

March 25, 2021

## Vaccine Uptake Survey Results Among Conservative Republicans and Evangelical Christians

Skepticism about the safety and effectiveness of coronavirus vaccines, doubts about being vulnerable to infection and less acceptance of vaccination norms are fueling comparatively high levels of vaccine hesitancy in two groups, conservative Republicans and evangelical Christians.

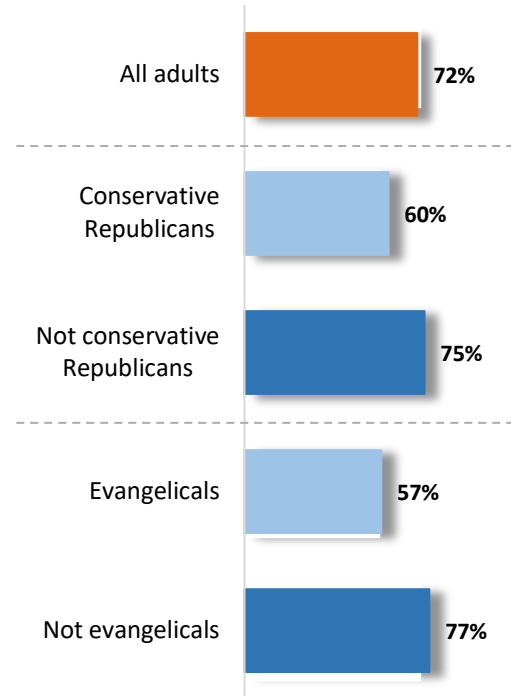
Still, COVID Collaborative survey results find avenues for progress, with Americans in both groups expressing openness to information about the vaccines and the advice of their healthcare providers.

The national, random sample survey underscores the need for outreach: Just 60 percent of conservative Republicans either have gotten vaccinated or are inclined to do so, compared with 75 percent of all other adults, a 15-point gap. Among evangelicals, uptake or intended uptake is 57 percent, vs. 77 percent among non-evangelicals, a gap of 20 percentage points.

Conservative Republicans account for about one in five adults, 21 percent. (Eighty percent of Republicans identify as conservatives.) Evangelicals are 24 percent of the population. There is some overlap: Thirty-eight percent of evangelicals are conservative Republicans.

This analysis also looks at evangelicals by race and ethnicity, finding sharp differences, with vaccine hesitancy higher among white evangelicals compared with those from racial and ethnic minority groups. Political and ideological views are part of that equation: Half of white evangelicals are conservative Republicans, compared with 17 percent of evangelicals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups.

Percent who have been vaccinated or are uptake-inclined



Results are presented below first among conservative Republicans and evangelical Christians as a whole, then explored among evangelicals by race and ethnicity.

### *Uptake and hesitancy*

Actual uptake, as of early March, was not the issue: Conservative Republicans and evangelicals reported receiving shots at roughly the same rates as other Americans. The difference is in intended uptake among those who haven't received a vaccine yet. This falls under half among conservative Republicans (47 percent) and evangelicals (46 percent), vs. seven in 10 others.

Indeed, among those who have not been vaccinated, about a quarter of evangelicals (24 percent) and 22 percent of conservative Republicans take the strongest negative position, saying they definitely will not get the vaccine, roughly double the rejection rate among other adults.

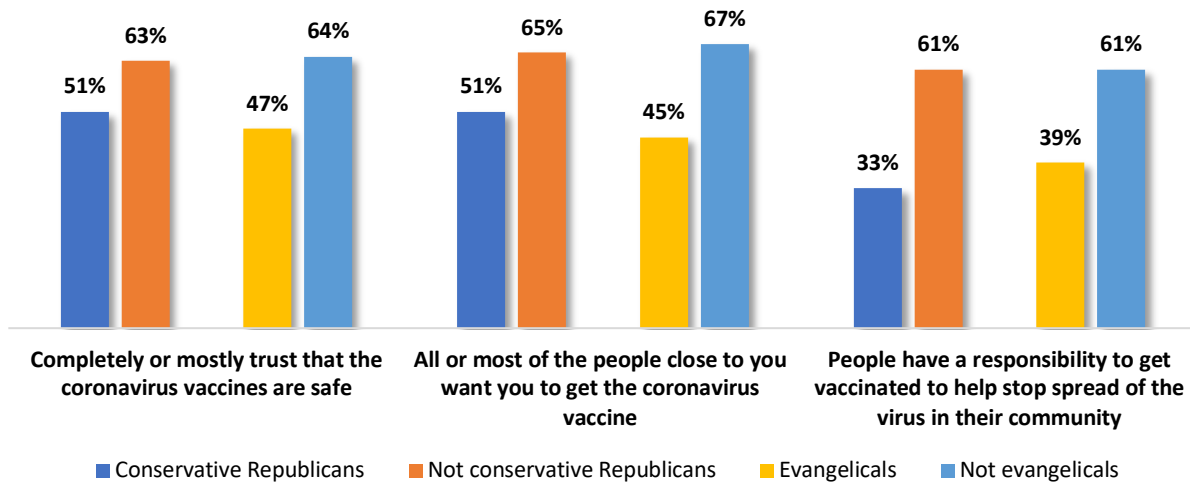
Further, among those who don't rule out getting vaccinated, conservative Republicans and evangelicals are especially likely to say they'll "wait and see" before taking action – 61 percent in both groups, vs. about 45 percent among others. This includes a much higher likelihood to say they'll wait for more than a few months – a third in both groups, roughly twice the rate of others.

