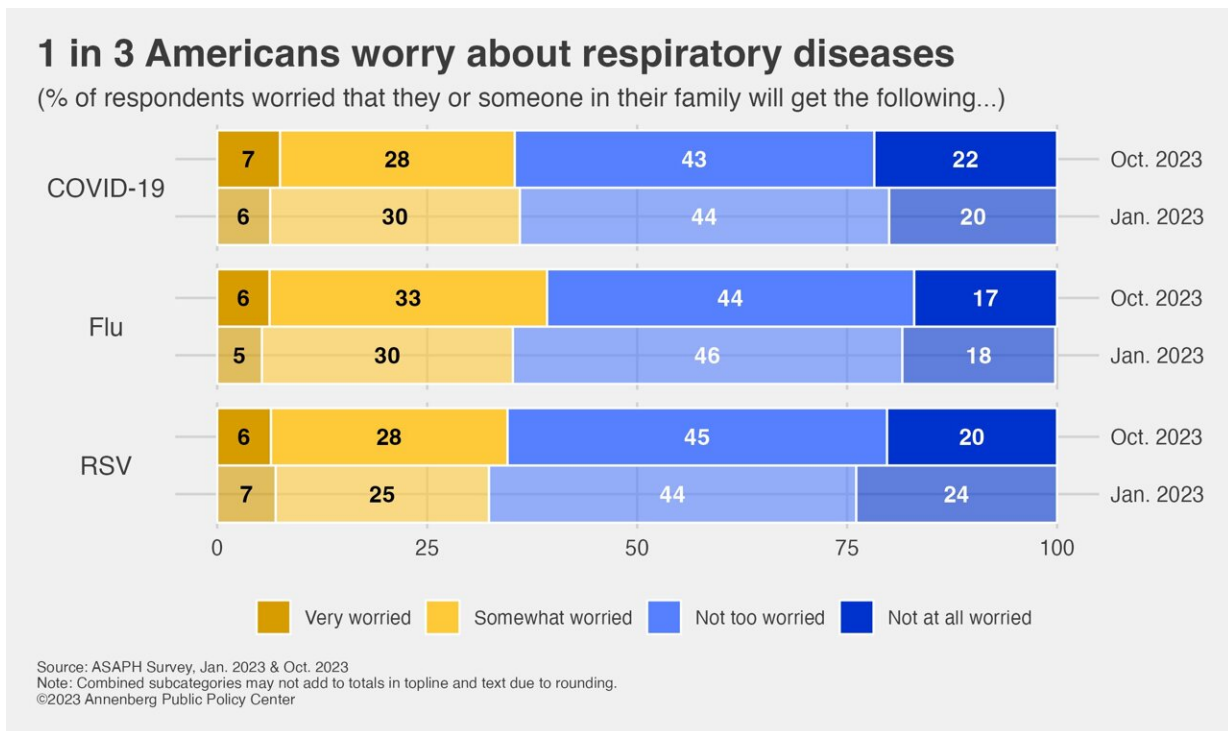


Survey: Over a third of Americans worry about getting the flu, RSV or COVID-19

November 20 2023



Over a third of U.S. adults are worried about getting COVID-19, the flu, or RSV over the next three months. From the Annenberg Public Policy Center's Annenberg Science and Public Health Knowledge surveys in January and October 2023. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

