



COVID-19 Survey Summary: July 23, 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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Public concerns about resuming pre-pandemic activities have increased as coronavirus infections rise across the country. But few are modifying their social behaviors, mask use is at a low and only a quarter of unvaccinated adults say they can be swayed into getting a shot.

New pandemic-related polls also find that an overwhelming majority of vaccinated people are likely to get a booster shot; majorities continue to trust information from their health care provider, the CDC and public health officials; and acceptance of vaccine misinformation has declined since mid-April. About one in 10 adults is sympathetic to vaccine conspiracy theories.

Other analyses quantify the toll of the pandemic. Negative emotions across more than 100 countries reached their highest in recent history in 2020. Coronavirus deaths last year spurred the largest decrease in life expectancy in the United States since World War II. And on the economic front, a third of Americans report a decline in their savings since the pandemic began.

New polls also find that 55 percent of Japanese oppose holding the Olympic Games, with nearly seven in 10 saying they cannot be held safely. Surveys from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Great Britain, the Netherlands and South Korea also are included in this week's summary.

Vaccines

Polls released this week align with [CDC estimates](#), with the coronavirus vaccination rate among adults stalled just shy of seven in 10.

Sixty-nine percent in one survey report having been vaccinated as of mid-July, essentially flat from three weeks ago (68 percent). It's 70 percent in another survey, conducted in June. Per the CDC, 69 percent of adults have gotten at least one dose, unchanged since last week.

About half of the unvaccinated in both new polls completely rule out getting a vaccine. Additionally, another quarter in one poll say it's unlikely they'll get a shot and a quarter in another plan to wait a year or more ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#), [Annenberg 6/2-6/22](#)).

Specifically in the nation’s nursing homes, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services reports that just 58 percent of staff have been vaccinated, compared with 81 percent of residents ([CMS 7/11](#)).

Rising Concerns

After four months of declining concerns, Americans are growing increasingly worried about returning to daily activities amid [rising](#) infections and hospitalizations. Thirty-nine percent think returning to their normal pre-pandemic life would pose a moderate or large risk to their health, up 11 percentage points from its pandemic low three weeks ago. Similarly, 38 percent are extremely or very concerned about the coronavirus outbreak, up from 32 percent in late June.

The spike in infections is attributed to spread of the Delta variant, accounting for [83 percent](#) of new cases in the country. More than nine in 10 Americans have heard of the strain; among them, 46 percent are extremely or very worried about it, up 9 points from late June.

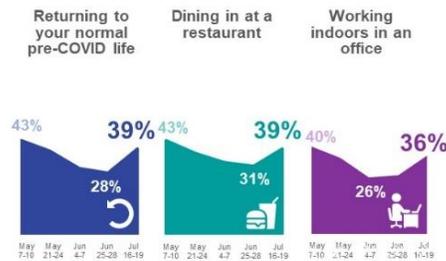
Thirty-six percent now see working indoors in an office as a moderate or large health risk, up 9 points since late June. Other growing concerns including dining in a restaurant (+9 points to 39 percent) and taking a vacation (+8 points to 43 percent). Majorities continue to express health concerns about airplane or travel on mass transit (59 percent), attending a wedding that is at least partially indoors (56 percent) or going to an in-person sporting event (56 percent).

Americans growing more concerned again about COVID-19

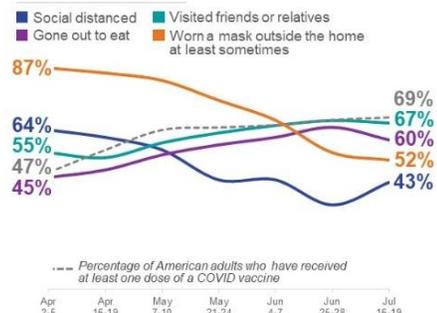
Yet many are unwilling to return to taking additional safety precautions or change their behavior

How much of a risk to your health and well-being do you think the following activities are right now?

% Large risk or Moderate risk



Percentage of Americans who have _____ in the last week



--- Percentage of American adults who have received at least one dose of a COVID vaccine

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Notably, risk perceptions are up primarily among vaccinated Americans. Forty-three percent say returning to pre-pandemic life poses a risk overall, up 14 points since late June, compared with 31 percent among unvaccinated adults, essentially unchanged ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#)).

Coronavirus Precautions

Some behaviors also show change, but others do not. Forty-three percent say they stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible in the past week, up 9 points, essentially matching its level in early June. The share who went out to eat decreased a slight 5 points to 60 percent, returning to its early June level after hitting a pandemic high.

Among other activities, two-thirds visited friends or relatives in the past week, essentially the same as its pandemic high in late June, and six in 10 visited a non-grocery retail store, also steady. While 63 say they maintained a distance of at least six feet from other people at least some of the time, that's continued down from 90 percent in late January to a new low ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#)).

