



COVID-19 Survey Summary: September 16, 2022

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

Americans appear largely resigned to live with lingering impacts of the coronavirus pandemic: Two new polls find pandemic lows in coronavirus concerns, and in one, the share who have returned to their normal pre-pandemic life reached a new high, even while most say the pandemic is not over.

Just 12 percent always wear a mask when leaving their home and 28 percent have socially distanced in the last week, pandemic lows. The public rejects continued coronavirus restrictions. Still, nine in 10 support the federal government providing people with free coronavirus vaccines and treatments.

A survey finds a high coronavirus vaccination rate among college students, bolstered by campus vaccine requirements. Among the unvaccinated, 84 percent were unlikely to get a shot, and among those who were vaccinated but unboosted, six in 10 expressed booster hesitancy.

Among vaccinated adults, two-thirds say they are likely to get updated booster shots.

A poll of Texas public school teachers and state results from Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are included in this week's summary, as are international results from Great Britain, Mexico, Russia and South Korea.

Coronavirus Experiences & Concerns

New average daily confirmed coronavirus [cases](#) continue to decline, down from a recent peak of about 130,000 cases in late July to about 60,000 per day now. Half of adults have contracted the coronavirus at least once since the beginning of the pandemic or suspect it. About a quarter of them say they've had it more than once. Seventy-two percent of vaccinated people in this group say they were infected after they received the vaccine.

In one poll, 57 percent are concerned about the coronavirus, including 7 percent extremely concerned, both pandemic lows ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)). In another, four in 10 are at least moderately concerned, down from 45 percent in early August ([CDC 8/28-9/3](#)). Among registered voters, 46 percent are extremely (20 percent) or very (26 percent) concerned, down 7 percentage points since July ([Fox News 9/9-9/12](#)).

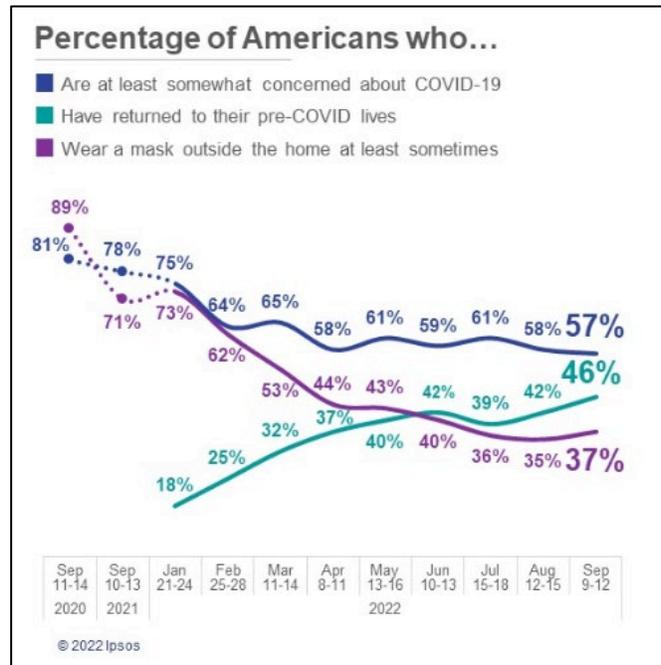
Among the coronavirus-concerned, 28 percent say their top concern is spreading the virus to people who are at higher risk of serious illness. Fewer identify concerns about personal impacts – developing long COVID (18 percent), dealing with restrictions in their daily life (15 percent), being hospitalized (12 percent) or dying (11 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

In late July and early August, a third of employed adults were very or moderately concerned about being exposed to the coronavirus at work, down from four in 10 last September and mostly mirroring previous [results](#) among the public at large. Democrats (51 percent) and women (41 percent) were more apt than Republicans (14 percent) and men (26 percent) to express concern. (A quarter of independents were concerned.) Concerns also differed by employment type; in-person workers and those employed in healthcare and education were more apt to express concern than those working remotely or in other sectors. Concerns among healthcare workers dropped 16 points from November while concerns among educators remained essentially steady. About half of workers overall were very (18 percent) or moderately (36 percent) worried about new variants ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

Future Expectations & Risk Assessments

With the pandemic well into its third year, the public largely is resigned to living with its effects. Eighty-five percent agree that we will never be fully rid of the coronavirus in their lifetime, up 7 points since August. Two-thirds disagree that the pandemic is over, steady the past month.

