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83% Say Measles Vaccine Is Safe for Healthy Children

*No Partisan Differences in Views of
Vaccine Safety*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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83% Say Measles Vaccine Is Safe for Healthy Children

No Partisan Differences in Views of Vaccine Safety

An 83% majority of the public says vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) are safe for healthy children, while about one-in-ten (9%) think such vaccines are not safe. An additional 7% volunteer that they don't know.

Majorities across virtually every demographic and partisan group view the vaccines as safe. However, there are some differences in attitudes, with less educated people and younger adults more likely to say they are not safe.

The new national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Feb. 5-8 among 1,003 adults, finds Republicans (89%) and Democrats (87%) generally agree that such vaccines are safe for children who are healthy.

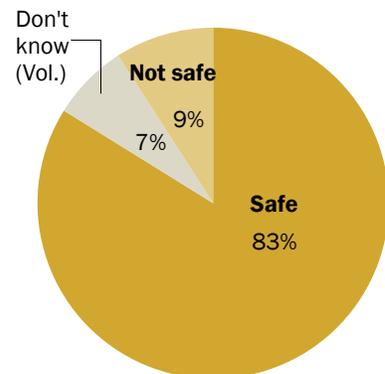
Roughly nine-in-ten college graduates (92%) see vaccines for MMR as safe for healthy children. This view is somewhat less widespread among those with some college experience (85%) or a high school degree or less (77%).

Three-quarters or more in every age group say vaccines for MMR are safe. However, among adults 50 and older, 90% express this view, compared with 77% of adults 18-29 and 81% of those 30-49.

A separate Pew Research Center survey of [opinion among the public and scientists](#) about science and society found widespread support for requiring childhood vaccinations: 68% of the public said children should be required to be vaccinated, while 30% in that survey said parents should be able to decide not to vaccinate their children. [Young adults were more likely to say vaccinations should be a parental choice](#), while there was no significant difference in attitudes based on education.

Large Majority Views Measles Vaccine as Safe

Vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella are ... for healthy children



Survey conducted Feb. 5-8, 2015. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [reported 102 cases of measles in 14 states](#) in the first 30 days of the new year, most of which were linked to an outbreak at Disneyland in California. Last year's 644 cases were the greatest number of cases since measles was eradicated from the U.S. in 2000, according to the CDC.

Parents and non-parents have similar outlooks about the safety of childhood vaccines. Eight-in-ten adults (80%) who are a parent or guardian of a child under 18 say the vaccines are safe for healthy children. Among those who are not parents of children under 18, 85% say the vaccines are safe.

A similar share of women (85%) and men (81%) say vaccines for MMR are safe for healthy children. Whites (87% safe vs. 6% unsafe) express a more positive view than non-whites (76% vs. 17%) about the safety of such vaccines.

Those who paid at least some attention to news about measles and vaccinations were more likely to say vaccines for MMR are safe for healthy children. Among the 80% of the public who followed the story "very," "fairly," or "not too closely," 87% say vaccines for MMR are safe for healthy children, 8% say they are unsafe and 5% don't know.

People who followed the measles outbreak and vaccination debate "not at all closely" (19% of the public) are less likely to say the vaccines are safe. Among that group, just two-thirds (66%) say vaccines for MMR are safe for healthy children, while one-third say they are not safe (16%) or volunteer that they don't know (17%).

Older Adults, College Graduates Most Likely to Say MMR Vaccines Are Safe

Vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella are ... for healthy children

	Safe %	Not safe %	Don't know %
Total	83	9	7=100
Men	81	11	8=100
Women	85	8	7=100
White	87	6	7=100
Non-white	76	17	7=100
18-29	77	15	8=100
30-49	81	10	9=100
50-64	89	6	5=100
65+	91	4	5=100
College grad+	92	5	4=100
Some college	85	8	8=100
HS or less	77	14	9=100
Republican	89	5	6=100
Democrat	87	9	4=100
Independent	83	10	6=100
East	80	12	8=100
Midwest	82	9	8=100
South	81	10	9=100
West	90	7	3=100
<i>Parent/guardian of child under 18?</i>			
Yes	80	13	7=100
No	85	8	7=100

Survey conducted Feb. 5-8, 2015. Whites include only those who are not Hispanic; non-whites include Hispanics. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

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Vaccine Skeptics Cite Variety of Concerns

Those who say that vaccines for such diseases as measles, mumps and rubella are unsafe for healthy children (9% of the public) were asked why they feel this way. They cite a variety of concerns; no single factor predominates.

Some are skeptical about the effectiveness of vaccines, while others question why healthy children should be given the vaccines. Still others say they distrust pharmaceutical companies. Notably, very few respondents specifically raise concerns about vaccines causing autism or other disorders.

