



# UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO ROUTINE CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATION

An April 2022 survey of parents with children between 0 and 6 years of age who are currently uninsured or covered by Medicaid found gaps in knowledge, trust and access. This survey was conducted by March of Dimes, with funding from Pfizer.

- **74%** of parents say their youngest child has received **all** of the recommended vaccines for which they are eligible.
- **12%** say their youngest child received **some but not all** of the recommended vaccines.
- **10%** of parents say their youngest child **has not received any** of the recommended vaccinations.
- **3%** of parents say they **don't know/unsure** if their youngest child has received the recommended vaccines for which they are eligible.

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ROUTINE CHILDHOOD IMMUNIZATIONS

Among parents surveyed, 17% say their youngest child missed routine vaccinations because of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among these parents, **their health care provider's lack of availability** during the COVID-19 pandemic (63%) and being **afraid of contracting COVID-19 while at the doctor** (58%) were influential factors in their youngest child missing a routine vaccine during the pandemic.



## MOTIVATION TO VACCINATE

Among parents whose youngest child received all or some of the recommended vaccines, **concern about their child getting sick, a doctor's recommendation and being required by daycare/school were influential factors in their decision to vaccinate.**

Among parents who say their youngest child has received **all of the recommended vaccines, the following factors were cited as very influential:**

- Worries about their child becoming sick (61%)
- Doctors' recommendations (59%)
- Daycare/school requirements (44%)

Among parents who say their youngest child received **some of the recommended vaccines, the following factors were cited as very influential:**

- Worries about their child becoming sick (42%)
- Doctors' recommendations (33%)
- Daycare/school requirements (24%)

**Black parents** are more likely than parents of other ethnicity groups to say **recommendations from friends (42%)** and **community leaders (40%)** were influential in their decisions about vaccines for their children.

## BARRIERS TO IMMUNIZATION

Among a sample of parents surveyed who say their **youngest child has not received any of the recommended vaccines**, factors related to trust, knowledge and access to health care influenced their decisions about routine vaccines:

Trust:

- **70%** say concerns about the **safety of vaccines** were an influential factor

Access:

- **35%** say **not having a regular doctor** was a factor
- **33%** say **lack of insurance coverage** was a factor
- **27%** say **lack of access to transportation** was a factor

Knowledge:

- **37%** say they **are not worried about the specific diseases** the vaccines help prevent
- **29%** say **lack of knowledge about what vaccines are recommended** was a factor

Among parents whose youngest children have received some but not all of the recommended vaccines, we heard similar influences:

- **71%** say they are worried about the **safety of recommended vaccines**
- **46%** say **lack of knowledge about what vaccines are recommended** was an influential factor
- **30%** say **affordability** was a factor
- **23%** say **lack of time** to get their child to the doctor was a factor
- **26%** say **not having a regular doctor** was a factor
- **24%** say **no insurance coverage** was a factor

## INFORMATION SOURCES

**A majority of parents surveyed (73%) say they look to doctors, nurses and health care providers as a source of information about vaccines for their children.**

- Parents whose youngest child received **all the recommended vaccines** also rely on **government agencies** like the CDC (27%) as a top information source.
- Parents whose youngest child received **some of the recommended vaccines** rely on **family members** (33%) and the **TV news** they watch (22%) as information sources.
- Parents whose youngest child received **none of the recommended vaccines** rely on **family members** (31%), **friends in real life** (18%) and **friends on social media** (16%) for information on vaccines for their children.



## VACCINES FOR CHILDREN PROGRAM:

### **NO COST VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE—BUT MANY PARENTS ARE UNAWARE.**

The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program provides recommended vaccines at no cost to children under the age of 18 who are Medicaid-eligible, uninsured, American Indian/Alaska Native or insured by health plans that don't fully cover all routine immunization.

It's likely that all parents surveyed have children who are eligible for free vaccines through the Vaccines for Children program. Yet, only **21% of parents** had heard of the program and just **10% of parents** have used the program to get vaccines for their children.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

March of Dimes, in partnership with Pfizer, conducted a survey to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on barriers to routine childhood immunization in communities with lower immunization rates. We learned that there continue to be significant gaps in knowledge, trust and access.

The survey was conducted from March 25-April 4, 2022, among a sample of 714 parents of children between the ages of 0-6, currently being covered by Medicaid or uninsured. Interviews were conducted online, and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample based on gender, educational attainment, age, race and ethnicity. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 4%. Survey was conducted by Morning Consult.