



COVID-19 Survey Summary: January 14, 2022

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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With cases soaring across the United States, public concern about the coronavirus continues to rise and risk perceptions have increased sharply. Booster uptake has grown and actions such as mask wearing, social distancing and self-quarantining are their highest since last spring.

Few unvaccinated adults, however, say the Omicron surge changes their mind.

One in 10 vaccinated people suspect they had a breakthrough case; about half of them say testing confirmed it. Two in 10 adults overall report trouble getting a coronavirus test in the past few weeks. While most say they understand the CDC's quarantine guidelines at least somewhat well, plans to self-quarantine if infected vary in duration, indicating no generally accepted standard.

Seven in 10 parents think it's safe for students to return to school in person, even as concerns about the risks have risen. Most adults overall oppose both vaccine requirements in public places and shifting schools back to remote learning. Polls differ in their assessments of Joe Biden's handling of the pandemic.

Three in 10 say the pandemic has caused strained relationships and one in 10 is drinking more compared with pre-pandemic. In longer-term trends, movie theater attendance remains well below its pre-pandemic levels, while charitable donations have rebounded from a pandemic dip.

State surveys in Virginia and Texas and international polls from Brazil, Canada, Chile, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, the Philippines and South Korea also are included in this week's summary.

Concerns & Outlooks

The United States averaged about [780,000](#) new daily cases in the past week, triple last winter's peak, according to the CDC. Deaths are up more than 40 percent this month, averaging about [1,700](#) per day the past week, compared with a peak of about 1,900 at the height of the Delta surge.

Twenty-one percent of Americans are extremely concerned about the coronavirus in general, up 7 percentage points since mid-December. An additional 28 percent are very concerned, another 28 percent somewhat concerned ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). A separate gauge finds 54 percent very or moderately concerned about the virus, up 12 points since mid-November ([CDC 12/26-12/31](#)).

Twenty-two percent feel they're at a greater risk of catching the virus now than in April 2020, up sharply from 6 percent in mid-December; the share who think they're at a lower risk is down 22 points, to 26 percent. These shifts have occurred primarily among vaccinated adults.

Pessimism also has risen. Fifty-one percent think it'll be more than a year before they'll be able to return to their normal pre-coronavirus life (35 percent) or say this never will happen (17 percent), up from 39 percent in early November and 16 percent in early June ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). In another survey (with a different scale), 65 percent of registered voters say it will take at least a few years for the pandemic to end in the United States, if ever, up from 44 percent a year ago ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#)). Asked differently, 81 percent expect the United States will have to live with the coronavirus "as the new normal" ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)).

Risk Perceptions

Fifty-eight percent of adults see returning to their normal pre-pandemic life as a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being, up 14 points since late November. Risk perceptions have risen sharply across a range of specific activities:

- Three-quarters see traveling on an airplane or mass transit as a large or moderate risk, up from 58 percent in early November.
- Sixty-three percent think attending an in-person gathering of friends and family outside their household is risky, compared with 38 percent two months ago.
- Fifty-eight percent see dining in at a restaurant as risky, up from 39 percent.
- Fifty-four percent say shopping at retail stores is a risk to their health, up from 36 percent ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Social Distancing, Masking & Other Precautionary Behaviors

As risk perceptions grow, more Americans report taking precautionary measures. Nearly three-quarters say they wear a mask at least some of the time when leaving home, including 44 percent who always do so, up 6 points in a month. Fifty-seven percent say they've social distanced (i.e., stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible) within the past week, up from 44 percent in late November to the most since April.

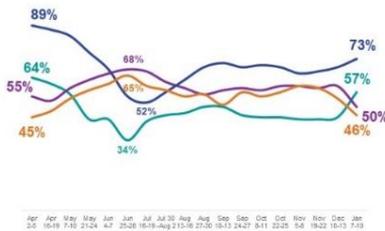
Fewer say they've visited friends or relatives within the past week (-10 points in a month to 50 percent), gone out to eat (-14 points since early November to 46 percent), or visited a retail store (-12 points in a month to 52 percent). Each has returned to levels not seen since spring ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Omicron has Americans taking precautions, feeling at risk again