*Roots of hesitancy*

Higher levels of hesitancy among conservative Republicans and evangelicals fit their broader attitudinal profile:

- Only about half of conservative Republicans and fewer than half of evangelicals trust that the coronavirus vaccines are safe and effective, compared with nearly two-thirds of other adults. That's a key shortfall, because, in modeling among all Americans, trust in safety and effectiveness is the single strongest predictor of intention to get vaccinated.

These gaps are reflected in greater skepticism about vaccines generally. Six in 10 conservative Republicans and evangelicals trust in the safety of vaccines overall, vs. seven in 10 others.



- Two-thirds of Americans in other groups think all or most of the people close to them want them to get vaccinated; this falls to 51 percent among conservative Republicans and again fewer than half of evangelicals, 45 percent. Again, it matters: The perception of this subjective social norm is another strong predictor of intended uptake (albeit distantly from trust in safety and effectiveness).

In a related result, just four in 10 conservative Republicans or evangelicals say they're likely to recommend getting vaccinated to their family or friends, 17 points below its level among others. Encouraging positive personal communication on the issue is an important step.

- Further, just 33 percent of conservative Republicans and 39 percent of evangelicals see getting vaccinated as a community responsibility rather than a personal choice, compared with 61 percent of other Americans. This perception of a moral norm is an additional important predictor of intended uptake.

There also is a broad gap on one more key predictor of uptake, perceived disease risk. Thirty-five percent of conservative Republicans say they're worried about catching COVID-19, vs. 60 percent of other adults. And it's 40 percent among evangelicals, compared with 59 percent of non-evangelicals.

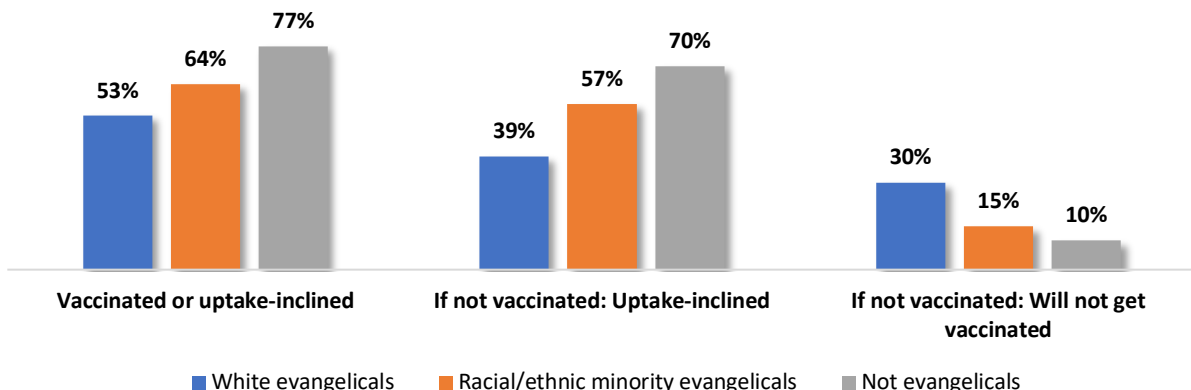
#### *White vs. racial and ethnic minority evangelicals*

Important differences emerge when evaluating evangelicals by race and ethnicity, with hesitancy more pronounced and key underlying motivators weaker among white evangelicals compared with evangelicals from racial or ethnic minority groups.

