

HEALTH REPORT**ARE AMERICANS PREPARED FOR
FLU SEASON?**

By: Bre D'Alessio South

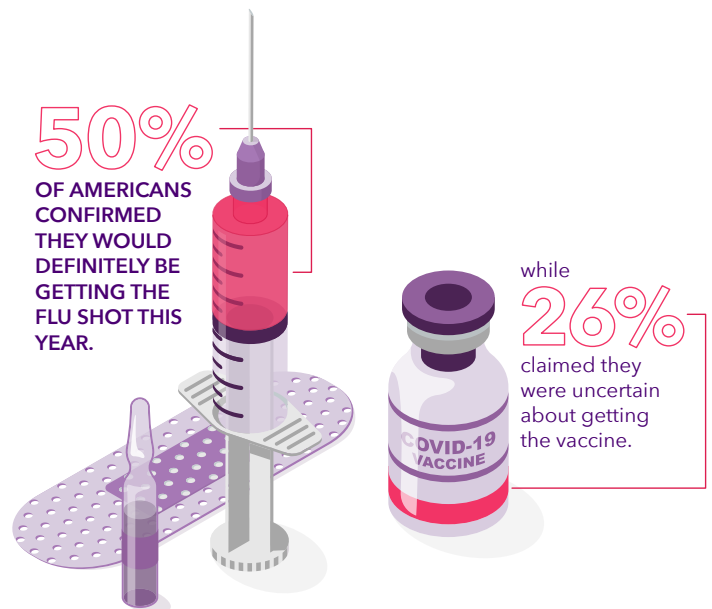
Medically Reviewed By: Holly Phillips, MD

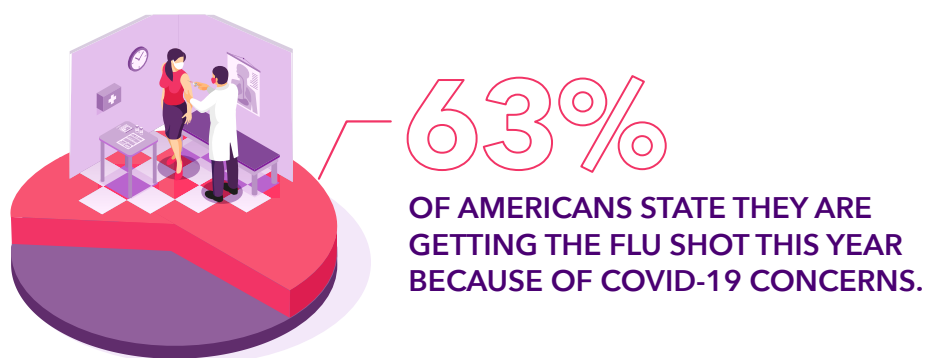


The 2020 flu season will look significantly different than it has in previous years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As of August this year, the unemployment rate fell to 8.4%³ which shows a decline in job losses for the first time since shelter-in-place orders were mandated in March. However, Americans are still cautious about what this year could bring and the looming flu season adds another layer of uncertainty to an already shifting future.

**Americans Plan to Get the Flu Shot Due to
COVID-19 Concerns**

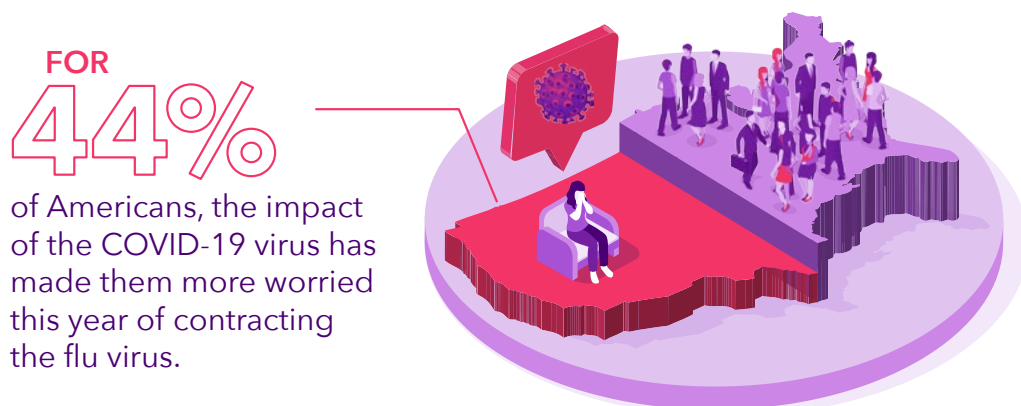
The flu shot has long been on America's mind, even since late Spring and early Summer, with reports indicating an increase for flu vaccines this year compared to past.⁴ In a recent survey conducted by Kelton Research for RxSaver, 50% of Americans confirmed they would definitely be getting the flu shot this year, while only 26% claimed they were uncertain about getting the vaccine.¹





