



COVID-19 Survey Summary: November 26, 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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Pandemic-related polls this week confirm substantial public skepticism about the safety and efficacy of coronavirus vaccines in children and find a decline in trust in the vaccines more generally, both posing challenges to further uptake.

With cases again on the rise, concerns about the virus have stabilized after falling sharply in October. Holiday activities may carry risks: Two-thirds indicated they would be spending time with people outside their household for Thanksgiving, with three in 10 in this group saying they'd probably see someone who was unvaccinated.

Americans are split on Joe Biden's handling of the pandemic, while polls differ on support for the administration's testing/vaccine requirement for larger employers. Many small businesses, for their part, report pandemic impacts on their expenses and supply chains. Another survey finds very broad support for booster shot access to all vaccinated adults.

This week's summary also covers a study on long-term loss of smell caused by the coronavirus, another that documents risks for pregnant women and their infants and a third that estimates the impact of overburdened hospitals on excess deaths. International results from Chile, Great Britain, Kenya, the Netherlands, Russia and Sweden also are included.

Vaccines

Eighty-two percent of adults have received at least one vaccine dose in the latest [CDC estimates](#), steady the past week. It's 75 percent in the one poll to estimate uptake this week, with an additional 7 percent likely to get a shot. Thirteen percent say it's "not at all likely."

Among parents with minor children, 58 percent say their child has received a vaccine (24 percent) or likely will do so as soon as it's available (34 percent). The total is essentially unchanged since mid-September, while down from 68 percent in late August ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)).

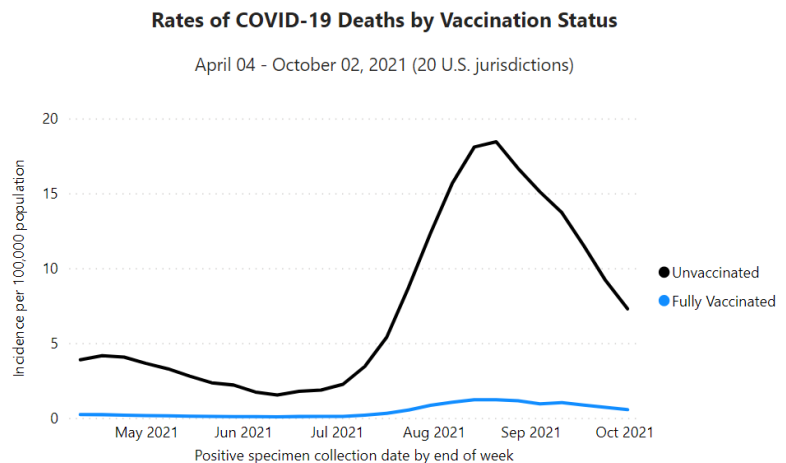
The [CDC](#) reports that 13 percent of newly eligible 5- to 11-year-olds have received at least one dose. Among 12- to 17-year-olds, 61 percent have gotten a shot.

Vaccine Perceptions

One poll finds a decline in confidence in the vaccines: In mid-September, 65 percent of registered voters saw them as safe and effective, vs. 58 percent now. Uncertainty is up 7 percentage points, to 12 percent. Thirty percent don't think they are safe and effective, essentially steady.

Asked specifically about the vaccines for children age 5-11, fewer, 45 percent, think they're safe and effective, while 38 percent do not, with 16 percent unsure. Skepticism rises among registered voters with children younger than 18; just 38 percent in this group see the vaccines as safe and effective for 5- to 11-year-olds, while more, 45 percent, do not ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

While the vaccines become less effective over time, they still afford protection: The [CDC](#) finds that in September, unvaccinated people were about six times more likely than fully vaccinated people to get infected and 14 times more likely to die from COVID-19.



Boosters

The [CDC estimates](#) that 21 percent of fully vaccinated adults have received a booster shot, up 3 points in the past week. A poll testing reasons for getting a booster finds that vaccinated adults are twice as likely to cite a lower chance of serious illness (38 percent) as to say it's to avoid infection in the first place (19 percent). Thirteen percent say it's because they or someone they live with is at elevated risk; 8 percent, because they're worried about antibodies wearing off.

In terms of policy, 86 percent of all adults say booster shots should be available for any vaccinated American who wants one, up from 66 percent in late September. Many fewer (12 percent, down from 31 percent) say they should be limited to adults older than 65 or at high risk of severe illness ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)). Interviews began the same day the CDC [expanded booster eligibility](#) to all people age 18 and older.

