



**Vaccinations: Only a Third of Americans Roll Up Their Sleeves**

**But latest The Associated Press/Ipsos Poll finds that vaccination rate jumps to 76% among elderly**

**December 26, 2003, Washington, DC** - While barely one-third of Americans (35%) have been vaccinated against influenza, three-quarters of Americans age 65 and older (76%) have received a flu shot. Overall, about half of men age 45 and older (48%) and women age 45 and older (49%) have been vaccinated, according to the latest The Associated Press/Ipsos Poll.

Only 27% of American parents report having vaccinated their children. There are no strong differences in child vaccination rates by education, region, or race.

Not surprisingly given the elderly nature of vaccinated Americans, most (87%) of this year's vaccinated people have been vaccinated in previous flu seasons and they have not adopted the latest vaccination methods: 99% of those vaccinated received a shot, and only 1% a nasal spray.

Of those who did not receive vaccinations, about two-thirds don't want to: 45% say it's not necessary, and 21% think it does more harm than good. Of the rest, 14% couldn't find the time, 6% couldn't find the money, and 6% couldn't find the vaccine.

Of those who did receive vaccinations, 38% just didn't want to get the flu, and 25% felt at some health risk that motivated them. About one-third were talked into it, mostly by doctors (24%), but sometimes by family/friends (5%) or by the news media (4%).

Half of the vaccinated say insurance covered it (48%), and employers paid for another 22%. Only 23% paid for the vaccination out of their own pocket--that's a low figure, suggesting that vaccination practices have not spread very far beyond the population that receives it at no out-of-pocket cost after insurance or employer pays.

In attempts to ward off the flu, 69% say they are washing their hands more often.

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