Mask Use

Mask use is at a new low. Twenty-four percent of Americans say they always wore a mask when leaving their home in the past week, down from 74 percent in March to the fewest in data since April 2020. Conversely, 22 percent say they never wore a mask, up from 2 percent in late February to a pandemic high.

Mask use across specific scenarios also has waned:

- Twenty-seven percent say they wear a mask at all times when indoors at public places, down sharply from six in 10 in early May.
- Twenty-two percent say they always wear a mask when outdoors in a crowded space, down 23 points since May to a new low.
- Seventeen percent report masking when attending small, indoor gatherings of people from multiple households, down from 31 percent in early May to match its late-June low.
- Twelve percent always wear a mask when dining outdoors with people from multiple households, down from 25 percent in early May, also to matching its late June low.
- One in 10 say they always wear a mask when spending time outdoors with others, steady since early May ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#)).

Motivators & Deterrents

While most unvaccinated adults are disinclined to get a shot, some say they can be swayed. Twenty-one to 26 percent say they would be motivated if they were able to get the vaccine at their doctor's office, could get paid time off, if a vaccinated friend or family member talked to them about it or if it were available at their workplace or a convenient mobile clinic. About 15 percent are receptive to a community volunteer coming to their house to discuss the vaccine or celebrity or public figure vaccine endorsements ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#)).

In June, given seven potential reasons for not wanting to get vaccinated, six in 10 said the vaccine is too untested and they want more time to see what happens. Forty-four percent cited concern about side effects; 43 percent, distrust in the government; and 36 percent, distrust in the scientists and companies that make the vaccine. Roughly three in 10 said they were not concerned about catching the coronavirus or don't get vaccines generally ([Annenberg 6/2-6/22](#)).

Booster shots

Broad majorities of vaccinated adults say they're likely to get a booster shot. Ninety-three percent say they're likely to do so if their primary care provider recommends it, including 70 percent very likely. Eighty-five percent to 88 percent also say they're apt to get a booster if it's recommended to get one annually like the flu shot, if a new variant spreads, if public health officials recommend it or if COVID-19 cases are on the rise. In each of these cases, at least six in 10 say they're very likely to get an additional jab ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#)).

Coronavirus Information Sources

Sixty-seven percent trust the CDC a great deal or fair amount to provide them with accurate information about the coronavirus, down from a peak of 88 percent in March 2020 though roughly steady since last August. Sixty-four percent trust national public health officials, little changed since July 2020, and 60 percent trust their friends and family members. Fewer place trust in their state government (54 percent), the federal government (53 percent), or Joe Biden (50 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 7/16-7/19](#)).

Another gauge finds that 83 percent in June were at least somewhat confident in their primary health care provider to provide trustworthy information about preventing and treating COVID-19. About three-quarters in this survey had confidence in the FDA and the CDC, while 68 percent said the same of Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institutes of Health. Trust in each was essentially the same as in August 2020 ([Annenberg 6/2-6/22](#)).

Polling in May and June found that information sources about the pandemic included the CDC (used by 38 percent), local TV news (37 percent) and close friends and family (35 percent). About three in 10 used information from local public health or public television or radio, with other sources used by about two in 10 or fewer, including 15 percent who used "contacts on social media" for pandemic information ([USC UAS 5/12-6/22](#)).

Misinformation

In June, 78 percent said it's true that the vaccines are effective at preventing COVID-19, up 4 points since mid-April. In terms of misinformation, three-quarters rejected the claim that the vaccine can infect someone with the coronavirus, up 6 points. Roughly one in 10 expressed at least some belief in other misinformation regarding the vaccines, largely unchanged from mid-April ([Annenberg 6/2-6/22](#)).

Pandemic Origins

Similar to results [last week](#), just more than half of Americans thought the coronavirus was released from a lab in Wuhan, China, either deliberately (20 percent) or accidentally through carelessness or incompetence (33 percent). Thirteen percent thought not, with the rest unsure.

In another question, 35 percent accepted a suggestion that the Chinese government created the coronavirus as a biological weapon, 42 percent thought this was probably or definitely false and 23 percent were unsure ([Annenberg 6/2-6/22](#)).

Changes in Life Expectancy

Newly released provisional data from the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics finds that life expectancy in the United States decreased by 1.5 years in 2020, the largest annual drop since World War II.

Building on analyses [last month](#), the authors confirmed that COVID-19 deaths were the primary contributor to decreased life expectancy, making up 74 percent of the negative change. Unintentional injuries – largely driven by drug overdose deaths, which, as covered [last week](#), were up sharply up last year – contributed 11 percent. Other causes include homicide, diabetes and chronic liver disease, each making up 2 to 3 percent of the negative change.

Decreases in life expectancy were nearly three times as large among Hispanic (-3.0 years) and Black (-2.9 years) people compared with whites (-1.2 years), widening already present racial and ethnic disparities ([Arias et al., 2021](#)).