Antiviral Pill

Given information that "U.S. pharmaceutical companies have developed new pills shown to reduce dramatically the chance of hospitalization and death for those who have coronavirus," 56 percent say they'd take them; 20 percent would not, with the rest unsure ([Fox News 11/14-](#)

[11/17](#)). Seventy-six percent have heard of this medication, though 50 percent say they know almost nothing about it ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)).

Vaccine & Mask Mandates

Corresponding with results covered [last week](#), one poll finds a drop in support for the Biden administration's testing/vaccine mandate for larger employers, down from 56 percent among registered voters in mid-September to 49 percent now. Another, however, finds 58 percent of Americans overall support it, little changed since mid-September. ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#), [Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#))

Fifty-six percent of workers support their employer instituting a vaccine mandate, reversing a 7-point drop from late October to early November. Majorities continue to support requiring all people in healthcare settings to be vaccinated (65 percent) and for schools to require vaccinations among teachers (55 percent). Support for vaccination requirements for students is lower, a 48-46 percent division ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#), [Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

Sixty percent support their state or local government requiring masks in public places, down 6 points since late August. One-third of Americans say they live in an area with a public mask requirement, down 10 points since late October. Still, use remains prevalent, with 67 percent saying they wear a mask at least some of the time when leaving home, largely steady since late August ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)).

Concerns & Outlooks

While far below their Delta-fueled peak in early September, coronavirus cases are rising again, up more than 40 percent in the past month. Deaths have leveled out after falling from their mid-September peak, averaging just under 1,000 per day in the week ending Nov. 23.

The share of registered voters who think the coronavirus in the United States is not at all under control has steadied at 24 percent after falling 13 points from September to October. Twenty-eight percent say it's completely or mostly under control and an additional 45 percent say it's somewhat controlled, each essentially unchanged the past month ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

Sixty-nine percent of Americans overall say they're at least somewhat concerned about the coronavirus outbreak generally, unchanged in the past two weeks while off its peak amid the Delta surge, 78 percent in mid-September.

Risk perceptions also have stabilized. Forty-four percent think returning to their normal pre-coronavirus life would pose a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being, unchanged since early November after falling 16 points from late August ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)).

Just over four in 10 registered voters are extremely (19 percent) or very (24 percent) concerned that the coronavirus will make it harder to get together with friends and family this holiday season. Fifty-six percent are not very or not at all concerned about this ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

Thanksgiving

Ahead of the Thanksgiving holidays, 67 percent of Americans planned to see family or friends outside their household, similar to the [72 percent](#) who said so in a separate poll last week – the latter up sharply from November 2020.

Among those who planned to gather with friends and family for the holiday, 38 expected to see people who did not regularly wear masks in public places and 30 percent said they'd probably see people who were unvaccinated. Responses differ by vaccination status: Fifty-six percent of unvaccinated adults expected to see other unvaccinated adults at their Thanksgiving table, vs. 22 percent of vaccinated people. Unvaccinated adults also were more apt to say they'd be spending time with people who did not regularly wear masks.

One in five adults with plans to gather with people outside their household also said they'd be spending time with people who were considered high risk for contracting the coronavirus; no differences by vaccination status emerged on this result. Just 4 percent said they'd be spending time with someone who was exposed to COVID-19 within the last two weeks.

COVID habits of Thanksgiving guests

Survey of 682 U.S. adults who are planning to see people for Thanksgiving, conducted Nov. 19-22, 2021

■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't Know

Are the people you will see...

Not regularly wearing masks in public places



Unvaccinated



Less strict about COVID-19 safety



Considered to be high risk for contracting COVID-19

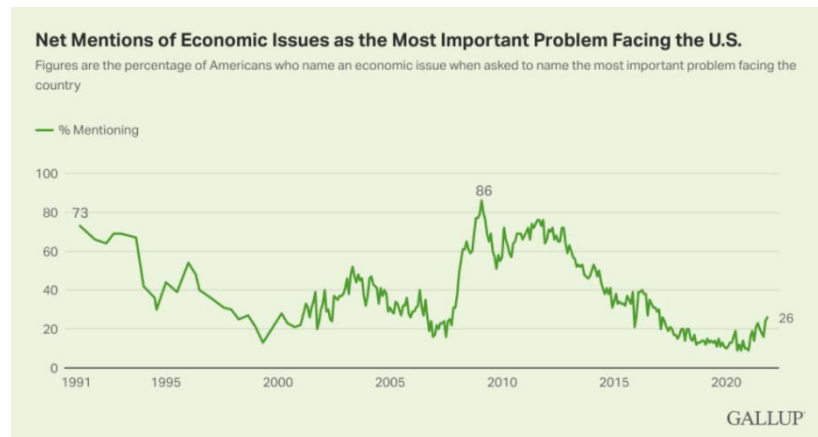


Data: Axios/Ipsos poll; Chart: Kavya Beheraj/Axios

Risk perceptions are down sharply from a year ago, with 31 percent seeing visiting friends or family for Thanksgiving as a large or moderate risk to their health or well-being, compared with 64 percent last November. Half view traveling for the fall and winter holidays as risky, down from three-quarters a year ago ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)).

