



COVID-19 Survey Summary: September 3, 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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As cases, hospitalizations and deaths hold at levels unseen since winter, seven in 10 Americans say the coronavirus situation is worsening, six in 10 think returning to their normal pre-coronavirus life poses a risk and four in 10 are worried about personally catching the virus, each up sharply since June. Most think pandemic disruptions will continue into 2022.

Vaccination attitudes may be on the move. Two in 10 adults say they're unlikely to get a coronavirus vaccine, a new low. The share of parents unlikely to get their child vaccinated has fallen to about three in 10 in the past two weeks. And employer-led vaccine mandates may sway as many as four in 10 unvaccinated adults to get a shot.

Other pandemic-related polls this week find a modest rise in the number of Americans taking precautions against the virus. Two-thirds support state- or local government-led mask mandates and seven in 10 in one survey support mask requirements in K-12 schools.

Other studies investigate internet use during the pandemic, the educational and emotional toll of remote learning and changes in work preferences among parents. One details the spread of the Delta variant in an elementary school setting and another finds evidence of increased risk of hospitalization from the Delta strain in England.

We include state-level polls from California and Virginia, as well as international surveys from Chile, Great Britain, Japan, Mexico and Turkey.

Vaccines

The [CDC estimates](#) that 75 percent of adults have received the vaccine, up one percentage over the week.

In the only poll estimating vaccine uptake this week, 72 percent say they've received a shot and 8 percent say they're likely to do so. The net is its highest in data since August 2020 and up 4 points since mid-July. Fourteen percent say they're very unlikely to get the shot, down from about two in 10 this spring to a new low ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).

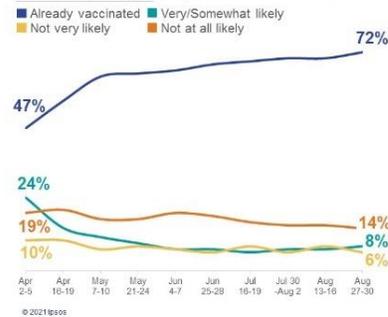
As the school year begins, parents' resistance to getting their child vaccinated has eased. Sixty percent of parents of 16- to 18-year-olds say their child has received at least one dose, up 9 points from its June/July average. It's 47 percent among parents of children age 12-15, up 8 points. These align with [CDC estimates](#), 58 percent for teens 16-17, up 1 point in a week, and 50 percent for 12- to 15-year-olds, up 2 points.

In one poll, 33 percent of parents say they do not intend to get their 16- to 18-year-old vaccinated, down 8 points since June/July; 42 percent say the same for their 12- to 15-year-old, down 5 points ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)). In another, 31 percent of parents of children under 18 say they're unlikely to get their child vaccinated when it becomes available for their age group, down 12 points in two weeks to a low ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).

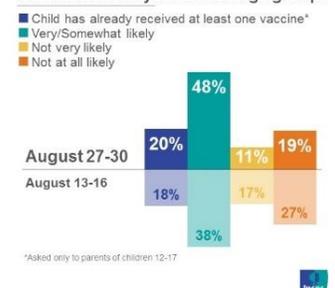
Hard opposition to getting COVID-19 vaccine falls to new low

The number of parents likely to get their children vaccinated has surged in the last two weeks

How likely are you to get the COVID-19 vaccine?



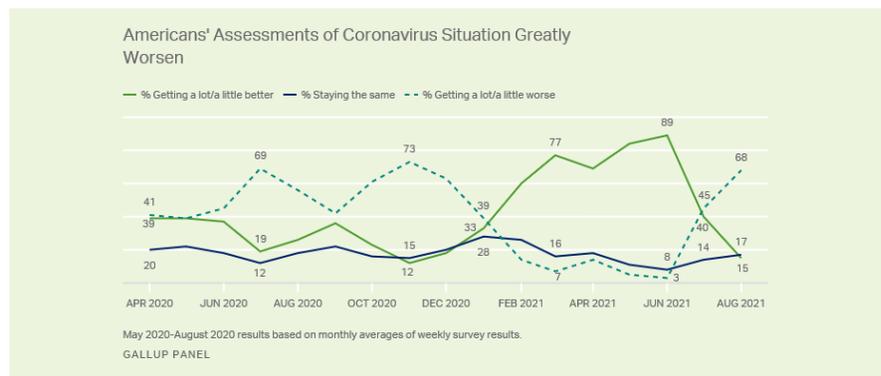
How likely are you to have your child get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it's available for your child's age group?