K-12 Education

In polling in May and June, 84 percent of parents of school-age children were planning to send their child to school in person in the fall, up from 77 percent in late April and May. Fewer, 7 percent, were unsure, down from 14 percent. There was no change in the share who did not plan to send their child to in-person school, steady at 9 percent.

White parents, those with a college degree and higher-income earners were more apt than Black parents, those with no more than a high school diploma and lower-income earners to say they'd send their child back to in-person school ([USC UAS 5/12-6/22](#)).

Health Care Coverage in the Pandemic

In a newly released poll conducted from March to June, 6 percent of adults reported losing employer-based insurance coverage because of job loss in the pandemic. Two-thirds of them were able gain coverage elsewhere. Fifty-four percent of those who lost coverage said they got a new source of coverage in three months or fewer, 18 percent in four to six months, 11 percent in seven to 11 months and 16 percent longer than that.

Thirty-eight percent of adults overall said that over the past year they had trouble paying medical debt, had been contacted by a collection agency about unpaid medical bills, had to alter their life to pay medical bills or were paying off medical debt over time. This included half of those who were uninsured at the time of the survey.

People who were harmed by the pandemic (i.e., had tested positive for COVID-19, lost income or lost employer insurance coverage) had higher rates of medical bill and debt problems than those who were not impacted in these ways ([Commonwealth Fund/SSRS 3/9-6/8](#)).

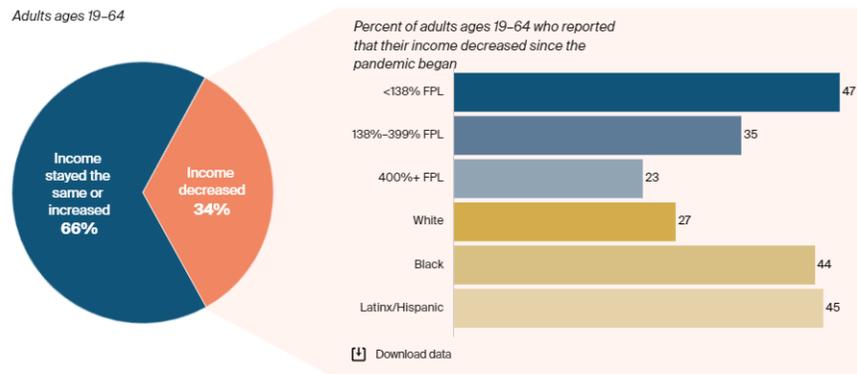
Personal Finances

Twice as many Americans say they have less rather than more money saved now than before the pandemic, 34 vs. 17 percent. (Four in 10 say they have about the same amount.) Americans with household incomes of \$75,000 or more are twice as likely as those earning less than \$30,000 to report having more savings, 27 vs. 13 percent ([Bankrate/SSRS 6/22-6/27](#)). That's likely because nearly half of lower-income adults (those with incomes less than 138 percent of the federal poverty level) reported a loss of employment income because of the pandemic, compared with 23 percent of those in higher-income households (earning four times the FPL).

([Commonwealth Fund/SSRS 3/9-6/8](#))

One-third of adults said that their income fell during the pandemic. Higher rates were found among Black and Latinx/Hispanic adults and people with low income.

? Compared to before the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S. (March 2020), has your household income changed?



Note: FPL = federal poverty level.

Data: Commonwealth Fund Health Care Coverage and COVID-19 Survey, March–June 2021.

Source: Sara R. Collins, Gabriella N. Abouafia, and Munira Z. Gunja, *As the Pandemic Eases, What Is the State of Health Care Coverage and Affordability in the U.S.? Findings from the Commonwealth Fund Health Care Coverage and COVID-19 Survey, March–June 2021* (Commonwealth Fund, July 2021).

A separate poll highlights growing financial pressures – particularly among low-income Americans – as the economy re-emerges. Sixty-four percent rate their personal finances positively, down from 69 percent a month ago. Losses are exclusively among those earning less than \$50,000, down 15 points to 42 percent, compared with essentially no change among higher-income adults, at about 80 percent ([CCI 6/21-7/18](#)).

State Results

In New Hampshire, 54 percent of adults approve of Joe Biden's handling of the pandemic, down slightly since June, while 42 percent disapprove. Just 12 percent of Republicans approve, a low since he took office. That compares with approval from 98 percent of Democrats and 58 percent of independents ([UNH 7/15-7/19](#)).

International Results

An analysis based on [Our World in Data](#) underscores vast gaps in vaccinations globally. As of early July, 51 percent of the population in high-income countries had received at least one dose, vs. 31 percent in upper middle-income countries, 14 percent in lower middle-income countries and just 1 percent in low-income countries.