In terms of uptake or intended uptake:

- Just 53 percent of white evangelicals intend to get vaccinated or have done so, compared with 64 percent of racial and ethnic minority evangelicals, including about equal shares of Black evangelicals (63 percent) and Hispanic evangelicals (62 percent). (As noted, it's 77 percent among all non-evangelicals.)
- That's largely driven by a shortfall in intended uptake among white evangelicals: Among those who have not been vaccinated against the coronavirus, just 39 percent in this group intend to get vaccinated, compared with 57 percent of evangelicals who are members of racial or ethnic minority groups.
- White evangelicals are twice as apt as racial and ethnic minority evangelicals to completely rule out getting vaccinated: Thirty percent do so, vs. 15 percent of other evangelicals. In this, racial and ethnic minority evangelicals look like the public at large (13 percent refuse vaccination), while white evangelicals are markedly different.

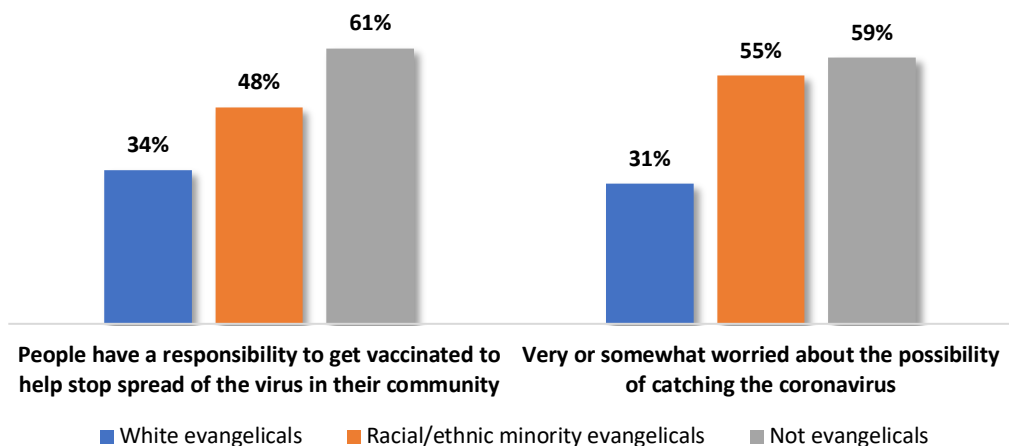
### Coronavirus vaccine uptake intentions



- White evangelicals who don't rule out getting vaccinated are more likely than those in racial and ethnic minority groups to say they'll wait longer than a few months before taking action, 38 vs. 27 percent.

Informing these divisions are differences on key predictors of vaccine uptake intentions:

- White evangelicals are 14 points less apt than racial and ethnic minority evangelicals to see getting vaccinated as a community responsibility, 34 vs. 48 percent. More say instead that it's a personal choice, an attitude that works against vaccine uptake.
- Just 31 percent white evangelicals are very or somewhat worried about catching the virus, compared with twice as many Hispanic evangelicals – 63 percent – and 53 percent of Black evangelicals. Worry about infection informs intention to get vaccinated.



- Compared with evangelicals in racial and ethnic minority groups, white evangelicals are 11 points more apt to be distrustful of the coronavirus vaccines' safety, 41 vs. 30 percent.

In a challenge to addressing these gaps, there are differences in trusted sources for advice on the coronavirus vaccine, with trust among white evangelicals lower in many cases:

- Given their political preferences, white evangelicals are 22 points less apt than racial and ethnic minority evangelicals to completely or mostly trust Joe Biden for advice on the vaccine (19 vs. 41 percent). They're also 15 points less apt to trust their state's governor on the issue (18 vs. 33 percent).
- Whites in this group are 13 points less apt than racial and ethnic minority evangelicals to trust religious leaders in their community (note, this is not about their own particular pastor), as well as 10 points less apt to trust social media posts from people they follow and 9 points less apt to trust celebrities whom they admire.

Geographically, roughly half of all white evangelicals reside in the South. But regional differences are not apparent; there are no significant differences between Southern and non-Southern white evangelicals on the measures discussed here. (Wave 1 and Wave 2 data were combined for an adequate sample size for regional analysis.)

### *Paths forward*

There are paths forward in encouraging uptake in these comparatively hesitant groups. They include fostering recognition of a community benefit in getting vaccinated, bolstering interpersonal encouragement, communicating the risks of infection and, above all, providing clear information about the vaccines' safety and effectiveness.

