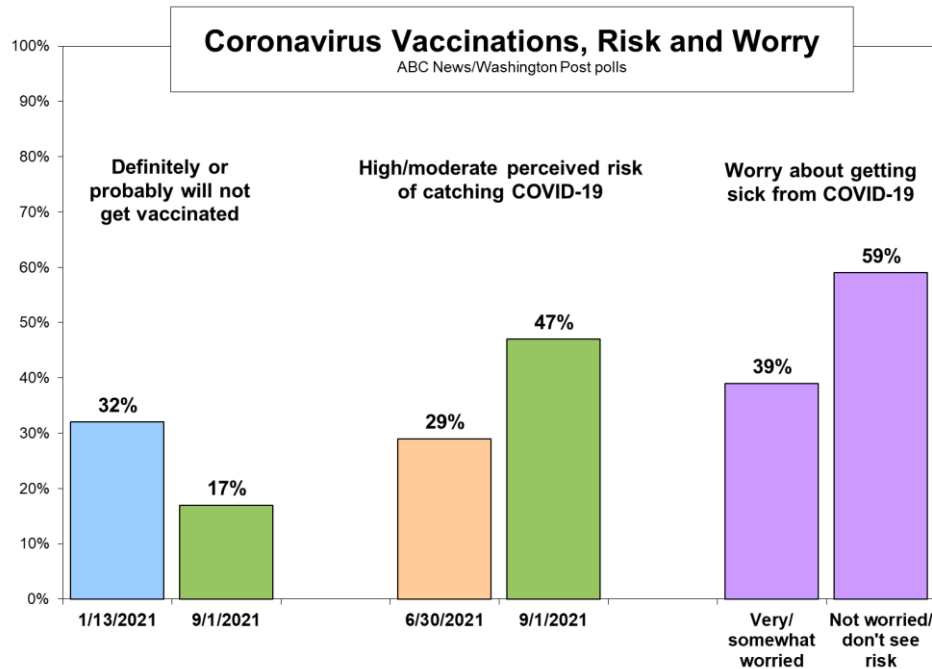


Vaccine Hesitancy Eases in the Teeth of the Delta Surge

Vaccine hesitancy has subsided in the face of the Delta surge, with the share of Americans who are disinclined to get a coronavirus shot now just half what it was last January. Support for mask mandates is broad, and Joe Biden’s approval for handling the pandemic has dropped sharply.

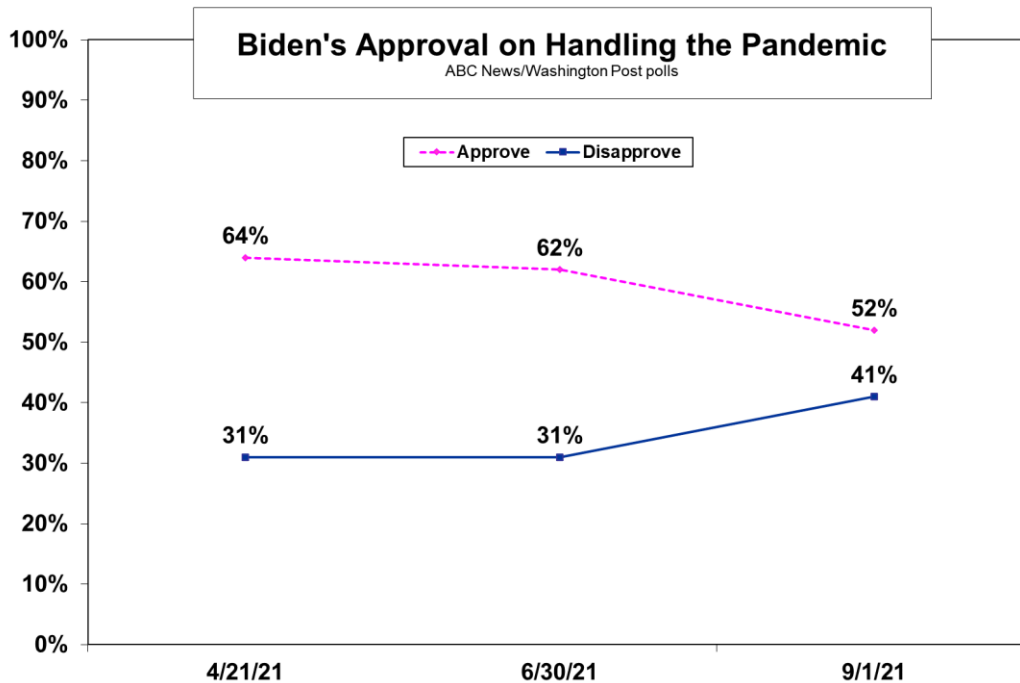
Alongside the steep rise in cases, there’s been a jump in perceived risk of catching the virus, from 29 percent in late June to 47 percent now, the latest ABC News/Washington Post poll finds. Yet worries about the consequences of infection are moderate, expressed by 39 percent, partly reflecting broad awareness of vaccine efficacy.