Over a third of American adults are worried that they or someone in

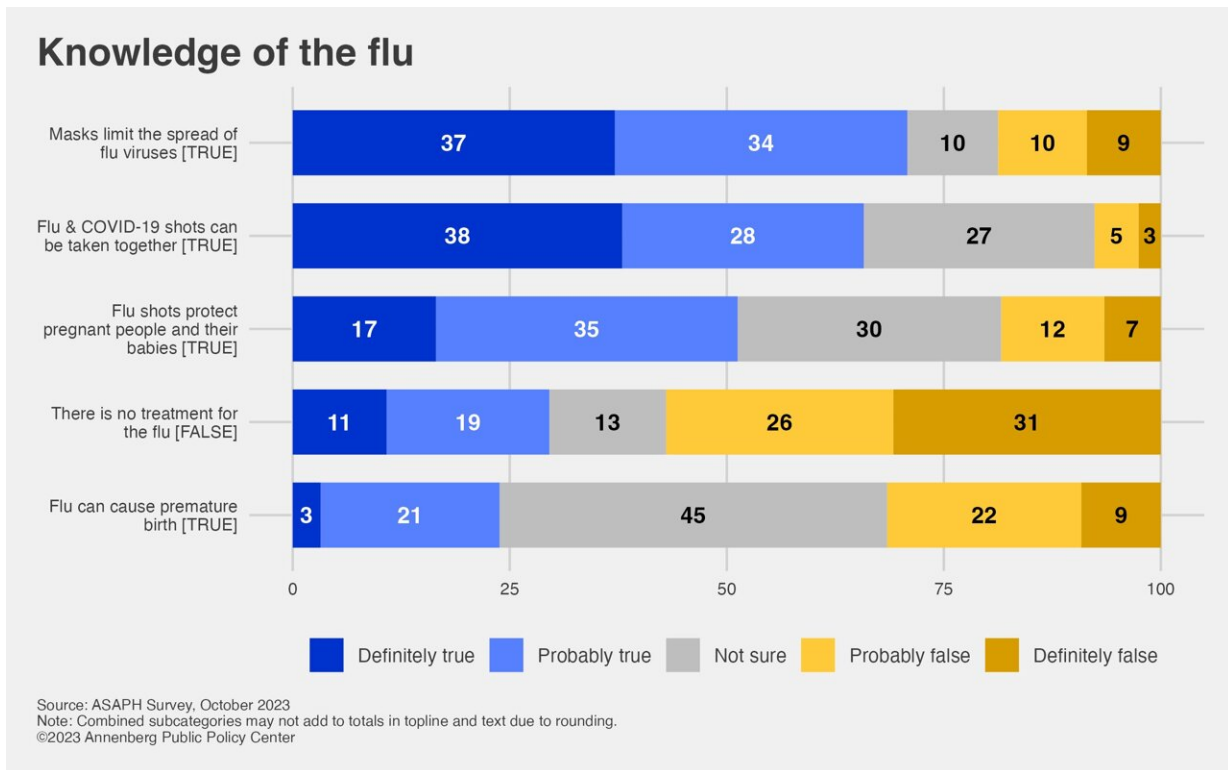
their family will get the seasonal flu, COVID-19, or RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) in the next three months, according to a new health survey from the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania.

Those three viral illnesses made up the "triple-demic" of respiratory illnesses that overwhelmed some [health care facilities](#) last winter. Although RSV typically peaks later in the year, this month, hospitals in parts of Texas are already seeing emergency rooms filled with children with RSV.

RSV is a common respiratory virus that often causes mild, cold-like symptoms but can be serious and require hospitalization among infants and [older adults](#), according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

There's no consensus among U.S. adults on which virus is more likely to cause severe illness: 22% say COVID-19, 13% say RSV, 7% say [seasonal flu](#), and 41% say they are equally likely to cause severe illness. Sixteen percent are not sure.

The Annenberg Science and Public Health Knowledge (ASAPH) [survey](#), which was conducted October 5-12, 2023, with a panel of over 1,500 U.S. adults, finds that Americans generally are more knowledgeable about RSV today than earlier this year. Over the spring and summer, health authorities approved new vaccines against RSV specifically for adults aged 60 and older and for pregnant people as a way to protect their newborns.