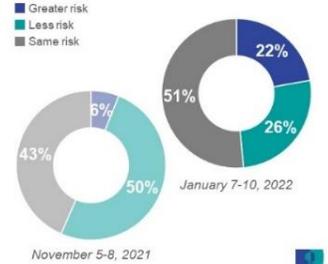
Percentages of Americans wearing masks and social distancing has climbed in recent weeks while fewer are going out in public

Percentage of Americans who have _____ in the past week

- Worn a mask outside the home at least sometimes
- Visited friends or relatives
- Gone out to eat
- Social distanced



Do you personally feel like you have a greater risk, less risk, or the same level of risk of contracting COVID-19 now, compared to in April 2020?



In a question framing restrictions as part of an attempt to stop the spread of the Omicron variant, 65 percent of registered voters support requiring social distancing in public places, while 55 percent oppose requiring a vaccination card for admission to such places ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#)).

Fifty-four percent of registered voters in one survey support a mask requirement in public places; it's higher, 67 percent of all adults, in a question that specifies that a requirement would come from state and local authorities ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#), [Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). Forty-three percent say they're currently under a mask mandate. Fifty-eight percent express concern about mask or vaccine requirements negatively impacting the economy ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Testing & Breakthrough Cases

Amid reports of widespread [testing shortages](#), one in 10 tried to get a coronavirus test within the past few weeks but couldn't get an appointment, 11 percent had to wait in a long line for a test and 14 percent tried unsuccessfully to buy an at-home test. Twenty-one percent experienced at least one of these difficulties.

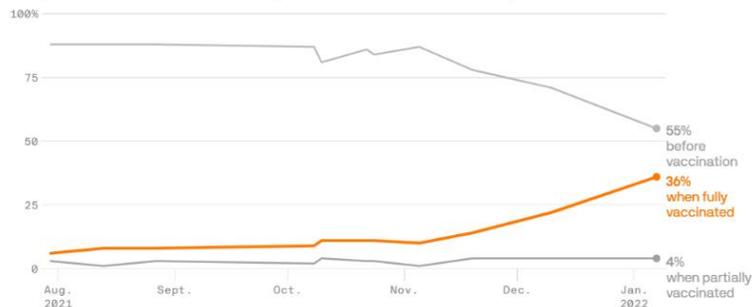
Sixty-four percent say they've personally been tested for the coronavirus at some point in the pandemic. A quarter of them tested positive, with nearly a third of test positives occurring in the past month. This corresponds to 16 percent of all adults having tested positive at some point, 5 percent in the past month.

Separately, 22 percent think they had the coronavirus but never were tested for it or tested negative at the time. Among them, 30 percent (or 7 percent of all adults) say this happened in the past month.

Self-reported breakthrough cases have risen. Among vaccinated adults who either tested positive for the virus or believe they've had it but weren't tested, 36 percent say this

When did you have COVID-19?

Survey of 1,759 vaccinated U.S. adults who said they had COVID-19; Conducted in waves from July 30, 2021, to Jan. 10, 2022



Data: Axios/Ipsos poll; Chart: Kavya Beheraj/Axios

happened after they were fully vaccinated, up from 22 percent in mid-December and 14 percent in late November. This corresponds to 11 percent of vaccinated adults overall who think they were infected with the coronavirus after they were fully vaccinated, including 6 percent with a positive test to confirm it ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Available data from the [New York State Department of Health](#) confirm a rise in breakthrough infections, albeit with unvaccinated residents still far more likely to catch the virus. In the week ending Jan. 3, vaccine effectiveness was 78 percent, according to preliminary data, in line with roughly 80 percent effectiveness pre-Omicron.

Quarantine & Isolation

Thirteen percent of Americans say they self-quarantined for 14 days including the past week, up 5 points since mid-December to the most since early April ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). The CDC recently amended its [guidelines](#), shortening the recommended isolation period to five days for people who test positive or have symptoms. Forty-three percent say they understand the current CDC guidance very well, 37 percent somewhat well ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)).