While 75 percent of adults have gotten a shot, per CDC data, some hesitancy persists. Among unvaccinated adults, about seven in 10 are skeptical of the vaccines’ safety and effectiveness, nine in 10 see vaccination as a personal choice rather than a broader responsibility and just 16 percent have been encouraged by someone close to them to get a shot. Each is an impediment to uptake.

Further, few unvaccinated Americans, 16 percent, say the FDA’s approval of the Pfizer vaccine makes them more likely to get a shot; 82 percent say it makes no difference. And among those who work, again just 16 percent say they’d get a shot if their employer required it; many more say they’d quit.

The poll, produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds approval of Biden’s handling of the pandemic dropping steeply, from 62 percent in June to 52 percent now. Forty-one percent disapprove, with the rest undecided. (Biden’s overall approval rating is just 44 percent, pulled down by criticism of his handling of the Afghanistan pullout, as reported [Friday](#).)



POLICIES – On the policy front, the survey finds broad support for mask mandates, with smaller majorities lining up behind vaccine requirements:

- Sixty-seven percent support school districts requiring students, faculty and staff to wear masks. As many support state or local orders requiring masks in public places.
- Fifty-nine percent support school vaccine mandates for teachers and staff; 54 percent support this for students if a vaccine is approved for their age group. Public school parents, though, are less apt to support student mandates – 47 percent, vs. 56 percent among others.
- Close to half of all adults, 52 percent, support businesses requiring vaccination for employees who come into work – but that ranges from 45 percent among people who work for pay to 66 percent of all others. Many fewer people who work for an employer, 18 percent, say their employer currently has a vaccine mandate in place.

	Support	Oppose
School districts requiring teachers, staff and students to wear masks	67%	30%
State or local orders requiring masks indoors in public places	67	32
School districts requiring teachers and staff to be vaccinated	59	39
School districts requiring students to be vaccinated if a vaccine is approved for their age	54	44
Businesses requiring that employees who come into work be vaccinated	52	45

Marking the strength of vaccine resistance among some Americans, if a workplace mandate were imposed, three-quarters of unvaccinated workers say they'd quit their job (42 percent) or seek a health or religious exemption (35 percent). If those who sought an exemption didn't get one, most say they'd then quit. In all, assuming no exemptions, 72 percent of unvaccinated workers not currently facing a workplace mandate threaten to walk if faced with one.

On the issue of vaccine information, one-third of unvaccinated Americans say they've heard or read things about the vaccines that have swayed them against getting a shot. (Many may have been predisposed to be receptive to that kind of information in the first place.) Just 4 percent say they've been swayed in favor, likely because nearly all such people are vaccinated by now. Sixty-two percent of the unvaccinated report no impact of what they've heard or read.