About nine in 10 agree that Americans’ lives have been changed forever by the pandemic. Still, a pandemic high of 46 percent say they have returned to their normal, pre-coronavirus life. Among the rest, fewer than one in 10 expects to return to normal within six months. Nearly three in 10 expect it within the year (13 percent) or say it will take longer than that (15 percent); two in 10, never.



Overall, two-thirds now see returning to their normal, pre-coronavirus life as a small risk or not a risk to their health and well-being. Just 6 percent see a large risk, down from a quarter in January. One in 10 sees contracting the coronavirus as a large health risk, down 5 points since July.

Assessments of high-level risk for specific activities likewise are down. Lows or matching lows see a large risk attending in-person gatherings or dining at a restaurant (both 5 percent), taking a vacation (6 percent), attending a sporting event (17 percent) or traveling on an airplane or mass transit (18 percent). Accordingly, 64 percent apiece have gone out to eat or visited friends or relatives in the past week, both mostly steady since late February. A pandemic low say they’ve socially distanced in the past week, 28 percent ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

Mask Wearing

Just 12 percent always wear a mask when leaving the home, down from 44 percent in January to a pandemic low. A quarter wear a mask sometimes when leaving the home, 29 percent occasionally and a third never. Mask wearing differs by activity. About half say they wear a mask at least sometimes on airplanes, four in 10 on public transportation or in rideshares and a third indoors in

public places and at grocery stores alike. About three in 10 or fewer wear a mask as often in crowded outdoor spaces (28 percent), walking into an indoor restaurant (27 percent) or at a small indoor gathering (24 percent).

Among those wear a mask at least occasionally, one in 10 has been asked to take it off and one in 10 has asked someone else to put one on. Seven percent say they have taken their mask off around certain people because of their political views. Two in 10 worry how other people will perceive them because of their mask, up 10 points since last asked in July 2020.

Among those who wear a mask less frequently or not at all, two in 10 report not being allowed into an establishment unmasked; 13 percent worry about how other people perceive them while unmasked. Fifteen percent have been told by someone to wear a mask; 5 percent have told someone to take one off ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

Pandemic Policy

In July, 64 to 69 percent said it was good that the government spent money on testing, on vaccines and boosters and on treatment to lower costs for individuals. Fewer, 10 to 14 percent, said spending for each was a bad thing, with the rest neutral ([AP-NORC 7/28-8/1](#)). Similarly, in September polling, large majorities support the federal government mailing free at-home tests to anyone who wants one (83 percent) and providing free coronavirus vaccines and treatment regardless of health insurance coverage (87 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

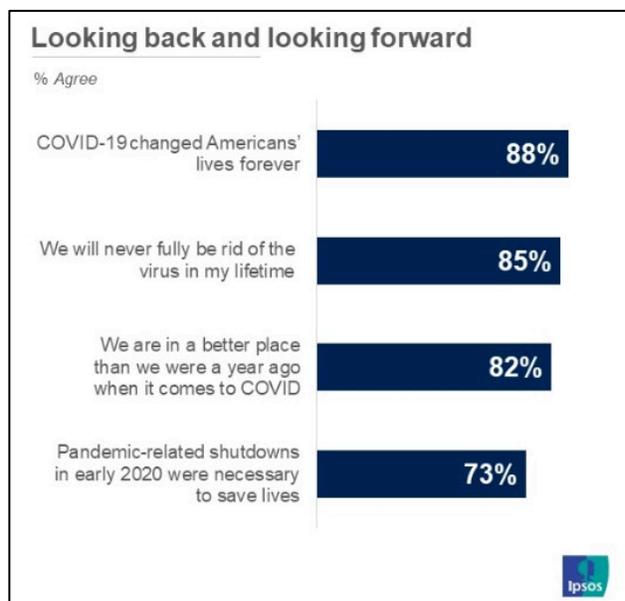
The public sours on continued coronavirus restrictions; two-thirds support the lifting of all restrictions, up 12 points since July to essentially match a yearly high. Looking back to 2020, though, 73 percent view the initial pandemic restrictions as necessary to save lives, and more disagree than agree that coronavirus shutdowns never were acceptable, 64 vs. 35 percent. The public splits 51-48 percent on whether 2020 shutdowns unnecessarily damaged the economy ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

Governmental Approval

Fifty-five percent approve of Joe Biden’s handling of the coronavirus, steady since May and exceeding his approval on all other issues tested ([AP-NORC 9/9-9/12](#)).

