30-49	57	41
50-64	66	30
65+	68	27
Education		
Post-Grad	72	24
College grad only	68	30
Some college	52	44
HS grad or less	62	35
Parental Status		
Americans with children under 18	58	41
Americans without children under 18	65	32

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Additional Research on Attitudes Toward Vaccination

- Global attitudes on vaccines were explored as part of the Wellcome Global Monitor Survey, which was conducted in 2018 and released in June 2019.
- Measured attitudes in 140 countries around the globe and found that 79% “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed that vaccines were safe.
- In the U.S., 72% “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed, while 17% neither “agreed, nor disagreed” and 11% “somewhat” or “strongly” disagreed.
- The country with the lowest level of agreement was Ukraine, where 29% agreed that vaccines were safe.
- France had the highest levels of disagreement, with 33% of the population disagreeing that vaccines were safe.
- 87% of Americans agreed it was important for children to have vaccines.
- 84% in the U.S. said vaccines are effective.

Questions or Additional Information

- Questions?
- For additional findings from the 2019 GPSS based questions as well as the topline data, please visit:
 - <https://news.gallup.com/poll/276929/fewer-continue-vaccines-important.aspx> or
 - <https://news.gallup.com/file/poll/277100/200114Vaccines.pdf>
- For additional information about global attitudes on vaccines, please visit the Wellcome Global Monitor
 - <https://wellcome.ac.uk/reports/wellcome-global-monitor/2018>
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