



COVID-19 Survey Summary: July 9, 2021

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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Americans' life satisfaction has rebounded in the pandemic recovery, with stress and worry declining to pre-pandemic levels. But vaccinations have stalled and vaccine-hesitant Americans overwhelmingly dismiss the risk of the Delta variant, raising concerns for the road ahead.

Pandemic-related polls released this week also show differences in the aspects of life that have returned to normal. Six in 10 say their social life is fully back, but this falls for other important indicators, including physical and mental health. Other results find that mask use and social distancing continue to decline. Small businesses report gains, but with continued struggles.

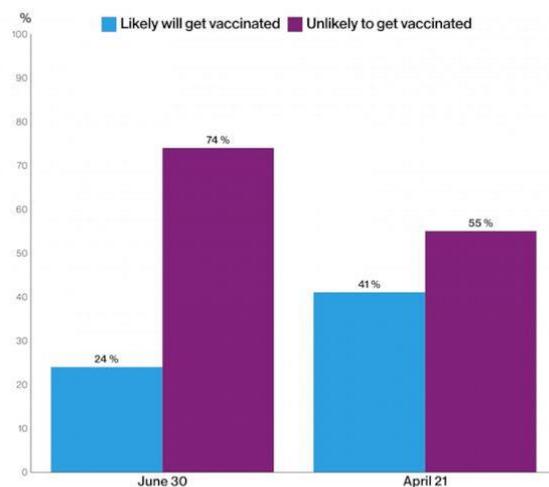
New analyses say the nation's vaccination campaign may have averted more than a quarter of a million deaths, show that childcare closures disproportionately impacted women's employment and suggest that higher mortality among Black COVID-19 patients may be attributable to the hospitals where they received care. In Ohio, a study finds no positive impact of lottery-based vaccine incentives.

Vaccines

The only poll to report on vaccine uptake this week finds continued hesitancy among a substantial share of adults. Twenty-nine percent say they definitely or probably will not get a coronavirus vaccine. Indeed, the share of unvaccinated adults who say they are unlikely to get a shot has grown from 55 percent in April to 74 percent now, suggesting the country may be approaching a ceiling on vaccinations.

Among the willing, six in 10 in this study report having received at least one dose of a vaccine and an additional 9 percent say

Vaccine Intentions Among the Unvaccinated:
Now vs. April



SOURCE: ABC NEWS/WASHINGTON POST POLLS

NEWS

they likely will do so. (The [CDC estimates](#) 67 percent of adults were vaccinated as of July 7.) ([ABC/Post 6/27-6/30](#))

Delta Variant & Risk Assessments

Addressing hesitancy faces challenges. Fewer than half of Americans (45 percent) think U.S. officials accurately are describing the risk of the Delta coronavirus variant, which officials have indicated is more contagious than other strains and therefore more dangerous. Thirty-five percent instead say officials are exaggerating the risk; about two in 10 are unsure.

Specifically among vaccine-acceptant people, 61 percent think officials are describing the risk of the Delta variant accurately. But among the vaccine hesitant, just 10 percent share this view, and instead 73 percent say the risks are being exaggerated – underscoring the difficulty in persuading these individuals to get a shot.

When it comes to personal assessments of risk more broadly, most adults overall – 69 percent – feel they have low (44 percent) or no risk (25 percent) of getting sick from the coronavirus. That includes 79 percent of vaccine-hesitant people, again showing the struggle in encouraging uptake. Modeling has shown that risk perception is a key uptake predictor.

Ninety-three percent of Democrats say they have been vaccinated or definitely or probably will do so, vs. 49 percent of Republicans. (It's 65 percent among independents.) Hesitancy also stands out among conservatives, evangelical white Protestants and less-educated adults. Many vaccine-hesitant groups also are more likely than others to call the risk of the Delta variant exaggerated, and no more apt to see themselves at high risk of infection.

Infection status is another factor. Three-quarters of Americans say they have not had COVID-19; 11 percent report having tested positive for it and 12 percent think they've had it but never tested positive. Among those who never have had it, 72 percent have been vaccinated or likely will do so. This drops to 60 percent of those who know or think they've had it.

Another result suggests progress in countering early high levels of vaccine hesitancy in the Black community: Seventy-nine percent of Black adults say they have gotten a shot or will do so. It's 68 percent among whites and 70 percent among Hispanic people ([ABC/Post 6/27-6/30](#)).

Vaccination Impacts

A new study suggests that vaccinations may have averted as many as 279,000 COVID-19 deaths and 1.25 million hospitalizations in the United States. Given the appearance of more contagious variants, the study suggests that without vaccinations, the country may have seen nearly 4,500 daily deaths from COVID-19 in the spring, eclipsing the winter peak of about 4,000.