Voting & the Midterms

In one measure, 16 percent of registered voters say the coronavirus will be an extremely important issue in deciding how to vote in the upcoming midterm congressional elections. That’s tied for 14th on a list of 19 items. (In a 2020 poll of likely voters, the coronavirus tied for third in a list of 19 items in the share saying it was an extremely important issue.) Among those who say the coronavirus will be



extremely important, more than twice as many intend to vote for a Democratic candidate as for a Republican one, 63 vs. 28 percent ([Politico-Harvard 8/5-8/22](#)).

Vaccines & Updated Boosters

Per the [CDC](#), 90 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine. In a September survey, 65 percent report having received at least one dose, vs. 74 percent in August, potentially an artifact of question order in the new survey. CDC estimates consistently have exceeded survey data, given the CDC's dose tracking challenges.

In the survey, among the vaccinated, 98 percent are fully vaccinated, 45 percent have received one booster dose and 28 percent have received two booster doses. Booster uptake is stagnant; since January, the share of adults who have been fully vaccinated but not boosted has remained mostly steady, fluctuating between a quarter to three in 10 vaccinated adults ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

On Aug. 31, the FDA [authorized](#) use of two updated booster vaccines to protect against the BA.4 and BA.5 omicron variant strains. Half of adults are familiar with the updated boosters. Of the vaccinated, two-thirds are at least somewhat likely to receive an updated booster shot. Among them, about half plan to get it before December. A third are not sure when ([Axios-Ipsos 9/9-9/12](#)).

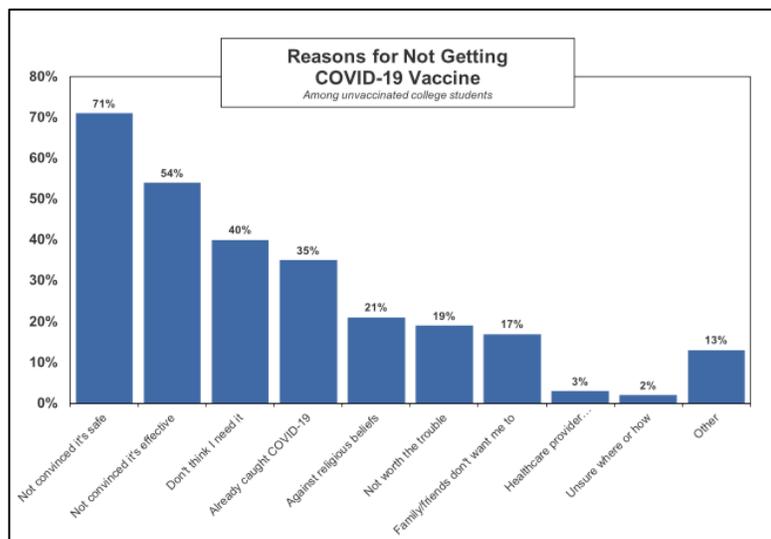
In July and early August, fewer than half of workers were very (5 percent) or moderately (39 percent) confident that vaccines will protect people from new variants. The study was fielded before updated boosters were authorized ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

Vaccines & College Students

In newly released results of a study of full- and part-time graduate and undergraduate students conducted this summer, 85 percent were at least partially vaccinated (nearly all of them, fully). That exceeded the vaccination rate among all adults, 79 percent, in contemporaneous [survey data](#).

Vaccination rates were highest among liberals, Democrats and graduate students and lowest among Republicans, conservatives and undergraduate students at two-year colleges. Regionally, 96 percent of students in the Northeast were vaccinated, compared with 80 percent in the South, with uptake in the West and Midwest in between.