Government Response

Economic concerns continue to surpass the coronavirus in being seen as the most important issue facing the country. In one survey, 36 percent of registered voters mention the economy, jobs/unemployment, inflation or the supply chain, while 17 percent cite the coronavirus, the pandemic or vaccines ([Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)). In another, 26 percent of all adults cite economy-related



issues, up 10 points since September; 13 percent name the coronavirus/diseases, down 13 points since August ([Gallup 11/1-11/16](#)).

Echoing previous results, Americans give mixed assessments of Biden's response to the coronavirus, splitting 49-49 percent among registered voters in one survey and 48-49 percent among all adults in another, each a low since he took office. Before the Delta surge, more than six in 10 approved ([Gallup 11/1-11/16](#), [Fox News 11/14-11/17](#)).

Small Business Impacts

Pandemic effects continue to hamper small businesses. Seventy-five percent say the prices they pay for goods and services are higher than pre-pandemic, including 34 percent who report a large increase, up 5 points since early October. Nearly half (46 percent) have experienced domestic supplier delays in the past week; 21 percent say the same for foreign supplier delays.

Among other effects, more small businesses say they have fewer (30 percent) rather than more (10 percent) paid employees than before the pandemic. Six in 10 say there's been little or no change. At the same time, 33 percent report more demand for their goods and services now than before March 2020, vs. 29 percent experiencing less demand. (Four in 10 report little to no change.)

Looking ahead, 36 percent of small businesses expect it will take more than six months to return to their normal operating levels; an additional 12 percent say it's unlikely this ever will happen, up 5 points since June to a high in data since April 2020. Four in 10 say they've already resumed normal operations or that their business wasn't affected in the first place; 12 percent expect full recovery in six months or fewer ([U.S. Census Bureau 11/15-11/21](#)).

Coronavirus Deaths

Coronavirus deaths in 2021 have surpassed those in 2020, with more than 388,000 so far this year, compared with 385,343 last year, per [CDC provisional mortality data](#).

Four in 10 Americans personally know someone who has died of the coronavirus, up from about a quarter at this time last year. This peaks among Black and rural Americans and those age 50 and older ([Axios-Ipsos 11/19-11/22](#)).

A study of COVID-19 mortality rates in 2020 adds to evidence of broad disparities by race/ethnicity and education. Among adults age 25 or older, age-adjusted mortality rates in 2020 were highest among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (356.9 per 100,000), American Indian or Alaska Native people (334.5), Hispanics (265.2) and Black people (237.9), compared with 116.4 among whites and 110.9 among Asians. Rates also were higher among those with no more than a high school diploma (208.1 per 100,000) than college graduates (89.3). The authors estimate that if all Americans experienced the same mortality rate as college-educated whites of the same age and sex, it would have prevented 176,000 of the 364,000 COVID-19 deaths among adults age 25 or older in 2020 ([Feldman and Bassett, 2021](#)).

Elevated Risks During Pregnancy

Pregnant women with COVID-19 are at increased risk for stillbirth, especially after the Delta variant became the dominant strain. A CDC study analyzed 1,249,634 delivery hospitalizations from March 2020 to September 2021 using data from a large hospital-based administrative database that represents approximately 20 percent of inpatient admissions in the United States. Stillbirths overall were rare (8,154; 0.65 percent), but were higher among women who had the coronavirus at the time of delivery (273; 1.26 percent) than among those who did not (7,881; 0.64 percent). Accordingly, the adjusted risk of stillbirth was about two times higher among pregnant women with COVID-19 than those without. In the period when the Delta variant was the dominant strain, the risk was four times greater ([CDC 11/19](#)).

Further, a separate analysis in Mississippi finds evidence that pregnant women themselves are at increased risk of death from the coronavirus. The State Department of Health identified 15 coronavirus-related deaths after infection during pregnancy from March 1, 2020 to Oct. 6, 2021, corresponding to nine deaths per 1,000 infections. Comparatively, coronavirus-associated deaths among non-pregnant women of reproductive age was 2.5 per 1,000 during this period. Five out of 1,000 pregnant women with the coronavirus died during or shortly after pregnancy in the pre-Delta period, rising to 25 out of 1,000 during the Delta period ([CDC 3/1/20-10/6/21](#)).