The survey touches on a few items unrelated to the pandemic. In one result, Biden has a 45-49 percent approval rating for handling the economy, with approval down 7 percentage points since it last was measured in April. In another, mildly on the positive side for Biden, 53 percent support \$3.5 trillion in federal spending on new or expanded social programs, educational assistance and efforts to address climate change. Forty-one percent are opposed.

VACCINE ATTITUDES – As noted, 47 percent of Americans think they have a high or moderate risk of getting sick from the coronavirus, up sharply from 29 percent in June as the Delta variant has surged. Still, just 39 percent are worried about it, with only 7 percent very worried. (Worry is broader among vaccinated people, at 45 percent, vs. the unvaccinated, 22 percent.)

In a different question in January, many more expressed concerns about infection: Sixty percent overall were worried that they or a family member might get sick. That peaked at 69 percent at the start of the pandemic in the United States in March 2020.

About seven in 10 Americans see the vaccines as safe and as many call them effective. Yet there are compunctions. Many fewer – 43 percent – call them very safe or very effective. And 27 percent don't think they're safe or effective. Vaccine hesitancy soars among people who hold these doubts; in a statistical analysis called regression, they're crucial predictors of not getting a shot. As noted, among the unvaccinated, seven in 10 question vaccine safety and efficacy.

Another key predictor of vaccine uptake is the sense that it's a responsibility to protect others, not just a personal choice. Yet the public only divides on this: Fifty percent call it a personal choice; 48 percent, a broader responsibility. Among unvaccinated people, the share calling it a personal choice soars to 91 percent, and eight in 10 of them feel strongly about this. Among the vaccinated, by contrast, 62 percent say it's a responsibility to others.

	Vaccinated	Unvaccinated
Confident coronavirus vaccines are safe	88%	26%
Confident coronavirus vaccines are effective	87	29
See vaccination as a personal choice	36	91
See vaccination as a responsibility to others	62	7
Encouraged by others to get vaccinated	58	16

Two other predictors of getting vaccinated, albeit weaker ones, are a sense that people who care about you want you to get a shot and one's level of worry about getting infected.

In the first, fewer than half of adults overall, 47 percent, say someone who cares about them has encouraged them to get vaccinated. About as many, 43 percent, say those who care about them have stayed out of it; 5 percent say they've been actively discouraged from taking action.

Notably, among unvaccinated adults, only 16 percent say people who care about them have encouraged them to get a shot, vs. 58 percent among vaccinated adults – evidence of how establishing a social norm of vaccination is another way to encourage uptake.

GROUPS – Lingering vaccine hesitancy – defined as people who say they definitely or probably will not get the coronavirus vaccine (as noted, 17 percent overall) – is especially high among rural residents (36 percent), very conservative people (36 percent), Republicans (30 percent), conservatives overall (30 percent), evangelical white Protestants (28 percent) and those with no more than a high school diploma (26 percent).

	Most vaccine-hesitant
Not confident in vaccine safety	57%
Not confident in effectiveness	52
Rural residents	36
Strong conservatives	36
No perceived risk	33
See vaccination as a personal choice	32
Republicans	30
All conservatives	30
Evangelical white Protestants	28
No more than high school	26
	Least vaccine-hesitant
See vaccination as a responsibility to others	1%
Confident in vaccine safety	2
Confident in vaccine effectiveness	4
Encouraged by others	4
Democrats	4
Liberals	6
Post-graduate degree	6

Attitudinally, hesitancy peaks among those who lack confidence in the vaccines' safety (57 percent) and effectiveness (52 percent). It's 33 percent among those who think they have no risk of getting sick from the coronavirus and essentially the same (32 percent) among those who see getting vaccinated as personal choice rather than a broader responsibility.

By contrast, hesitancy is lowest among those with a post-graduate degree (6 percent), liberals (6 percent), Democrats (4 percent), those who've been encouraged to get vaccinated by people close to them (4 percent), those with confidence in the vaccines' effectiveness (4 percent) or safety (2 percent) and those who see getting vaccinated as a broader responsibility (1 percent).