Uptake intentions were low among unvaccinated and unboosted students. Of the unvaccinated, 84 percent were unlikely to get the vaccine. Most, 71 percent, cited safety concerns. Among those vaccinated but unboosted, about six in 10 did not intend to get a booster dose.



Eight in 10 students were at least somewhat confident that vaccines are effective at reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalization and death. Forty-four percent were worried about contracting the coronavirus in the future. Communication was lacking: Fewer than half of students reported getting at least a good amount of information about the coronavirus or coronavirus vaccines from their college. Incoming students had low awareness of their schools' vaccine or mask requirements.

The study identifies several factors as independent, significant predictors of vaccine uptake: The presence of a campus vaccine requirement, high trust in vaccine safety, perceiving vaccination as a community responsibility and having been encouraged by a trusted advisor to get vaccinated all were significant positive predictors. Being an undergraduate enrolled in a two-year college was a negative predictor ([ACHA 6/3-7/5](#)).

Mental Health

The share of adults who have received mental health services increased during the pandemic, from 19 percent in 2019 to 22 percent in 2021, per CDC survey data. Those younger than 45 went from the least apt to the most apt among age groups to have received such services. Usage peaked among white people (30 percent) and women (29 percent) ([NHIC 2021](#)).

State Results

A newly released survey of Texas public school teachers conducted in the spring found broad support for continuing most pandemic-era teaching practices. Nearly all favored continuing student mental health support, family communication and engagement and teacher collaboration; nine in 10 or more said interventions to address learning gaps and utilizing software to personalize instruction should be continued. Most also favored continuing conducting parent-teacher conferences remotely and providing computers or devices, as well as broadband access, to students for at-home use. Other pandemic practices were less popular; just half said remote tutoring should be continued and 68 percent said optional remote instruction should be discontinued.

Six in 10 teachers were not so (38 percent) or not at all (22 percent) confident that they had the necessary support and resources to address learning loss.

In an open-ended question, 7 percent identified pandemic issues (including learning loss) as one of the top three issues facing their local public schools. More identified student behavior (22 percent), overworked teachers (20 percent) and parent lack of support (19 percent) ([Charles Butt Foundation 4/4-5/16](#)).

In Pennsylvania, 1 percent of registered voters say the pandemic is among the top two most important issues facing the country, tied for last in a list of 21 items ([Monmouth 9/8-9/12](#)).

Among Wisconsin registered voters, about half are at least somewhat concerned about the pandemic in their state. Looking back, more say the decision to close schools and businesses and restrict gatherings in 2020 was an appropriate response than say it was an overreaction, 56 vs. 41 percent. Half approve of Governor Tony Evers' response to the coronavirus; about four in 10 disapprove. Fewer approve of Sen. Ron Johnson's response, 35 percent ([Marquette 9/6-9/11](#)).

International Results

In Great Britain, three in 10 have worn a mask in the past week while leaving home, down from about half in late May and early June. Among them, 54 percent did so always (21 percent) or often (33 percent). Thirty-six percent are very or somewhat worried about the effect the coronavirus is having on their life, up from 31 percent in mid-August. More, 44 percent, are worried about new variants. Fourteen percent have taken a rapid coronavirus test in the past week, down 13 points since mid-July to a new low ([Office for National Statistics 8/17-8/29](#)).

A survey in Mexico finds that 4 percent call the coronavirus the country's main problem, outpaced by public safety (50 percent) and the economy (26 percent) ([El Financiero 8/12-13, 19-21, 26-28](#)).

In Russia, 55 percent are afraid that they or their loved ones will get sick from the coronavirus, up 8 points from July and 11 points since a pandemic low in March ([VCIOM 8/1-8/31](#)).

In South Korea, 73 percent plan to meet with their families during the Chuseok holiday, up from 38 percent in 2020 and 47 percent in 2021 to regain pre-pandemic levels ([Gallup Korea 8/30-9/1](#)).

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

A closing note: Axios-Ipsos has announced that its latest project represents its final regularly scheduled [Coronavirus Index](#) survey, ending 70 waves of research with more than 2,000 pandemic-related questions since March 2020. Ipsos Public Affairs has generously donated its full survey materials, including datasets, to the SEAN archive. We congratulate them on this rich contribution to our understanding of public attitudes and behavior in the pandemic.

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