The COVID-19 virus has helped push the decision-making process for Americans, with 63% of Americans stating they are getting the flu shot this year because of COVID-19 concerns.¹ Americans are clearly on high alert having witnessed the effects of the pandemic these last six months.

For 44% of Americans, the impact of the COVID-19 virus has made them more worried this year of contracting the flu virus.¹

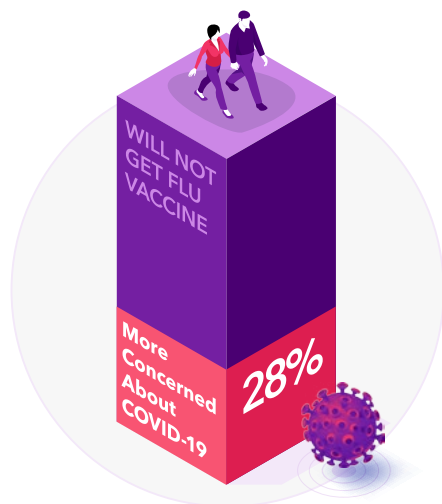


Not surprisingly, 51% of Americans claim they get sick most often during flu season.¹ So it's critical for their personal protection to get ahead of concerns with flu shot preparation.

Why Some Americans Are Still Concerned about The Flu Shot

For the other 53% of Americans who do not plan to get the flu shot, there are considerable reasons why they are choosing not to get the vaccine this year. 28% of this group are afraid of the common side effects associated with the flu shot and 28% also worry they will end up contracting the flu virus after receiving the shot.¹

**OF THOSE WHO DO NOT PLAN
TO GET THE FLU VACCINE,
28% ARE MORE CONCERNED
ABOUT COVID-19.**



These concerns are the most common reasons why people have opted to not get vaccinated in the past and still prove to be lingering fears this year.

Interestingly enough, 28% of those who do not plan to get the flu vaccine state the reason they won't be getting the vaccine is due to being more concerned about COVID-19 at this time versus the flu virus.¹

The Cost of Becoming Sick During Flu Season

For many Americans, the fear of getting the flu or even a cold is tied not only to the fact they would be ill, but also what the cost for medication treatment would look like for them. Three in 10 Americans stated that the costs involved in treating the illness were actually what drove their anxiety when it came to falling ill. 30% of Americans struggle to pay for medications that treat a cold or the flu which forces many individuals to cut costs elsewhere in order to afford treatment.¹

For many the thought of not working while sick with a cold or even worse the flu, is not an option in order to afford finances. 33% of Americans have to make financial sacrifices when faced with getting sick with a virus. It even comes down to generation, with 49% Gen Z/Millennials claiming a cold or flu sickness has adversely impacted them in years past, compared to 24% of older generations.

However, getting the flu vaccine in advance of the season has improved over time. 75% of Americans agreed that getting the flu shot has become much easier to obtain compared to years past.