Why Do You Think Vaccines Are Unsafe? For the Small Group of Skeptics, No Single Factor Stands Out

Examples of Open-End Responses

"Because you are injecting a virus into a healthy kid, and I don't understand why"
-Woman, age 39

"Because they're injecting you with a disease to prevent a disease"
-Woman, age 35

"Honestly I don't trust pharmaceutical companies" **-Man, age 44**

"One of my children got a very high fever from the immunization"
-Woman, age 57

"They make them sicker, it weakens the immune system, instead of allowing the body to use its own natural antibodies to fight it off" **-Woman, age 22**

"Some children cannot take the vaccines. They cause autism and other problems, muscular problems occasionally, but not very often" **-Man, age 66**

Survey conducted Feb. 5-8, 2015. Example of open-ended responses from those who say vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella are unsafe for healthy children (9% of all respondents; N=80).

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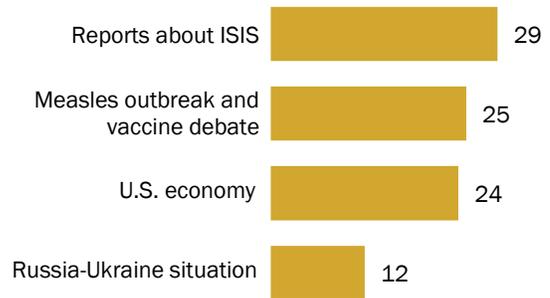
The Week's News

Nearly three-in-ten Americans (29%) followed news about ISIS very closely. Comparable percentages say they very closely followed news about the recent measles outbreak and the debate over childhood vaccines (25%) and U.S. economic news (24%). Just 12% paid very close attention to the situation involving Russia and Ukraine.

Republicans are far more likely than Democrats or independents to say they followed news about ISIS very closely (44% vs. 25% and 27%, respectively). The partisan differences were much smaller in attentiveness to the week's other stories.

ISIS, Measles/Vaccine Debate and Economy Garner Most News Interest

% following each story 'very closely'



Survey conducted Feb. 5-8, 2015.

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ISIS a Much Bigger Story for Republicans than Democrats

% following each story 'very closely' ...

	Total %	Rep %	Dem %	Ind %	R-D Diff
Reports about ISIS	29	44	25	27	+19
Measles outbreak and vaccines debate	25	25	32	20	-7
U.S. economy	24	33	24	22	+9
Russia-Ukraine	12	15	10	12	+5

Survey conducted Feb. 5-8, 2015.

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About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted February 5-8, 2015 among a national sample of 1,003 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in the continental United States (501 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 502 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 300 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and region to parameters from the 2013 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2014 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. The margins of error reported and statistical tests of significance are adjusted to account for the survey's design effect, a measure of how much efficiency is lost from the weighting procedures.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,003	3.6 percentage points
Republican	273	6.8 percentage points
Democrat	264	6.9 percentage points
Independent	350	6.0 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

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**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
FEBRUARY 5-8, 2015 OMNIBUS
FINAL TOPLINE
N=1,003**

ASK ALL:

PEW.1 As I read a list of some stories covered by news organizations this past week, please tell me if you happened to follow each news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. First, **[INSERT ITEM; RANDOMIZE] [IF NECESSARY "Did you follow [ITEM] very closely, fairly closely, not too closely or not at all closely?"]**