Regionally, roughly four in 10 had received at least one dose in Europe (40 percent), the Americas (39 percent) and the western Pacific (37 percent). Coverage fell sharply in Southeast Asia (17 percent), the eastern Mediterranean (9 percent) and Africa (2 percent), with gaps likely to grow based on current trends ([KFF 7/21](#)).

Economic attitudes improved internationally in the pandemic emergence this spring, with positive assessments of the economy increasing over a year earlier in 10 of 13 high-income countries. Australia posted the largest increase, with 74 percent of adults rating the economy positively in early May, double its level in 2020 (36 percent). Ratings were lowest, and flat, in the United States (29 percent), Spain (13 percent) and Italy (12 percent) ([Pew 3/12-5/26](#)).

An index tracking stress, worry, physical pain, sadness and anger across more than 100 countries reached a 15-year high in 2020. Worry and stress were reported by four in 10 adults in the day preceding their interview, 29 percent experienced significant physical pain and about a quarter reported sadness and anger. Each, with the exception of physical pain, increased in 2020, extending a decade-long trend. Experiences of stress gained 5 points from 2019 to a high in data since 2006. The Negative Experience Index was highest in countries experiencing economic and political unrest, reaching 53 in Iraq and 51 in Lebanon, both also among the highest in 2019. It was lowest in Taiwan, with an index of 13 ([Gallup 2020-2021](#)).

In other international results, a new poll in Japan finds that more adults oppose than support holding the Olympics by a 22-point margin, 55-33 percent. Sixty-eight percent think the games cannot be held safely and securely and 76 percent say they are glad spectators are not allowed to enter most venues. Still, 56 percent want to watch the events ([Asahi Shimbun 7/17-7/18](#)).

In another Japan poll, 29 percent say they've received a vaccine, up from 12 percent in June. Half plan to get vaccinated immediately once they become eligible, 15 percent would prefer to wait and see and 4 percent rule it out. Overall, 56 percent do not think the country's vaccine rollout is going smoothly, down 4 points since mid-June, while the share who do think the rollout is going well, 27 percent, has held steady. Just 16 percent thought the July 12 decision to reinstate Tokyo's state of emergency will curb the spread of the virus; two-thirds expect no effect, with 18 percent unsure ([Mainichi Shimbun 7/17](#)).

In Chile, 88 percent report having received at least one dose of a vaccine, steady for three weeks straight. Eighty-two percent say they received both shots, up 5 points in the past week. The share who are worried about catching the coronavirus held steady at 55 percent after falling 6 points last week to a low since February. Fifty-one percent approve of the government's handling of the pandemic, up 14 points in a month to the most since March ([Cadem 7/14-7/15](#)).

In South Korea, 37 percent report being vaccinated, up just 4 points in the past month. Approval of the government's handling of the pandemic fell 17 points to 47 percent in the same period. The campaign is focused on older people, and 89 percent of adults in their 60s say they are vaccinated compared with 8 percent of those in their 20s. As cases in the country rise, 70 percent of adults are worried about getting sick from the coronavirus ([Gallup Korea 7/13-7/15](#)).

The Netherlands [lifted](#) many restrictions June 26, allowing all establishments to open their doors and dropping a face mask requirement. With a surge in cases, rules then were [tightened](#) July 9. Fifty-four percent of Dutch adults think it was irresponsible for the government to relax measures. Vaccinated people (77 percent of the population) are far more likely to feel this way than the unvaccinated, 61-17 percent. A month ago, two-thirds overall wanted restrictions to be relaxed; eight in 10 now feel current restrictions should be maintained (37 percent) or tightened further (41 percent). Measures with the most support are closing bars and nightclubs, 70 percent, and cancelling events, 59 percent ([I&O Research, 7/9-7/12](#)).

In Great Britain, nine in 10 say they've received at least one dose of a vaccine, including 70 percent who've gotten both shots, up 5 points in a week. This survey ran the week before the country lifted restrictions July 19; 57 percent were worried about the change. Two-thirds say they'll continue wearing a face mask in shops and on transit, compared with nine in 10 currently doing so. Fifty-four percent say they're most looking forward to a summer vacation abroad once they are able, rising to 62 percent of those younger than 30. Sixty-two percent overall say they always or often maintain social distance from others outside their household or bubble, down from 85 percent in April ([Office for National Statistics 7/7-7/11](#)).

In Brazil, 74 percent are following the parliamentary inquiry into the federal government's management of the pandemic, including reported irregularities in the purchase of the Covaxin vaccine. That's up from 67 percent in late May ([PoderData 7/7-7/9](#)).

In Canada, 53 percent rate Justin Trudeau's Liberal government positively (7-10 on an 11-point scale) for its response to the pandemic, double the share (26 percent) who rate it negatively (0-3). Two in 10 offer middling ratings (4-6) ([Nanos 6/30-7/5](#)).

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

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