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Aug. 29-Sept. 1, 2021, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,006 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 percentage points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 30-24-36 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents. In addition to traditional sample weights for age, race/ethnicity, sex and education, results were adjusted to reflect CDC vaccination rates.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on all new poll releases.

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Full results follow.

1, 2c, 19-24 previously released. 17, 25-26 held for release. *= less than 0.5 percent

2. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Biden is handling [ITEM]?

9/1/21 - Summary table

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
a. the economy	45	49	5
b. the coronavirus pandemic	52	41	6

Trend:

a. the economy

	Approve			Disapprove			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/21	45	NA	NA	49	NA	NA	5
4/21/21	52	33	19	41	8	33	7

b. the coronavirus pandemic

	Approve			Disapprove			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/21	52	NA	NA	41	NA	NA	6

6/30/21	62	NA	NA	31	NA	NA	7
4/21/21	64	46	18	31	8	22	11

3. Have you personally received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion/Refused
9/1/21	74	23	3
6/30/21	60	38	2
4/21/21	56	43	1

4. (ASK IF NOT RECEIVED VACCINATION OR UNSURE) Will you definitely get a coronavirus vaccine, probably get it, probably not get it, or definitely not get it?

	----- Will get it -----			----- Will not get it -----			No op.
	NET	Definitely	Probably	NET	Probably	Definitely	
9/1/21	24	7	17	71	23	48	5
6/30/21	24	8	16	74	23	52	2
4/21/21	41	16	25	55	18	37	3

3/4 NET

	Already got it	----- Have not gotten vaccine yet -----			No opinion			
		-- Will get it --	- Will not get it -					
	NET	Def.	Prob.	NET	Prob.	Def.		
9/1/21	74	6	2	4	17	6	12	3

Compare to:

When it becomes available to you, will you definitely get the coronavirus vaccine, probably get it, probably not get it or definitely not get it?

	----- Will get it -----			----- Will not get it -----			Already got it	No op.
	NET	Definitely	Probably	NET	Probably	Definitely	(vol.)	
1/13/21	63	40	23	32	11	22	3	2

If a vaccine that protected you from the coronavirus was available for free to everyone who wanted it, would you definitely get it, probably get it, probably not get it or definitely not get it?

	---- Likely to get it ----			----- Not likely to get it -----			No op.
	NET	Definitely	Probably	NET	Probably not	Definitely not	
5/28/20	71	43	28	27	12	15	2

5. How confident are you that the coronavirus vaccines are [ITEM] - very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

9/1/21 - Summary table

	- More confident -			---- Less confident ----			Depends which	No op.
	NET	Very	Smwht	NET	Not so	Not at all	(vol.)	
a. safe	71	43	28	27	12	15	*	1
b. effective at preventing serious illness and death	72	43	29	27	11	15	*	1

6. Which comes closer to your view: getting vaccinated against COVID-19 (is a personal choice) OR getting vaccinated (is part of everyone's responsibility to protect the health of others)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	---- Personal choice ----			Everyone's responsibility			Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No op
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly			
9/1/21	50	41	10	48	6	42	NA	NA	2
3/22/21*	46	NA	NA	53	NA	NA	0	0	1
2/23/21	45			52			2	*	1
1/18/21	44			51			3	*	1
12/8/20	49	"	"	49	"	"	2	*	1

* March 2021 and previous, Kaiser Family Foundation

7. Have/Did most people who care about you (encourage(d) you to get vaccinated), (discourage(d) you from getting vaccinated), or have/did they stay(ed) out of it?

	Encouraged to get vaccinated	Discouraged to get vaccinated	Stayed out of it	50/50 (vol.)	No opinion
9/1/21	47	5	43	4	1

8. How would you rate your level of risk of getting sick from the coronavirus - would you say you're at high risk, moderate risk, low risk or no risk? (ASK IF ALREADY CAUGHT CORONAVIRUS) How about the chance of catching it again? Would you say you're at high risk, moderate risk, low risk or no risk?