If the rollout had been half as fast, the authors estimate there would have been close to 121,000 additional deaths and more than 450,000 additional hospitalizations.

The analysis uses simulation models to compare actual cases, hospitalizations and deaths from Dec. 12, 2020 to July 1, 2021, with one scenario in which no one was vaccinated during that time and another in which daily vaccination rates were cut in half ([Galvani et al., 2021](#)).

Daily Life

Just 18 percent of Americans say they are completely or mostly isolating themselves from non-household members, a pandemic low, down from three-quarters in April 2020. Forty-seven percent made no such self-isolation attempts at all in the past day.

Twenty-one percent avoided small gatherings in the past seven days out of concern about the coronavirus, also a pandemic low. Three in 10 avoided public places such as stores and restaurants, 35 percent avoided traveling by air, bus, subway or train and 39 percent avoided events with large crowds. Each has declined steadily since the beginning of the year.

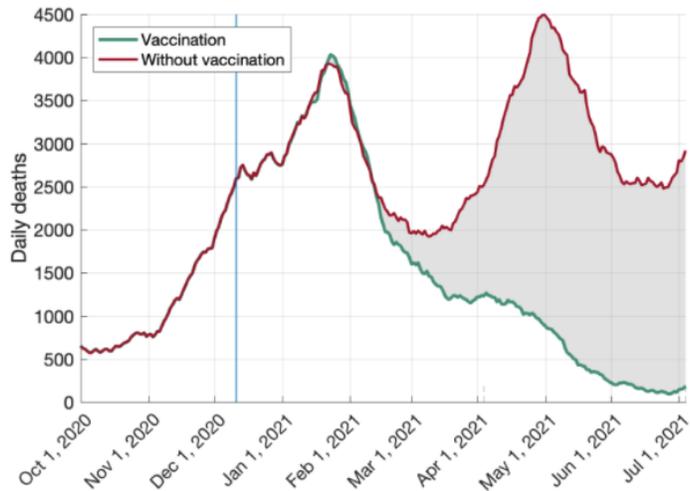
Two-thirds say they've worn a face mask in the previous week, down 11 percentage points since May. Among fully vaccinated Americans, use of a face mask dropped from 90 percent in May to 77 percent now. Among those who do not plan to get vaccinated, mask use dropped from 49 to 38 percent. The drop among those who are partially vaccinated or plan to be vaccinated has been more modest, from 86 to 81 percent.

As noted [last week](#), 15 percent say their life is completely back to normal. Many more say so within specific domains, although broad disruptions remain. Most, 59 percent, say their social life is completely back to normal. It's about half for shopping behaviors (52 percent) and personal finances (49 percent). Fewer than half report a full return to normalcy in other areas – 45 percent in terms of dining-out habits, 43 percent for physical health, 39 percent apiece for mental health and exercise habits and three in 10 for entertainment/recreation and travel.

Half of parents say their parenting and how they raise their children is fully back to normal. Just a third say school is back to normal. And employed people divide on whether or not work is back to normal, 49-51 percent ([Gallup 6/14-6/20](#)).

At the same time, just 16 percent say the community where they live has fully recovered from the pandemic. An additional 44 percent say it has mostly recovered and 22 percent say it's partly there. Fourteen percent think their community still has a long way to go ([ABC/Post 6/27-6/30](#)).

Life Satisfaction



Source: Alison Galvani, Seyed M. Moghadas, and Eric C. Schneider, *Deaths and Hospitalizations Averted by Rapid U.S. Vaccination Rollout* (Commonwealth Fund, July 2021). <https://doi.org/10.26099/wm2j-mz32>

After plunging at the beginning of the pandemic, Americans' life satisfaction has improved to its highest in more than 13 years, with 59 percent considered "thriving." That is up from 46 percent in April 2020, which tied the record low last seen during the Great Recession.

Stress and worry also have eased to pre-COVID levels. In March 2020, the share experiencing stress "a lot of the day yesterday" rose 14 points to 60 percent, and worry rose 20 points to 58 percent; both spikes were far larger than those recorded during the Great Recession. Both now are back to pre-pandemic levels, with 44 percent reporting a lot of stress, essentially steady since January, and 38 percent experiencing worry, steady since April.

Experience of enjoyment also has rebounded, albeit not to pre-pandemic levels. The share of people experiencing joy a lot of the previous day fell from about eight in 10 to 61 percent as the pandemic took hold; it's now climbed back to 73 percent. Reports of boredom have declined from a peak of 47 percent in mid-April 2020 to 26 percent now.

According to parents, children also are experiencing fewer negative emotions than at the start of the pandemic. Sixteen percent say their child experienced worry a lot the previous day, down 10 points from March 2020. Sixteen percent also said their child experienced anger a lot, down 8 points, and 18 percent reported stress, down 6 points. Forty-three percent said their child experienced boredom a lot, down sharply from 65 percent in March 2020 ([Gallup 6/14-6/20](#)).

