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AP-NORC poll: Half of Americans wouldn't get a COVID-19 vaccine

By Lauran Neergaard

WASHINGTON — Half of Americans say they wouldn’t get a COVID-19 vaccine even if one was available soon, according to a poll released Thursday.

The nationwide poll from the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that 49% of adults said they wouldn’t get vaccinated if a vaccine were available, while 48% said they would.

The poll found that white adults were more likely to say they would get vaccinated than black and Hispanic adults. It also found that 39% of those younger than 50 said they would get vaccinated, compared with 52% of those older than 50.

In addition, 49% of women said they would get vaccinated compared with 43% of men. And 71% of adults who have health conditions that put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 said they would get vaccinated, compared with 45% of those with no such conditions.

The poll’s release comes as President Donald Trump is calling for a rapid vaccine rollout, saying it could be available by October. But some experts say a vaccine would likely need to be tested on tens of thousands of people before it could be approved.

The poll was conducted May 13 to May 17, among a sample of 1,400 adults ages 18 and older. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.2 percentage points.

In this May 4 photo from the University of Maryland School of Medicine, the first patient enrolled in Pfizer's COVID-19 coronavirus vaccine clinical trial at the University of Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore, receives an injection. (University of Maryland School of Medicine via AP)

"I'm definitely going to get vaccinated," said Grimes, who directs the National Institutes of Health, insists safety is the top priority.

The NIH is creating a master plan for testing the leading COVID-19 vaccine candidates to ensure they are safe and effective. If the vaccine proves effective, the NIH says it will release the first batch of doses to health care workers and first responders.

But safety is also at the forefront of public concerns. The poll found that 55% of adults say they would feel very confident getting vaccinated, while 37% say they would have at least some confidence in a vaccine.

The poll also found that 58% of adults say they would be likely to get vaccinated if their family and friends were getting vaccinated. But 32% say they would be unlikely to get vaccinated.

About a third of adults say they would need to see more information before they would feel confident getting vaccinated, while 25% say they would need to see more information before they would feel likely to get vaccinated.

The poll finds that 58% of adults say they would not be widely tested as to its safety, while 34% say they would be."