Indeed, results to another question show substantial willingness in these groups to hear relevant information. Those who are inclined to wait and see before getting vaccinated were asked what might be most persuasive in encouraging them to take action sooner. The results:

- A broad 76 percent of evangelicals and 74 percent of conservative Republicans say information on the safety and effectiveness of the vaccines could be persuasive, similar to the share of other Americans who say so (70 percent).
- Six in 10 evangelicals and conservative Republicans also rate information on the development and testing of the vaccines as persuasive, again about as many as the share of other adults who say so (65 percent).
- Also high on the list, 60 percent of evangelicals and 54 percent of conservative Republicans are open to advice from their doctor or other healthcare provider not to wait, again similar to the share of others who say the same.
- Conservative Republicans and evangelicals, at the same time, are 16 or 17 points less apt than other Americans to say "an easy-to-get appointment at a convenient location" would be persuasive in encouraging them not to wait – making it clear that, for these populations, information, not convenience, is the operating factor.

A final result buttresses the role of healthcare providers. In addition to rating them as persuasive, evangelicals are 15 points more likely than other Americans to say that, given a choice, they'd prefer to get the vaccine at their doctor's office. There's a smaller, marginally significant 8-point gap on this question among conservative Republicans vs. others.

A table summarizing these results follows. The full survey materials are available via the SEAN COVID-19 [Survey Archive](#).

	All adults	Cons. Reps.	Not cons. Reps.	----- Evangelicals -----					
				All evan.	White	Minor-ities	Black	Hisp.	Not evan.
Vaccinated or uptake-inclined	72%	60	75	57	53	64	63	62	77
Vaccinated	21	24	21	21	23	17	24	11	22
If not vaccinated:									
Uptake-inclined	65	47	69	46	39	57	51	58*	70
Will not get vaccinated	13	22	11	24	30	15	16	16*	10
If may get vaccinated:									
ASAP	51	38	54	38	35	42	30	42*	55
Wait (NET)	48	61	45	61	64	56	66	56*	44
Wait > a few months	21	34	18	33	38	27	30	26*	18
Trust/safe	60	51	63	47	44	52	46	51	64
Trust/effective	61	50	63	47	45	51	46	51	65
Trust safety of vaccines generally	69	61	71	59	59	58	53	56	72
Subj. social norm	62	51	65	45	43	49	40	51	67
Moral norm	55	33	61	39	34	48	44	46	61
Recommend to family/friends	53	39	56	40	38	43	41	45	57
Infection worry	55	35	60	40	31	55	53	63	59
Persuasive:									
Info on safety/effectiveness	71	74	70	76	--	76	--	--	70
Info on development/testing	63	58	65	61	--	68	--	--	65
Healthcare provider	56	54	57	60	--	66	--	--	56
Easy/convenient appointment	46	34	50	34	--	42	--	--	51
Preferred location:									
Doctor's office	37	44	36	49	49	49	54	--	34
Trusted sources**:									
Healthcare provider	64	58	66	59	62	54	57	47	66
Joe Biden	37	8	45	27	19	41	44	40	41
State's governor	31	21	34	24	18	33	29	32	34
Family members	50	46	50	47	45	50	46	52	50
Celebrities	9	4	10	9	6	15	15	18	9
Religious leaders	20	21	19	28	23	36	31	37	17
Social media posts	10	6	12	10	6	16	13	18	11

\* Combines Wave 1 and Wave 2 data for adequate sample size.

\*\* Wave 1 data.

These results are based on the COVID Collaborative coronavirus vaccine uptake tracking survey conducted Feb. 26-March 8, 2021, among a random national sample of 1,845 adults. Wave 1 results, where used, are from the COVID Collaborative coronavirus vaccine uptake tracking survey conducted Jan. 15-25, 2021, among a random national sample of 1,853 adults.

The studies were produced for the [COVID Collaborative](#) by [Langer Research Associates](#), with sampling and data collection by Ipsos Public Affairs via its online, probability-based KnowledgePanel®, which provides internet access as needed to randomly recruited participants.

Wave 2 results have a margin of sampling error of 6.7 percentage points for the sample of 312 conservative Republicans, 3.0 points for the 1,533 respondents who are not conservative Republicans, 5.3 points for the 503 evangelical Christians, 8.9 points for the 181 white evangelicals, 6.6 points for the 322 racial and ethnic minority evangelicals, 8.2 points for the 210 Black evangelicals, 12.1 points for the 97 Hispanic evangelicals and 3.3 points for the 1,333 non-evangelicals, including design effects.