



Military Families' Perceptions of the COVID-19 Vaccine

December 2020

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Over half of military family respondents do not plan to receive the vaccine²



A recent [Gallup poll](#) indicated that 58% of Americans would agree to receive a COVID-19 vaccine approved by the Federal Drug Administration, but only 33% of military family respondents in our sample said the same. Fewer military respondents plan to vaccinate their children (18%), 58% reported they will not allow their children to receive the vaccine, and 25% were still undecided.³ When asked what additional information would help them decide, more information about side effects and child clinical trials were the most common themes.

“I’m not sure I want to be a guinea pig, and I really don’t want my kids to be either. I want to know the side effects and what can happen in 20 years. It’s scary deciding whether or not to put something so unknown in your body, but it’s 10X harder choosing for your kids.” – Military Spouse

Respondents' plans to receive the COVID-19 vaccine under emergency use authorization

	Service member (n=57)	Military spouse (n=613)	Total (n=667)
Yes	40%	32%	33%
No	49%	54%	53%
Undecided	11%	14%	14%

Concerns about the vaccine’s development and safety were the top reasons military family respondents chose to opt out

Seven of ten military family respondents foregoing the vaccine reported concerns about the safety, side effects, and efficacy.



‘This virus hasn’t been isolated under a microscope and the tests being used are faulty and lead to false results as they aren’t even created specifically for the virus from the get go. Use your common sense and practice hygiene like you would for any other cold.’ – Military Spouse

Factors influencing respondents’ decision not to vaccinate (n=457)

Distrust of vaccine development process or timeline	71%
Concerns about vaccine safety	70%
Prefer to wait and see if additional side effects arise	58%
Concerns about vaccine efficacy	52%
Personal health reasons (e.g., pregnancy, immunocompromised, etc.)	29%
Don’t believe the coronavirus is a threat to me or my family	28%
Distrust of most or all vaccines	27%
Personal religious beliefs	25%

Veteran Families’ Perceptions of the COVID-19 Vaccine⁴

Nearly half of veteran family respondents do not plan to receive the vaccine⁵

Forty-six percent of veteran family respondents indicated they did not plan to receive the COVID-19 vaccine under emergency use authorization, while another 13% reported being undecided. A greater percentage of veteran family respondents, however,

indicated they were planning to receive the vaccine (41%) than military family respondents (33%). Only one quarter (26%) of veteran family respondents planned for their children to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Respondents’ plans to vaccinate *themselves* against COVID-19

	Veteran family respondents (n=133)
Yes	41%
No	46%
Undecided	13%

Respondents’ plans to vaccinate their children against COVID-19

	Veteran family respondents (n=106)
Yes	26%
No	59%
Undecided	14%

“[It] is not shown to prevent transmission. While there are higher risk people, the risks of the vaccine are significant. I am looking for long term placebo controlled studies. I do not want my family, or service members to be guinea pigs. We have experienced severe side effects first hand that were not properly documented by [the Military Treatment Facility].” – Spouse of a Veteran

Like active-duty families, veteran family respondents’ top concerns about the vaccine related to development and safety

Three quarters (74%) of veteran family respondents who do not intend to receive the vaccine reported concerns about the safety, side effects, and efficacy of the vaccine.



Factors influencing respondents’ decision not to vaccinate (n=65)

Distrust of vaccine development process or timeline	74%
Concerns about vaccine safety	74%
Prefer to wait and see if additional side effects arise	62%
Concerns about vaccine efficacy	55%
Personal health reasons (e.g., pregnancy, immunocompromised, etc.)	32%
Don’t believe the coronavirus is a threat to me or my family	29%
Distrust of most or all vaccines	28%
Personal religious beliefs	25%

¹ 674 active-duty family respondents polled December 10-14, 2020

² Question: "If a COVID-19 vaccine with FDA emergency use authorization became available to you at no cost, would you agree to receive it?"

³ Among respondents with child(ren) under the age of 18

⁴ 136 veteran family respondents polled December 10-14, 2020

⁵ Question: "If a COVID-19 vaccine with FDA emergency use authorization became available to you at no cost, would you agree to receive it?"