Concerns & Outlooks

Nearly seven in 10 Americans say the coronavirus situation is getting worse, up dramatically from 3 percent in June. Just 15 percent think the situation is getting better; 17 percent say it's staying the same. This level of pessimism has been surpassed only twice, in July 2020 and November 2020 ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).

Seventy-eight percent are at least somewhat concerned about the pandemic. Half are highly concerned, up 4 points in two weeks and 18 points from its low in late June.



Six in 10 think that returning to their normal pre-coronavirus life poses at least a moderate risk, up 7 points since mid-August and double the number in late June ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)). Four in 10 are worried about personally catching the coronavirus, up 22 points since June to the most since February ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).

The perceived risk of various activities has continued to grow. Seventy-two percent see traveling on an airplane or mass transit as at least a moderate risk to their health, up from 54 percent in late June. Fifty-three percent say the same about attending in-person gatherings, up from about three in 10; as many see dining in a restaurant as a risk, up from 31 percent; and 48 percent think shopping at retail stores is a risk, up from 26 percent in early June ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).

Looking ahead, 63 percent expect societal and economic disruptions caused by the pandemic to continue into next year, up 21 points since July and 46 points since June ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).

Coronavirus Precautions

As concerns grow, two polls this week find modest increases in the number of people taking precautions against the virus. Both ask about behaviors taken within the past week – diverging from a [previously covered](#) August poll that asks about behaviors more generally, which found no change in precautionary activities since July.

- Half say they've social distanced (i.e., stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible), up a slight 3 points this week and 16 points from its low in late June ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).
- In another distancing measure, 24 percent say they isolated from others, with very little or no contact with people outside their home, up 6 points from June to the most since April ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).
- Sixty-nine percent say they've worn a mask when outside the home, up 9 points since July ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)). In another survey, as many (also 69 percent) report having worn a mask at some or all times when leaving the house, up 6 points in two weeks and 17 points since mid-July ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).
- A quarter have avoided small gatherings with family or friends because of concerns over the virus, up 5 points since July ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)). On the flipside, 56 percent visited friends or relatives in the past week, down a slight 3 points in two weeks and 12 points since late June ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).
- Thirty-two percent have avoided going to public places such as stores or restaurants because of the coronavirus, up 5 points since July ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)). Conversely, 56 percent say they've gone out to eat in the past seven days, steady since mid-August but down from 65 percent in late June ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).
- Among other results, half say they've avoided large crowds, up 9 points in a month, and four in 10 have avoided traveling by plane, bus, subway or train because of the virus, up 4 points ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).

While precautionary behaviors have increased, they remain below levels before vaccinations were available widely. Likewise, the numbers engaging in in-person social behaviors are far higher than earlier in the pandemic ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#) and [Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).

Vaccine Mandates & Motivators

Employed adults support a vaccine mandate in their place of work by 57-42 percent. Far fewer, 19 percent, say their employer currently has a vaccine requirement in place, up a slight 3 points in two weeks. Four in 10 adults overall say their state or local government has required government employees to be vaccinated, up 6 points since mid-August.

Mandates may have the potential to sway some unvaccinated adults; 43 percent say they're likely to get vaccinated if their employer instituted a mandate, up 10 points in a month.

Among other potential motivators, three in 10 unvaccinated adults say they'd get vaccinated if it were required to travel by airplane or train. And 35 percent say formal approval of the vaccines by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration makes them more likely to get the vaccine ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).

Precautions in K-12 Schools

Seven in 10 adults support their local school district requiring everyone in schools, including teachers, students and administrators, to wear masks; half strongly support this. Results are similar among parents of school-age children ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).

A survey just among K-12 parents finds lower support for mask mandates specifically for students, regardless of their vaccination status – 48 percent. Eleven percent favor a mandate only for unvaccinated students, while four in 10 say no students should be required to wear a mask. Results are similar for teachers and staff.

Despite widespread circulation of the Delta variant, 77 percent of parents expect their child in K-12 to return to a pre-pandemic school schedule ([Gallup 8/16-8/22](#)).

Government Action

Two-thirds of Americans support their state or local government requiring masks to be worn in all public places. Fewer, 40 percent, say they're currently under such a mandate – up from a third two weeks ago.