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
a. Reports about the condition of the U.S. economy					
February 5-8, 2015	24	32	19	23	2
January 22-25, 2015	26	30	18	24	2
January 8-11, 2015	24	35	17	24	1
December 4-7, 2014	28	31	20	19	1
November 6-9, 2014	31	35	21	12	2
October 16-19, 2014	26	33	22	18	1
September 25-28, 2014	25	33	22	19	1
July 31-August 3, 2014	27	29	23	21	1
June 5-8, 2014	26	28	20	24	1
March 20-23, 2014	30	34	18	17	2
March 6-9, 2014	27	31	19	22	1
February 27-March 2, 2014	27	32	16	24	1
February 6-9, 2014	28	29	20	22	1
January 30-February 2, 2014	29	31	17	23	*
January 9-12, 2014	28	29	19	23	1
January 2-5, 2014	29	31	17	22	1
<u>SEE TREND FOR PREVIOUS YEARS: http://www.people-press.org/files/2015/01/NII-Economy-trend.pdf</u>					
b. The situation involving Russia and Ukraine					
February 5-8, 2015	12	21	26	40	*
September 11-14, 2014	23	30	20	26	1
July 31-August 3, 2014	24	31	20	23	2
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
July 24-27, 2014: <i>The investigation into the downing of a Malaysia Airlines plane in Ukraine</i>	33	35	17	14	1
April 3-6, 2014: <i>The situation involving Russia and Ukraine</i>	26	31	18	23	2
March 20-23, 2014: <i>Russia taking control of Ukraine's Crimea region</i>	30	33	14	21	1
March 6-9, 2014: <i>Russia sending troops into Ukraine's Crimea region in response to a new Ukrainian government</i>	28	31	17	23	1
February 27-March 2, 2014: <i>Political violence and a new government in Ukraine</i>	19	28	21	31	1
c. An outbreak of measles and the debate over childhood vaccines					
February 5-8, 2015	25	33	22	19	1
TRENDS FOR COMPARISON:					
May 15-18, 2014: <i>The lung disease called "MERS" that has spread from the Middle East</i>	13	23	25	38	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	Very closely	Fairly closely	Not too closely	Not at all closely	(VOL.) DK/Ref
December 18-21, 2009: <i>Reports about swine flu and the vaccine</i>	25	32	24	18	0
November 20-23, 2009	29	33	21	17	*
November 13-16, 2009	34	31	21	15	*
November 6-9, 2009	32	35	24	10	*
October 30-November 2, 2009	33	33	22	12	*
October 23-26, 2009	43	30	17	9	*
October 16-19, 2009	32	35	18	14	0
October 9-12, 2009	38	35	16	11	*
September 18-21, 2009: <i>Reports about swine flu and the availability of a vaccine</i>	34	31	25	9	*
September 11-14, 2009	30	36	21	12	*
September 3-6, 2009	26	32	25	17	0
August 28-31, 2009	26	33	22	18	*
May 21-24, 2009: <i>Reports about swine flu in the U.S. and elsewhere</i>	30	39	21	11	*
May 8-11, 2009	34	36	19	11	*
May 1-4, 2009: <i>The outbreak of swine flu in different parts of the world</i>	43	37	15	4	1
April 25-27, 2009: <i>Reports of swine flu in Mexico and the U.S.</i>	25	30	19	26	*
October 19-22, 2007: <i>The growing danger of a drug-resistant staph infection in the U.S.</i>	26	31	19	24	0
June 1-4, 2007: <i>An Atlanta man with a dangerous form of tuberculosis who traveled to Europe against the advice of government health officials</i>	24	34	21	19	2
March, 2006: <i>Outbreaks of bird flu in different parts of the world</i>	21	36	24	19	*
November, 2005: <i>The outbreak of bird flu in Asia and Europe</i>	22	37	25	15	1
Late October, 2005	22	33	24	20	1
Mid-October, 2004: <i>A shortage in the supply of flu vaccines available this year</i>	44	27	14	14	1
January, 2004: <i>Reports about a case of mad cow disease in Washington state</i>	29	42	19	9	1
December, 2003: <i>Early outbreaks of the flu and a national shortage of flu vaccinations</i>	41	33	16	9	1
June, 2003: <i>The lung disease called "SARS" that has spread from Asia</i>	28	44	19	8	1
May, 2003	39	39	15	6	1
September, 2002: <i>Cases of West Nile virus spread by mosquitoes</i>	34	36	21	8	1
Early September, 2001: <i>The spread of mad cow disease in Europe</i>	18	34	27	20	1
March 2001: <i>The outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease among livestock in Europe</i>	22	33	22	22	1
January, 1998: <i>The outbreak of an Asian flu spread by birds or chickens</i>	19	36	25	20	*
d. Reports about the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS					
February 5-8, 2015	29	31	17	21	1
January 22-25, 2015	25	33	21	21	1
December 4-7, 2014	28	29	21	21	1

PEW.1 CONTINUED...

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Fairly closely</u>	<u>Not too closely</u>	<u>Not at all closely</u>	(VOL.) DK/Ref
November 20-23, 2014	31	31	17	20	1
October 16-19, 2014: <i>U.S. airstrikes against ISIS and other Islamic militant groups in Iraq and Syria</i>	29	33	19	19	1
October 2-5, 2014	31	30	21	18	1
September 25-28, 2014: <i>U.S. airstrikes against ISIS and other Islamic militant groups in the Middle East</i>	37	32	16	14	1
September 11-14, 2014: <i>Reports about the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS</i>	37	30	16	17	*
August 14-17, 2014: <i>U.S. airstrikes against an Islamic militant group in Iraq</i>	23	29	21	26	1
June 26-29, 2014: <i>Growing violence and political instability in Iraq</i>	25	29	18	27	1

QUESTIONS PEW.2-3 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

On a different subject ...

ASK ALL:

PEW.4 Thinking about vaccines for diseases such as measles, mumps, and rubella, do you think these vaccines are safe for healthy children or are they not safe for healthy children?

Feb 5-8

2015

83	Safe for healthy children
9	Not safe for healthy children
7	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)

ASK IF NOT SAFE FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN (PEW.4=2) [N=80]:

PEW.5 Just in your own words, why do you feel that such vaccines are not safe for healthy children? **[OPEN-END; ACCEPT UP TO THREE RESPONSES; PROBE ONCE WITH "ANYTHING ELSE"]**

PEW.5 results not shown because of insufficient sample size; used for qualitative purposes only.

ASK ALL:

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Independent</u>	(VOL.) No preference	(VOL.) Other party	(VOL.) DK/Ref	Lean <u>Rep</u>	Lean <u>Dem</u>
February 5-8, 2015	24	26	36	8	1	5	12	15