



Poll STATION

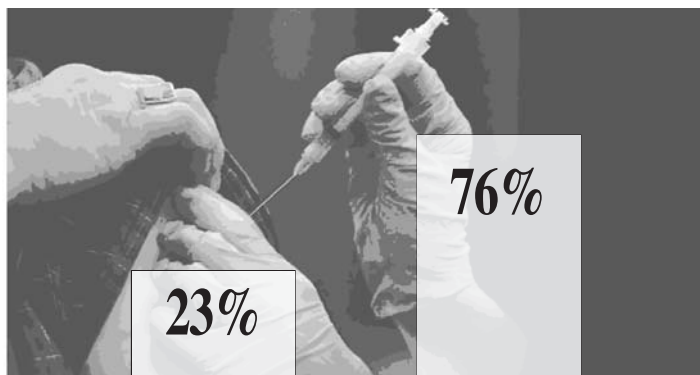
With Linda Banister

Now that Albertans are able to receive their H1N1 vaccinations with relative ease and concern has largely subsided, we decided to take a look back to the height of the crisis. In this month's *Poll Station*, we probe Edmontonians' attitudes toward the H1N1 virus and vaccine.

DID YOU RECEIVE A FLU SHOT AND WAS IT EFFECTIVE?

To begin the survey, respondents were asked whether they received an annual flu shot. Approximately half of respondents reported they did (49 percent), while the remainder did not (51 percent). Of those who did, the majority (84 percent) reported they find it is effective in preventing the flu. Six percent believed it was not effective, while 10 percent were unsure whether it was effective or not.

DID YOU RECEIVE H1N1 IMMUNIZATION? IF NOT, WHY NOT?



Responded they had received the H1N1 flu shot.

Responded they had not received the H1N1 flu shot.

Next, respondents were asked whether they had received the H1N1 immunization. Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) reported receiving the vaccine and 76 percent indicated they had not. Of those who had not received the shot, more than one-third (37 percent) reported they plan on getting it, while nearly half (46 percent) did not, and 17 percent were unsure.

Respondents who did not receive nor plan on receiving the H1N1 immunization most frequently said that it is too much of an inconvenience to get the vaccine (20 percent), while 14 percent each reported they dislike the reaction to flu shots, think the H1N1 immunization is unnecessary, or live a healthy lifestyle and take preventative measures. Eleven percent indicated not believing in the H1N1 hype as their reason for not receiving the vaccine.

WHERE DID YOU GET INFORMATION ON THE H1N1 VACCINATION?

All respondents were then asked where they received information on the H1N1 vaccination. Half (50 percent) mentioned they received it from television news, followed by 39 percent from the newspaper, 29 percent from the radio, and 24 percent from the Internet. Other mentions included friends or family (18 percent), a doctor (12 percent), or television in general (12 percent).

ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT SIDE EFFECTS OF THE H1N1 VACCINE?

Respondents were then asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions and concern with side effects of the H1N1 vaccine. When asked to rate their concern with the potential short-term side effects, the majority (65 percent) expressed low levels of concern, while 23 percent were highly concerned, and 11 percent were only moderately concerned. In regard to long-term side effects, 55 percent reported low levels of concern while 31 percent were highly concerned, leaving 11 percent moderately concerned.

Those concerned about long term side effects most frequently cited a belief that not enough research had been done (23 percent), while 19 percent believed there was the potential for loss of limb mobility, paralysis or muscle problems. Ten percent each believe that the vaccine's side effects could generally be severe or disabling, could cause diseases to the immune system, or could result in death. Twenty-nine percent were unsure what the effects could be.

WERE YOU SATISFIED WITH HOW THE VACCINE WAS DISTRIBUTED?

Finally, when respondents were asked if they were satisfied with the way the vaccine was distributed, the majority reported low levels of satisfaction (63 percent), while approximately one-quarter (26 percent) were moderately satisfied, and nine percent were highly satisfied with the distribution process. Those who were dissatisfied with the distribution most frequently suggested that there should have been a priority placed on high risk individuals from the beginning (25 percent), that the process should have been better planned (22 percent), that there should have been more distribution centres (10 percent), and that they should have made sure there was enough supply of the vaccine (six percent). ✓

Monthly Poll Station Online Question

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Want a question included in the Edmontonians Poll?

Contact Linda at 780.451.4444 or e-mail lbanister@edmontonians.com.

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