Two-thirds also oppose state laws that would prohibit local governments from creating mask mandates, moves implemented by several Republican governors. Three-quarters oppose their state government withholding funding from school districts or local governments that implement mask requirements ([Axios-Ipsos 8/27-8/30](#)).

Sixty-four percent in one poll approve of Joe Biden's response to the pandemic, essentially unchanged from a month ago. That ranges from 91 percent of Democrats to 65 percent of independents and 32 percent of Republicans ([ABC-Ipsos 8/27-8/28](#)). Other surveys [last week](#) had Biden's overall pandemic approval about 10 points lower.

Educational Impacts

In a newly released, pre-surge poll conducted in late May to June, most parents of school-age children reported negative impacts of the pandemic, with results little changed from November 2020. Fifty-seven percent said their child learned less during the school year than they would have had there not been a pandemic, similar to the 60 percent who said so previously.

Half said measures their child’s school was taking to limit the spread of the virus were negatively impacting their child’s social relationships. Four in 10 apiece said the same for their child’s emotional wellbeing, physical fitness and academic knowledge and skills. Nonetheless, 78 percent were satisfied with the instructions and activities their child’s school provided ([Education Next 5/28-6/21](#)).

In newly published data from mid-April, 93 percent of parents with school-age children said their child had at least some online instruction since the pandemic began. Among them, 62 percent thought online instruction had gone well for their child and 70 percent reported having an easy experience helping them with online instruction. Rural and lower-income parents were more apt than others to report difficulty helping their child use technology for school.

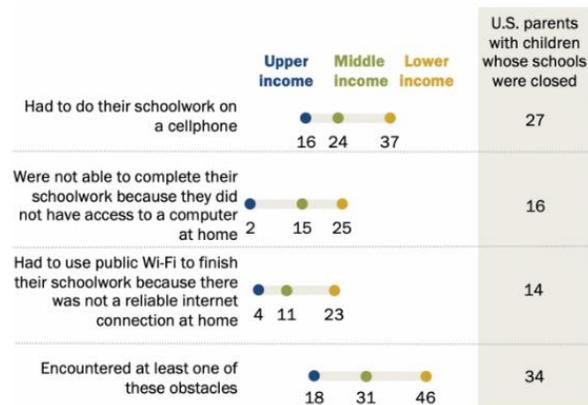
A third of parents whose children’s schools were closed because of the pandemic said their child experienced technology-related challenges because of a lack of computers or reliable internet, again with lower-income adults disproportionately affected.

Half of all adults said that given the pandemic, schools had a responsibility to provide all students with computers to help them complete schoolwork at home, up 12 points from April 2020. An additional 37 percent said schools should provide computers, but only for students whose families cannot afford it, while 13 percent saw no such responsibility, down 6 points. Three-quarters of Republicans and more than nine in 10 Democrats said schools had a responsibility to provide computers to at least some students ([Pew 4/12-4/18](#)).

In a survey conducted from March to June, 39 percent of parents whose child attended school remotely at some point noted attention problems, 33 percent cited less social interaction and just more than two in 10 reported lower teacher interaction or too much screen time. Academics were a lower-level concern, with roughly one in 10 apiece saying low academic motivation or falling behind academically was a challenge for their child ([MOSAIC-SSRS 3/11-6/13](#)).

Parents with lower incomes more likely than parents with higher incomes to say their children have faced tech-related schoolwork challenges in the pandemic

Among parents with children whose K-12 schools were closed at some point due to the coronavirus outbreak, % who say that, since the beginning of the outbreak in February 2020, their children ever ...



Note: "Parents with children whose (K-12) schools were closed" refers to those who said they were the parent or guardian of any children who were enrolled in elementary, middle or high school and who lived in their household; and who said that their children's schools closed due to the coronavirus outbreak at any point since the beginning of the outbreak in February 2020. Family income tiers are based on adjusted 2019 earnings. Those who did not give an answer are not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 12-18, 2021.

"The Internet and the Pandemic"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Internet Use in the Pandemic

Again in newly released data from last April, nine in 10 Americans said that the internet was important for them personally during the pandemic, including 58 percent who said it was essential, up a slight 5 points from April 2020.

Four in 10 said they used digital technology or the internet in new or different ways compared with before the pandemic. Twenty-nine percent of broadband users said they did something to improve their internet connection at home since the outbreak began.