	----- More risk -----			---- Less risk ----			No opinion
	NET	High	Moderate	NET	Low	No risk	
9/1/21	47	18	29	51	38	13	2
6/30/21*	29	13	16	69	44	25	2

* "Already caught" prompt not asked

9. (ASK IF MORE THAN NO RISK) Are you very worried about that, somewhat worried, not too worried or not worried at all?

8/9 NET

	---- More worried ---			----- Less worried -----			No risk	No opinion
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
9/1/21	39	7	32	45	21	24	13	2

Compare to:

How do you feel about the possibility that you or someone in your immediate family might catch the coronavirus - very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not worried at all?

	----- Worried -----			----- Not worried -----			Already caught it (vol.)	No op
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not too	Not at all		
1/13/21	60	30	31	30	14	16	10	*
10/9/20 RV	65	29	36	27	15	12	8	1
9/24/20	62	29	33	33	18	15	5	*
8/15/20	65	31	34	29	15	14	5	*
7/15/20	66	33	33	29	17	12	5	1
5/28/20	63	30	33	35	22	13	2	*
3/25/20	69	30	39	30	20	10	1	*
3/13/20* RV	53	15	38	47	31	16	*	*

*NBC/Wall Street Journal

10. (ASK IF NOT VACCINATED) Has information you've heard or read about coronavirus vaccines swayed you more (in favor of) getting vaccinated, more (against) getting vaccinated, or has it not made a difference one way or the other?

	In favor	Against	No difference	No opinion
9/1/21	4	33	62	2

11. Please tell me if you support or oppose each of the following steps relating to the coronavirus pandemic. [READ ITEM].

9/1/21 - Summary table

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
a. School districts requiring teachers, staff and students to wear masks	67	30	3
b. School districts requiring teachers and staff to be vaccinated	59	39	2
c. School districts requiring students to be vaccinated if a vaccine is approved for their age	54	44	3
d. Businesses requiring that employees who come into work be vaccinated	52	45	2
e. State or local orders requiring masks indoors in public places	67	32	2

*full sample asked items a-c, half sample asked item d, other half asked e

Compare to:

After all Americans have had the opportunity to get vaccinated, would you support or oppose businesses requiring that employees who come into work get vaccinated?

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
4/21/21	45	51	4

12. (ASK IF NOT VACCINATED) Does the FDA's approval of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccine make you more likely to get vaccinated, or does it make no difference in your decision? (IF MORE LIKELY) Is that much more likely, or somewhat?

	NET	---- More likely ----	Makes no difference	No opinion
9/1/21	16	7	9	82
				1

13. Are you self-employed, employed by someone else, or not employed for pay?

	Self-employed	Employed by someone else	Not employed for pay	No opinion
9/1/21	16	48	36	*

14. (ASK IF EMPLOYED BY SOMEONE ELSE) Does your employer require employees to be vaccinated before they come in to work, or not?

	Yes	No	Fully remote/no one comes in to work (vol.)	No opinion
9/1/21	18	79	2	1

15. (ASK IF NOT VACCINATED AND VACCINE IS NOT REQUIRED BY EMPLOYER) If your employer required you to get vaccinated before coming in to work, what would you be most likely to do - (get vaccinated), (ask for a medical or religious exemption), or (quit your job)?

	Get vaccinated	Ask for exemption	Quit	No opinion
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9/1/21 16 35 42 7

16. (ASK IF ASK FOR MEDICAL OR RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION) If you didn't get an exemption, would you be more likely to (get vaccinated) or to (quit your job)?

15/16 NET

	Get vaccinated	Quit your job	Unsure if exemption refused	No opinion
9/1/21	18	72	3	7

18. On another subject, from what you've heard or read about it, do you support or oppose the federal government spending three and a half trillion dollars on new or expanded social programs, educational assistance and programs to address climate change? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/1/21	53	34	19	41	10	31	6

*** END ***