Americans divide on what they'd do if they got the coronavirus and had mild or no symptoms. Twenty-three percent say they'd self-isolate for 10 or more days, 19 percent for around five days and 30 percent until they got a negative test result. Twelve percent say they'd quarantine or self-isolate until they felt better; 10 percent wouldn't self-isolate at all ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

More disapprove than approve of the CDC's response to the virus, 57 vs. 37 percent ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)). At the same time, 62 percent trust the CDC to provide accurate information about the coronavirus. While that's steady, the share with a great deal of trust is down 6 points in a month to 23 percent ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Vaccines

Two polls find 76 percent of adults (or registered voters) at least partially vaccinated ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#), [Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). It's 83 percent in another, weighted to late-December CDC estimates ([CDC 12/26-12/31](#)). The [CDC's](#) latest estimate is higher, 87 percent.

Sixty-five percent of vaccinated adults say they've gotten a booster shot, up 15 points in a month ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). Another estimate has 43 percent of registered voters saying they received a booster, or approximately 57 percent of those who are vaccinated ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#)).

The [CDC's](#) estimate of booster uptake is much lower, at 41 percent of fully vaccinated adults. As noted previously, the CDC has [acknowledged](#) that it may overestimate initial doses and underestimate booster doses because of data reporting challenges.

The rapid spread of the Omicron variant continues to show little sway among unvaccinated Americans. Eighteen percent of adults say they're unlikely to get vaccinated, largely steady since late August ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). Another poll finds that 11 percent probably or definitely

won't get vaccinated, unchanged the past month ([CDC 12/26-12/31](#)). Just 13 percent of unvaccinated people say the Omicron variant makes them more likely to get a shot ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

K-12 Education

Twenty-two percent of parents see sending their child to school or daycare as a large risk to their health and well-being, up 11 points since October; an additional 33 percent see it as a moderate risk ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)). At the same time, 71 percent of parents of school-age children say it's safe for students to attend school in person ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)).

Sixteen percent say their child's school or childcare center closed (fully or in certain classrooms) in the past week because of the coronavirus ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Two-thirds of registered voters oppose shifting schools to remote learning to combat the spread of Omicron, including 52 percent of Democrats, 65 percent of independents and 82 percent of Republicans ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#)). Results among parents weren't given.

Government Response

Results differ on Biden's handling of the pandemic. In one, more Americans disapprove than approve, 55-39 percent, with approval down from 65 percent in May to a new low ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)). In another, registered voters split, 47-47 percent ([USA Today/Suffolk 12/27-12/30](#)).

In newly released data from an early December poll – pre-Omicron surge – 37 percent said the coronavirus was one of their top five priorities for the government in 2022, down from 53 percent a year earlier ([AP-NORC 12/2-12/7](#)).

Pandemic Impacts

Roughly three in 10 adults say the pandemic has put significant strains on their relationships with friends (28 percent), family (28 percent) or that they've distanced themselves from some people in their circle because of their stance on vaccines or masking (30 percent). Thirty-four percent say the pandemic has had an impact on how lonely they feel.

Among adults who live with a partner or who are married, 11 percent say the pandemic has put significant strains on their relationship with their partner or spouse. As many adults overall, 11 percent, say they are drinking more compared with pre-pandemic.

Twelve percent say they or someone in their family have sought out services from a mental health professional because the pandemic ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)).

Forty-two percent say they personally know someone who has died from the virus ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Unemployment Benefits

Two polls this week find starkly different results on whether people who lose or quit their job over vaccine mandates should be eligible for, or receive, unemployment benefits. In one, Americans by 58-37 percent say someone who loses or quits a job over vaccine mandates should be eligible for unemployment benefits ([Quinnipiac 1/7-1/10](#)). In another, asking whether people who lose their job for not complying with vaccination requirements should receive such benefits, just 42 percent are in support, with 57 percent opposed ([Axios-Ipsos 1/7-1/10](#)).

Movie-going and Charitable Giving

On average, adults report having watched 1.4 movies at a theater in 2021, compared with 4.8 from 2001-2007. Sixty-one percent say they didn't visit a movie theater at all last year, about double the number in the early to mid-aughts ([Gallup 12/1-12/16](#)).

Self-reported charitable donations rebounded after a dip in 2020. Eighty-one percent say they donated money to a religious or other charitable organization last year, up from a record low of 73 percent in 2020 and about even with its 2017 and 2013 levels ([Gallup 12/1-12/16](#)).