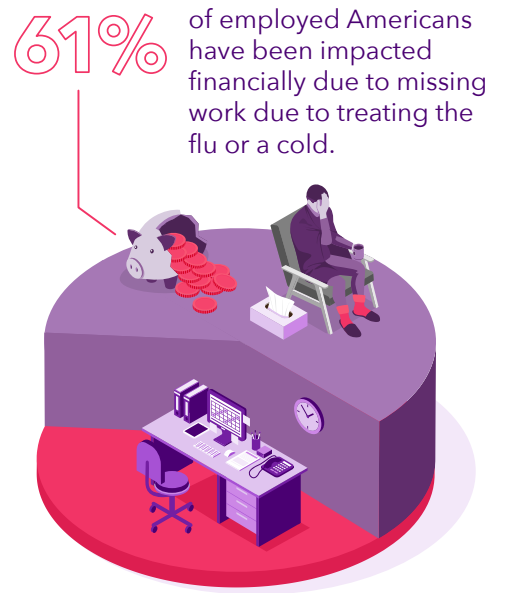
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How Does Flu Season Impact Work for Americans?

In a pre-COVID world, 75% of Americans claimed to have worked during an illness such as a cold or the flu², but recent numbers show Americans may be taking illness more seriously this year. 64% of employed Americans claim they typically still try to work even when sick¹ which is down significantly from 2019.

While medications are routinely available for treating cold and flu viruses, the burden of missing work still weighs heavy on most Americans. 37% of Americans report they have had to miss extensive periods of work due to treating either the cold or flu virus.¹ Missed work results in missed wages for most. 61% of employed Americans have been impacted financially due to missing work due to treating the flu or a cold.¹



Flu Season Puts An Additional Strain on Finances

Flu season offers not only a concern of health, but also proves to be a financial security risk for Americans. Since over half of Americans reported being impacted financially due to missing work because of the cold or flu, many had to be mindful of their spending and their costs. In fact, 48% admit to searching for discounts on routine purchases to help offset lost wages, while an additional 48% of respondents had to set a strict financial budget as a result of lost income.¹

Stay Vigilant This Flu Season

Additionally, healthcare providers worry that individuals could potentially become sick with both COVID-19 and the flu virus at the same time, resulting in more severe illness. There are many factors to be unsure about as we enter a flu season unlike one we've seen before, which is why it's critical to continue practicing healthy and safe measures as we continue to fight the pandemic during this flu season.

References

1. Kelton. The RetailMeNot Q3 PR + RxSaver 2020 Survey was conducted between August 17th, 2020 and August 19th, 2020 among 1,052 nationally representative Americans.
2. Kelton. The RetailMeNot Q3 PR + RxSaver 2019 Survey was conducted between August 19th 2019 and August 23rd 2019 among 1,055 nationally representative Americans.
3. The Bureau of Labor Statistics. "The Employment Situation-August 2020." US Department of Labor, 4 Sept. 2020. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empstat.pdf>
4. Sagonowsky, Eric. "Flu shot makers gear up-and get creative-for a critical vaccination season." Fierce Pharma, 8 June 2020. <https://www.fiercepharma.com/vaccines/flu-vaccines-take-even-more-importance-amid-covid-19-but-challenges-await-experts>



Bre D'Alessio South is the content marketing manager and managing editor of RxSaver. Her writing focuses on health care, mental health, and gender rights. At RxSaver, she also serves as co-lead for the employee resource group caRe, which focuses on mental health and chronic health support in the workplace.



Dr. Holly Phillips, a Board-Certified General Internist in private practice, is a journalist, author, television contributor, and medical expert for Rx-Saver. Featured regularly across multiple media outlets, Dr. Phillips first gained nationwide recognition as a Medical Contributor to CBS News and "Core Member" of the Dr. Oz Show. Frequently quoted in print, she has been a contributing editor for Prevention, and appeared in feature articles for Vogue, Self, and others. Dr. Phillips is the author of the book, "The Exhaustion Breakthrough," published by Rodale.

Dr. Phillips obtained her medical degree from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and trained at Lenox Hill Hospital. In practice, she addresses all Internal Medicine Conditions with a focus on preventive women's health. Dr. Phillips is well versed in the foundations of complementary and alternative medicine and views these ideas as integral to the practice of medicine today. She lives in Manhattan with her husband, two young daughters and Pug.

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