In terms of specific activities, 81 percent of adults said they'd talked with someone via video call since the beginning of the pandemic. Only 17 percent say their interactions either online or by telephone were as good as in-person contact. Four in 10 of those who'd been on video calls said they often or sometimes felt fatigued by them.

Among parents of school-age children, 72 percent said their child was spending more time in front of screens compared with before the pandemic. A third of adults overall said they'd tried to cut back on screen time at some point, rising to half of those age 18-29 ([Pew 4/12-4/18](#)).

Work Preferences Among Parents

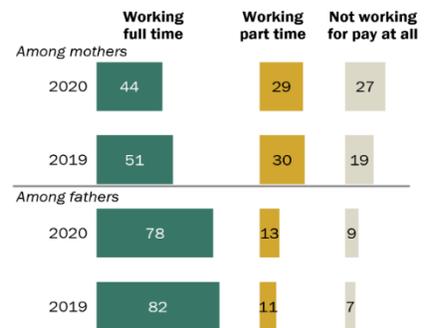
A comparison of work preferences in October 2020 vs. June 2019 finds an increase in the share of mothers who preferred not to work for pay. Forty-four percent said working full time was the best option for them personally at that time in their life, down from 51 percent. Twenty-seven percent said not working for pay at all was the best arrangement, up from 19 percent, with the largest increase among those who were not then employed. There were no changes in work preferences among fathers, with 78 percent saying working full time was the best option for them personally ([Pew 10/13/20-10/19/20; 6/25/19-7/8/19](#)).

Spread of COVID-19 in Schools

Analysis of a Delta variant outbreak last spring at an elementary school in Marin County, California, underscores the importance of safety protocols as schools return to in-person learning. An unvaccinated teacher worked for two days while symptomatic before being tested for the virus; during that time, the teacher read aloud to students while indoors and unmasked, despite a mask mandate. Twenty-two of the teacher's 24 students – all ineligible for vaccination due to age – were tested; 12 tested positive. Proximity to the teacher was a factor. Eight of 10 students in the first two rows tested positive, vs. four of 14 in the three back rows. Fourteen additional cases were linked to the outbreak, including six of 18 students in a separate classroom and eight parents and siblings of those in the two classes ([CDC 5/23-6/12](#)).

Amid pandemic, views of optimal work arrangements shifted among U.S. mothers, but not among fathers

% saying that, at this point in their life, _____ would be best for them personally



Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown. Parents are those with children under age 18 in their household. Source: Surveys of U.S. adults conducted Oct. 13-19, 2020, and June 25-July 8, 2019.

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A CDC report documents the rapid spread of COVID-19 at a Chicago university after students returned from spring break, with the majority of cases linked to unvaccinated students who had traveled. A total of 158 undergraduate students tested positive for COVID-19 in the months after spring break. Sequencing of 104 of those cases found that 64 percent were caused by the B.1.1.222 variant, a strain commonly found in Mexico that was rare in Chicago at the time, showing that rapid spread can occur from a single introduction of cases. The authors stress the importance of testing, encouraging mask use and discouraging unvaccinated students from traveling to reduce the spread of the virus ([CDC 3/15-5/3](#)).

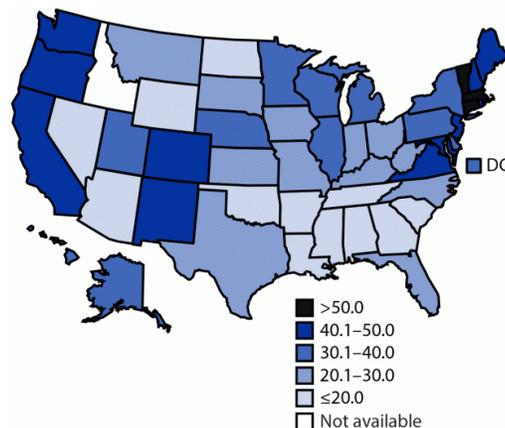
Delta Variant and Hospitalizations

A large-scale study of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in England from March 29 to May 23 adds to continued effectiveness. Overall evidence of heightened risk from the Delta variant and the coronavirus vaccines', patients infected with the Delta variant had more than twice the risk of hospitalization compared with those infected with the Alpha variant. Results were similar among unvaccinated individuals specifically. The share of vaccinated adults hospitalized for COVID-19 was low, resulting in no significant difference in relative hospitalization risk between the Alpha and Delta variants for those who'd been vaccinated ([The Lancet 3/28-5/23](#)).