State Results

Eight in 10 Virginians think K-12 students fell behind because of remote schooling in the pandemic and six in 10 think it had a large (29 percent) or small (31 percent) negative health impact on students. In an open-ended question, one in 10 mentioned the coronavirus as the main issue the General Assembly should focus on in 2022, behind the economy (21 percent) and alongside education (12 percent). ([Virginia Commonwealth University 12/13-12/30](#))

In a late October to mid-November poll, 29 percent of Texans said they personally knew someone who died of the coronavirus and 54 percent said they or someone they know had been seriously ill. Forty-nine percent said the pandemic has caused their household financial hardship, peaking at 59 percent of Hispanic adults – including 71 percent of Hispanics born outside the United States – and 62 percent of those with household incomes less than \$66,000 per year.

Forty-six percent of Texans supported vaccine requirements to go to restaurants, theaters and other non-essential business. Fifty-six percent of parents of 12- to 17-year-olds supported school vaccine mandates. (Children age 5-11 gained vaccine eligibility during the field period.) ([Episcopal Health Foundation 10/20-11/18](#))

International Results

In the Netherlands, 39 percent are confident the new government will be able to solve the coronavirus crisis; 53 percent lack confidence in this ([I&O Research 1/7-1/10](#)).

In Chile, where 91 percent have gotten at least one dose of the [vaccine](#), about eight in 10 adults say the country has sufficient vaccines for everyone and they had timely access to a shot – up from 49 and 40 percent, respectively, a year ago. Still, fewer than half, 46 percent, think vaccines will stop the pandemic, down eight points from August.

Sixty-four percent say the vaccines should be mandatory for all adults; 58 percent, for 10- to 18-year-olds; and 43 percent, for 3- to 9-year-olds. Seven in 10 say unvaccinated people should not be able to enter public events or restaurants and bars; 53 percent say they should not go to work in person; 35 percent say they should be confined to their homes ([Cadem 1/5-1/7](#)).

In South Korea, 15 percent mention the coronavirus as one of the top priorities for the next president in an open-ended question. It's surpassed by economic recovery and solving real estate problems, each cited by 32 percent ([Gallup Korea 1/4-1/6](#)).

In Germany, six in 10 are worried about future shutdowns. Some concerns have eased since early December: Half are concerned about new variants, down 9 points; half about bottlenecks in medical care, down 14 points. Thirty percent are concerned about personally becoming sick, little changed. Thirty-one percent think current restrictions are not strict enough, down 29 points since early December, while support for current measures is up 22 points to 42 percent. A quarter say requirements are too restrictive, up 8 points. Two-thirds support reducing the quarantine period for sick people and close contacts ([Infratest Dimap 1/3-1/5](#)).

In Brazil, 42 percent are very concerned about the Omicron variant, down 7 points in a month ([PoderData 1/2-1/4](#)). Forty-seven percent think the pandemic will continue into 2023, while 38 percent expect it to end sometime this year ([PoderData 1/2-1/4](#)). Seventy-one percent say they would vaccinate their child, 16 percent not ([PoderData 1/2-1/4](#)).

In Great Britain, 96 percent of adults say they wore a face covering when outside their home in the past week. Forty-three percent always or often maintained social distance and 63 percent avoided physical contact with others outside their home. Sixty percent traveled to work, down 12 points from early December. Two-thirds are worried about the impact of the pandemic on their lives, up 10 points in three weeks but down from 75 percent a year ago. Ninety-seven percent report having received at least one vaccine dose and two-thirds say they've gotten a booster shot, up 20 points since early December ([Office for National Statistics 12/15-1/3](#)).

Six in 10 Canadians support closing the U.S.-Canada border to non-essential travel because of concern about the spread of the Omicron variant. Canadians are more apt to think that visitors from other countries pose a bigger health threat than Canadians travelling internationally and returning home, 42 vs. 32 percent ([Nanos 12/22-12/23](#)).

In a mid-December survey, before the Omicron surge, 80 percent of Filipinos were hopeful that the worst of the coronavirus was over, up sharply from 38 percent in September. Still, worry about personally catching the coronavirus remained high, at 88 percent ([SWS 12/12-12/16](#)).

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

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