Consumer Sentiment

Americans' ratings of the buying climate and their personal finances declined for a second week in a row, driving the largest two-week drop this year in a weekly measure of consumer sentiment. After advancing to a pandemic high in late May, these consecutive losses are the first since May 2020 and may reflect rising gasoline prices, now their highest since 2014 ([CCI 7/4](#)).

Small Business Impacts

The climate for small businesses continues to brighten. Just a quarter now report a large negative impact from the pandemic, a new low and half what it was in April 2020.

That said, there's much room for improvement. Just 22 percent say their business has returned to its normal level of operations, although that's the most since the question was first asked in August. Thirty-two percent think it'll take more than six months to get back to normal, a pandemic low, and 7 percent don't think they'll ever get back to normal.

Other indicators also are at their pandemic best:

- Eleven percent say that in the past week their number of paid employees has increased, a numerical high, while 8 percent say it's decreased.
- Similarly, 12 percent say the number of hours worked by paid employees has increased in the past week, again a numerical high, while 9 percent say it's decreased, a low.

- Eighteen percent say their operating revenues have decreased, a numerical low. Thirteen percent report an increase.
- Fourteen percent expect that in the next six months they'll need to obtain financial assistance or additional capital, a pandemic low ([U.S. Census Bureau 6/21-6/27](#)).

Impacts on Education

A newly released poll conducted in March and April investigates challenges related to online learning reported by parents of children age 3-13 with annual household incomes less than \$75,000. Overall, disruptions were reported by 53 percent, including a third who said their child was unable to participate in class or complete schoolwork because of a lack of internet access, 32 percent who had to use a smartphone and 21 percent who missed class or work because they couldn't access a computer.

Disruptions disproportionately impacted the lowest-income families and those headed by Hispanic parents. Roughly two-thirds in each of these groups reported that lack of access to a computer or the internet caused obstacles to school participation, rising to 75 percent of families headed by immigrant Hispanics.

Overall, 82 percent of households in the group studied had broadband internet access at home. That included 72 percent of families headed by immigrant Hispanic parents, compared with 80 percent of white families, 91 percent of families with U.S.-born Hispanic parents and 92 percent of Black families. Many with home broadband access reported insufficient or unreliable service.

There also were positives: Two-thirds of parents in this group said they know more about their child's strengths and weaknesses as a learner than they did before the pandemic, 62 percent know more about what their child is learning in school, 43 percent are more comfortable communicating with their child's teachers and 44 percent are more confident helping their child with schoolwork. Black and Hispanic parents and those with incomes below the federal poverty level reported the greatest gains across all measures.

Additionally, nearly a quarter of parents of 3- to 9-year-olds said they'd spent more time reading with their child during the pandemic than previously, more than double the share who said they were doing so less frequently (10 percent) ([New America/SSRS 3/10-4/18](#)).

Hospital Outcomes

An analysis of Medicare Advantage enrollees hospitalized with COVID-19 through Aug. 22, 2020, found that Black patients had an 11 percent higher rate of mortality or discharge to hospice than white patients after adjusting for sociodemographic and clinical characteristics (e.g., age, sex, income and comorbidities). This difference largely was eliminated after adjusting for the hospital where the care was received, suggesting that increased mortality among Black patients was attributable in large part to the hospitals at which they disproportionately receive care.

The analysis included 44,217 adults with COVID-19 admitted to 1,188 acute care hospitals in 41 states. Only hospitals that admitted at least one Black patient and one white patient with COVID-19 were included ([Asch et al., 2021](#)).

Childcare Facility Closures

A new analysis suggests that childcare facility closures early in the pandemic disproportionately impacted employment among women. Among men and women age 18-64 in households with children, in the 15 states that closed childcare facilities, the likelihood of women being employed was 2.6 points lower than it was among men when the closures were in effect. This rose to 3.3 points in households with children younger than six. Differences were strongest in households with white and Hispanic individuals. In households without children, there was no association of sex with employment status ([Feyman et al., 2021](#)).

National Response

Sixty-two percent approve of the way President Biden is handling the pandemic, steady since April. More broadly, 56 percent are at least somewhat confident that the United States has learned lessons from the pandemic that will help it respond more effectively when another pandemic occurs; however, just 18 percent are very confident in this. Forty-two percent are not so or not at all confident in this ([ABC/Post 6/27-6/30](#)).

State Results

In Ohio, a new analysis that adjusts for an increase in vaccinations given expanded eligibility for 12- to-15-year-olds finds no evidence that a lottery-based incentive introduced May 12 resulted in an increase in adult vaccination rates. In fact, in the month following the introduction of the lottery system, the rate of decline in vaccinations slowed to a lesser extent in Ohio than it did nationally ([Walkey et al., 2021](#)).

