2019 National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) Annual Influenza/Pneumococcal News Conference

Thursday, September 26, 2019
National Press Club, Washington, DC
Expert Panel Delivered Impactful Messages and Led By Example

US Health Officials Urge Influenza and Pneumococcal Disease Vaccination

Moderator
William Schaffner, MD
NFID Medical Director

Protecting The Nation Against Influenza and Pneumococcal Disease
Alex M. Azar II
US Secretary of Health and Human Services

Preventing Childhood Influenza
Patricia N. Whitley-Williams, MD
NFID President-Elect, Professor of Pediatrics and Division Chief, Allergy, Immunology, and Infectious Diseases, Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

The Dangers of Influenza in Adults with Chronic Health Conditions
William B. Borden, MD
Associate Professor of Medicine and Health Policy, George Washington University, and Chief Quality and Population Health Officer, GW Medical Faculty Associate
NFID National Survey: Attitudes about Flu and Pneumococcal Disease Prevention

Attitudes about Influenza and Pneumococcal Disease Prevention

A National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) survey conducted among US adults uncovered insights about influenza (flu) and pneumococcal disease knowledge, as well as attitudes and behaviors around vaccination.

FLU

60% agree the flu vaccine is the best preventive measure against flu-related deaths and hospitalizations.

52% said they plan to get vaccinated against flu this season.

1 in 4 who are at greater risk for flu-related complications said they were not planning to get vaccinated.

71% of US adults say they trust their doctor a great deal/a lot.

70% do not trust social media as a source of information about flu vaccines.

60% agree that social media platforms should implement policies to reduce inaccurate information about flu vaccination.

Top reasons for NOT getting a flu vaccine:

- 51% don’t think flu vaccines work very well
- 34% are concerned with side effects of the vaccine
- 22% are concerned about getting flu from the vaccine

PNEUMOCOCCAL DISEASE

46% of high-risk individuals were unfamiliar with pneumococcal disease.

70% of individuals at high risk for pneumococcal disease said they were not planning on getting vaccinated.

60% of high-risk individuals report that they have never been advised to get vaccinated against pneumococcal disease.

Top reasons for NOT getting a pneumococcal vaccine:

- 42% are concerned with side effects of the vaccine
- 20% don’t like needles
- 12% don’t think pneumococcal vaccines work very well

Vaccination is the best way to protect against flu and pneumococcal disease and related complications. Visit www.nfid.org to learn more about how you can #FightFlu and #PreventPneumo.

Leading by Example: #FightFlu

www.nfid.org/lbe
Collaboration and Support

Leading public health/medical groups demonstrated strong and unified commitment to influenza prevention
Top-Tier Media Coverage

Despite a heavy news day in Washington, DC, media placements secured in top-tier print/online/TV and radio outlets, resulted in **950+ million impressions**

- **37 press members** onsite or via telecast/webinar
- As of October 7: **500 stories** from the press conference, including **34 original stories**
- AP story **picked up by 382 outlets reaching all 50 US states**
- **2 original Spanish language placements** on top-tier radio stations: Spanish Public Radio and CNN Español

*Online, print, TV, and radio figures are based on Cision; includes press release impressions from PR Newswire*
“Getting vaccinated is going to be the best way to prevent whatever happens,” Dr. Daniel Jernigan, flu chief at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told the Associated Press.

If people shrug at the risk, “it’s not just about you,” Azar said. “Vaccinating yourself may also protect people around you,” such as how newborns have some flu protection if their mothers were vaccinated during pregnancy.

Parents wouldn’t “drive off with their child not restrained in a car seat, just in case they’re in an accident,” said Dr. Patricia Whitley-Williams, a pediatrician with Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. “So why would you not vaccinate your child against the flu?”

For now, people who get vaccinated and still get sick can expect a milder illness — and a lower risk of pneumonia, hospitalization or death, stressed Dr. William Schaffner of Vanderbilt University and the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.
Digital Screens Extend Reach

In both traditional and social media, digital screens helped extend the reach of key messages.
NFID Survey Drove Top-Tier Headlines

"Schaffner cited a survey NFID conducted this summer on Americans' attitudes about the flu vaccine, which found that while 60% of adults believe that getting a flu vaccine is the best defense against flu-related hospitalization or death, only half of Americans plan to get the vaccine this year."

"…a new survey from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) found that only 52 percent of Americans plan to get the vaccine this year. Oddly, 62 percent of people in the US believe that the flu shot is the best defense against influenza-related hospitalizations and deaths, yet significantly fewer actually intend to afford themselves that protection."
Panelists Helped Emphasize Key Messages

“Unfortunately flu infection is often just the beginning of the problem for certain patients with chronic health conditions,” Borden said. “An often unrecognized danger of the flu is that the resulting inflammation may last for several weeks after the acute infection.”

“This past year we saw high rates of pediatric hospitalization due to flu-related complications. This did not include just children with underlying illness, but also healthy children who were hospitalized and even died from flu-related complications,” said Patricia N. Whitley-Williams, MD, NFID president-elect.”
“The virus is even more nasty than you thought,” Dr. Schaffner said. “Flu initiates a whole-body inflammatory reaction. The damage from flu continues even after one recovers from the acute flu illness. ... It’s why many people feel wiped out for two weeks or more after they’ve stopped coughing. This lingering inflammation can involve blood vessels, particularly the blood vessels to the heart and the brain.”
How You Can Help #FightFlu

1. Join the NFID Leading By Example (LBE) initiative

2. Update your Facebook profile with a #FightFlu frame: On your Facebook profile image, select Update Profile Picture, Add Frame, and search for #FightFlu

3. Help spread awareness, not flu! Take a photo with the Traveling Flu Bug in your hometown, on your travels, or near an interesting landmark, and post it on social media using #TravelingFluBug and #FightFlu