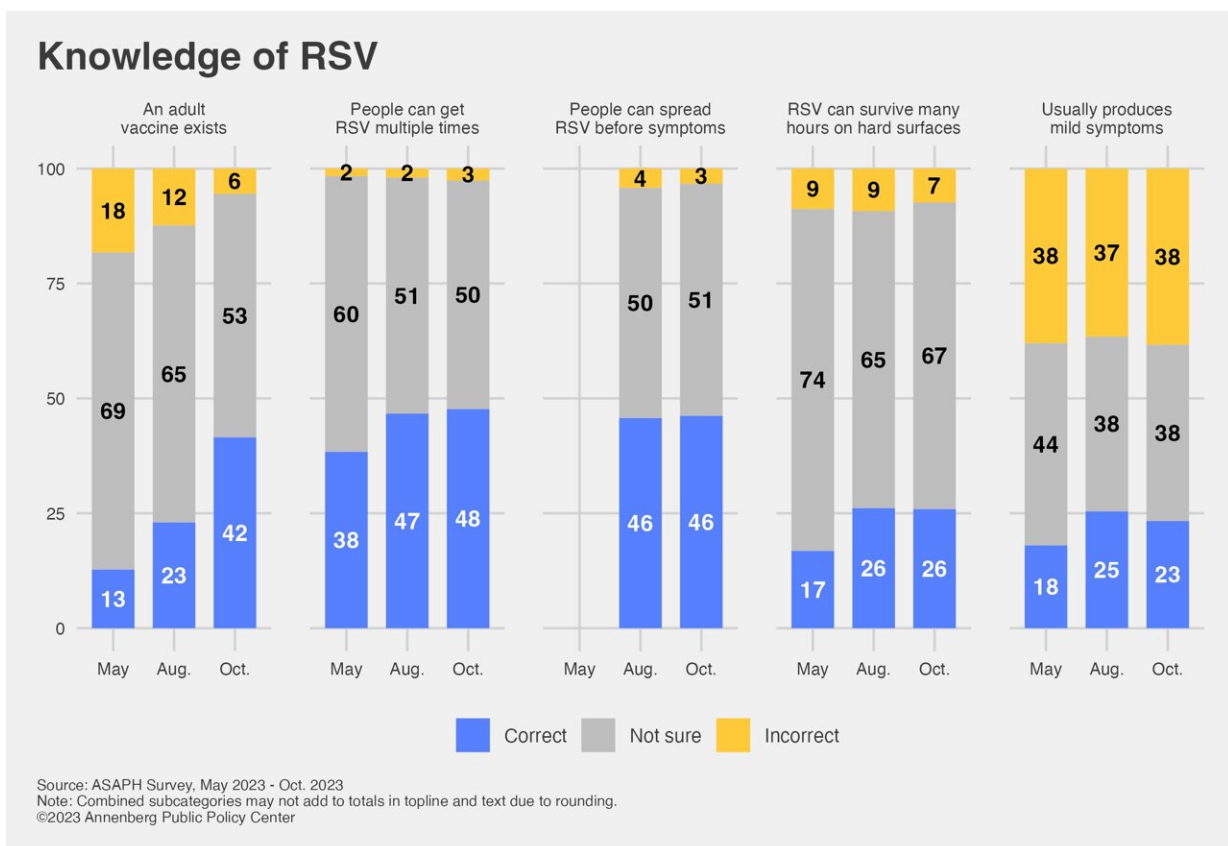


Knowledge of the flu. From the Annenberg Public Policy Center's Annenberg Science and Public Health Knowledge survey Oct. 5-12, 2023. Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

- **RSV concern:** 35% worry that they or someone in their family will get RSV in the next three months, up from 32% in January 2023. About two-thirds (65%) are not worried.
- **COVID-19 concern:** 35% are worried that they or someone in their family will get COVID-19 in the next three months, up from 21% in August 2023 but similar to last winter (36% in January 2023). About two-thirds (65%) are not worried.
- **Flu concern:** 39% are worried that they or someone in their family will contract the seasonal flu in the next three months, statistically unchanged from January 2023. Six in 10 people

(61%) are not worried.

- **Complications:** Nearly 1 in 3 people (31%) say they personally know someone who believes they are suffering long-term health complications as a result of getting infected with COVID-19. One in 6 (17%) say they personally know someone who believes they are suffering long-term health complications as a result of getting infected with COVID-19.
- **Fewer say they've had a flu shot:** At the time the survey was fielded (Oct. 5-12, 2023), 21% said they had received the [flu shot](#) this season, compared with 26% in mid-October 2022 and 38% in the second week of November 2021.



What U.S. adults know about RSV. From the Annenberg Public Policy Center's Annenberg Science and Public Health Knowledge surveys May-Oct 2023.

Credit: Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

"Because getting a flu shot yearly not only helps to protect us from serious infection but also predicts our acceptance of other CDC-recommended vaccines, the drop in reported [flu vaccination](#) we see reflected in our panel is worrisome," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center and director of the survey.

More information: Survey: [cdn.annenbergpublicpolicycente ... SAPH Topline W13.pdf](#)

Provided by Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania

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