In Virginia, a newly released poll from May finds that 74 percent of adults had received a COVID-19 vaccine, up from 63 percent in April. Eight percent were likely to get a shot, down from 21 percent, while 17 percent were not likely to get vaccinated, essentially unchanged. Fewer than one in 10 unvaccinated people said they would be likely to get vaccinated if they were given a cash reward or paid time off from work (both 7 percent) or a gift card (3 percent).

Six in 10 parents of children age 12-15 said they were likely to have their child vaccinated, as did 53 percent of those with children younger than 12. White parents were less apt than Black parents to express willingness to have their child vaccinated. Six in 10 Virginians overall supported colleges and universities requiring students to get vaccinated before they attend.

Two in 10 said they or another adult in their household had lost a job, been placed on furlough or had pay or hours reduced because of COVID-19 in the previous three months. Roughly one in 10 had fallen behind in paying credit card or other bills (10 percent) or had problems paying their medical bills (9 percent). Fewer reported problems affording health insurance coverage (7

percent), paying for food (6 percent) or paying rent or mortgage (5 percent). Racial and ethnic minorities were disproportionately likely to experience many of these economic hardships.

When it comes to providing answers and information to the public about COVID-19, majorities positively rated the effectiveness of Gov. Ralph Northam (61 percent), the state health director (56 percent) and local elected officials (54 percent) ([VCU 5/17-5/28](#)).

International Results

In Chile, 85 percent say they've been vaccinated, including 72 percent who have received both doses. Forty-three percent approve of how the government is handling the coronavirus situation, up 6 points from two weeks ago ([Cadem 6/30-7/1](#)).

In Russia, 54 percent say they are not ready to get vaccinated, down from 62 percent in April; a quarter are ready and 19 percent have gotten a shot, up from 10 percent. Fifty-seven percent are not afraid of contracting the coronavirus, essentially unchanged since February. Among those who are afraid, uptake intention rises – 37 percent are ready to get vaccinated and 20 percent have done so. It's also higher among those who approve of Vladimir Putin.

Among vaccine-hesitant Russians, 41 percent say they will not get a shot under any circumstances and 7 percent say they'll do so only if required. A quarter say they'll be ready to get vaccinated once all tests are completed and vaccine safety is guaranteed.

Two-thirds say vaccination should be voluntary, while 14 percent think it should be mandatory for certain people (e.g., doctors, educators, transport and trade workers) and 19 percent think it should be mandatory for everyone except those who have contraindications. In another question, 58 percent do not support a general vaccination mandate (compared with a poll reported [last week](#) in which half generally supported a mandate specifically in Moscow). Among those who fear infection, 52 percent support compulsory vaccination, as do half of those who approve of Putin ([Levada 6/24-6/30](#)).

In Great Britain, 89 percent of adults have received at least one dose of a vaccine, up from 84 percent last week. Sixty-three percent have received both doses, essentially unchanged. Half have met up indoors with someone not in their household or bubble in the past week, up from 44 percent last week; 56 percent have met up with someone outside, down from 65 percent in the beginning of June ([Office for National Statistics 6/23-6/27](#)).

In the Netherlands, 72 percent of 12- to 18-year-olds probably or definitely want to be vaccinated; 21 percent do not and 8 percent are unsure. Willingness is higher among those age 16 or 17 than 12- to 15-year-olds, 79 vs. 68 percent. Among parents of children age 12-18, two surveys (one in early June and another in mid-June) find majorities willing to have their children vaccinated, though estimates range from 56 to 69 percent. It's slightly higher for older adolescents ([I&O Research 6/4-6/7; 6/16-6/20; 6/22-6/27](#)).

In Mexico, the share of people who think coronavirus infections are declining has dropped from 41 to 33 percent since April, while the number who think they are increasing has inched up to 44

percent. Seventy-seven percent personally know someone who has been infected with COVID-19, a 14-point jump since May to a pandemic high, and 46 percent say a relative has been infected, up 13 points. Sixty-three percent personally know someone who has died, up from 50 percent in May, also to a pandemic high.

Amid increasing cases, 64 percent say it is better to maintain restrictions and isolation measures, while 34 percent think it is better to return to normal activities and reopen businesses, compared with a 50-48 percent split in April. Despite this, the share who say they are wearing a mask at all times has declined steadily from a peak of 66 percent in February to 45 percent now.

Thirty-five percent say they have been vaccinated, up from 13 percent in April. Sixty-two percent evaluate the government's vaccination management positively, up from 43 percent in March. Twelve percent view the pandemic as the country's main problem, essentially unchanged since April, but down sharply from 42 percent in January. Seven in 10 think it will be five months or more until the pandemic is over in Mexico ([El Financiero 6/24-6/25](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).