State Results

A CDC report finds vaccine uptake among adolescents varying widely by state. As of July 31, 42 percent of 12- to 17-year-olds had received at least one dose of a vaccine, ranging from 51 percent of teens age 16-17 to 36 percent of those 12-13. States with the highest rates of uptake among adolescents included Vermont (70 percent), Massachusetts (66 percent), Hawaii (64 percent) and Connecticut (62 percent). Those with the lowest were Wyoming and Mississippi (each at 20 percent), Alabama (21 percent), Louisiana (22 percent) and Tennessee (24 percent). (Idaho was excluded from the analysis because of the state's data-sharing restrictions.) ([CDC 12/14/20-7/31/21](#))

FIGURE. Percentage of adolescents aged 12–17 years who completed the COVID-19 vaccination series*¹ — United States,[§] December 14, 2020–July 31, 2021



In Virginia, the coronavirus tops the list of topics registered voters would like to see candidates in the upcoming gubernatorial election talk about. It was cited by 23 percent, followed by education and public schools (18 percent), the economy (16 percent), jobs (14 percent) and health care (13 percent). Voters trust Democrat Terry McAuliffe to handle the pandemic more than his opponent Glenn Younkin by 38-26 percent, with two in 10 volunteering that they trust both equally ([Monmouth 8/24-8/29](#)).

In California, 21 percent pick the coronavirus as the top issue facing the state, surpassing jobs and the economy, homelessness, housing costs and problems with elected officials (selected by 7 to 12 percent). Eight in 10 assess the state's vaccine rollout positively, including 28 percent who say it's doing an excellent job distributing vaccines to Californians. Seventy-seven percent of

adults say they've received at least one dose of the vaccine and 7 percent say they'll definitely or probably do so, surpassing estimates of vaccine acceptance nationally. Sixty-one percent favor requiring proof of vaccination to enter large gatherings or indoor spaces ([PPIC 8/20-8/29](#)).

International Results

In Japan, where coronavirus [deaths](#) are up sharply and daily new cases hit a pandemic high Aug. 25, seven in 10 are worried about the country's medical system collapsing. Disapproval of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga's cabinet hit a record high, 66 percent. Sixty-four percent say the government's state of emergency has not been effective and 70 percent say they don't appreciate the government's coronavirus countermeasures. Forty-six percent blame the government for the spread of the coronavirus, a third blame people who don't follow guidelines and 21 percent say "it can't be helped as it is a new virus strain." Seven in 10 have received at least one dose of a vaccine and 59 percent have received two doses ([Mainichi Shimbun 8/28](#)).

In Mexico, where deaths have [increased](#) by 20 percent the past two weeks, more than half say the government has done little or nothing to help people like them during the pandemic. Approval of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has slipped 4 points in a month to 56 percent; fewer, 42 percent, disapprove ([El Financiero 8/27-8/28](#)).

In Chile, nine in 10 adults report having been vaccinated, 5 percent have gotten a booster shot and daily new cases continue to [fall](#), nearly matching lows last seen in April and March 2020. Approval of the government's handling of the pandemic is at a high of 65 percent. Even so, the country is essentially split on expectations for the future. About half think the pandemic is being controlled by vaccinations and that any rise in cases will not result in new restrictions; 45 percent think a new wave of infections will happen and the country will be forced to tighten restrictions. Half are worried about the coronavirus generally and 55 percent are worried specifically about the Delta variant ([Cadem 8/25-8/27](#)).

In Great Britain, even as restrictions have eased, nine in 10 adults wear face coverings outside the home and 45 percent always or often report maintaining social distance from others. About half are worried about the effect of the coronavirus on their lives right now, down from 57 percent in July. Just 16 percent expect life to return to normal in the next six months. Eighty-five percent have gotten two doses of a vaccine and 94 percent of them would get a booster shot if offered, including 86 percent very likely to do so ([Office for National Statistics 8/18-8/22](#)).

In an early August survey, seven in 10 Turkish adults said unvaccinated people put others around them in danger. Six in 10 apiece supported mandatory vaccination and said those who are unvaccinated should not be able to enter public places such as cafes or restaurants. At the same time, 57 percent expressed concern about vaccine side effects ([Istanbul Economic Research 8/6-8/10](#)).

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

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