The authors of both studies stress the importance of vaccinations before and during pregnancy to protect the health of the infant and mother. As of Nov. 13, the [CDC estimates](#) that only 35 percent of pregnant women had received at least one vaccine dose before or during their pregnancies, using data from eight integrated health care organizations across seven states.

Long-term Loss of Smell

A new study estimates that as of August between 700,000 and 1.6 million Americans developed chronic olfactory dysfunction lasting at least six months as a result of a coronavirus infection. That's 5.3 to 12.0 percent higher than pre-pandemic levels of measurable olfactory disorder in people older than 40 (the only comparison data available). Lost sense of smell is associated with decreased quality of life, impaired food intake, inability to detect harmful gas and smoke, worries about personal hygiene, diminished social well-being and the start of depressive symptoms. The authors analyzed confirmed and probable coronavirus cases from Jan. 13, 2020 to March 7, 2021 ([Khan et al., 2021](#)).

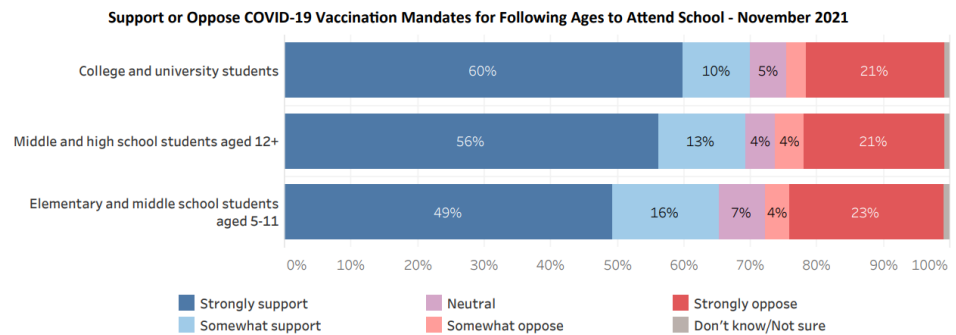
Excess Deaths and Hospital Capacity

An analysis evaluates the relationship between overwhelmed hospitals and excess deaths in the pandemic. Using a model based on all-cause excess deaths from July 4, 2020, to July 1, 2021, the authors estimate that if intensive care unit occupancy were at 75 percent nationwide, 12,000 excess deaths would be expected to occur in the following two weeks, with additional deaths at four and six weeks. If hospitals were to exceed 100 percent ICU bed capacity, about 80,000 excess deaths would be expected within two weeks. The authors stress the need for vaccination and other strategies to reduce disease prevalence to reduce the strain on hospitals ([CDC 11/19](#)).

State Results

In Vermont, 90 percent of adults have received at least one vaccine dose, with 88 percent fully vaccinated. Two in five vaccinated adults have gotten a booster shot and an additional 47 percent say they almost certainly or probably will do so. Among those who have not gotten a shot, the vast majority say they will almost certainly (77 percent) or probably (8 percent) not do so. Top reasons are doubts about the vaccines' safety and effectiveness (selected by 57 percent apiece), distrust in pharmaceutical companies (45 percent) or a belief that it's unnecessary because they've already tested positive or that the coronavirus is not a serious threat to their health (33 percent each).

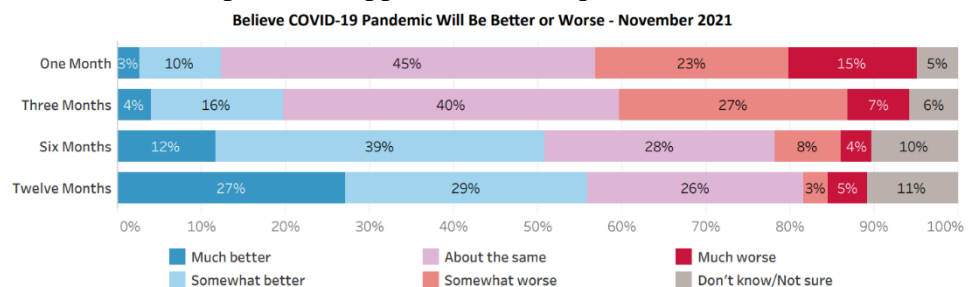
Majorities of Vermonters support various pandemic-related mandates. Seventy-three percent support requiring employers to provide paid time off for employees to get vaccinated, 70 percent



support requiring vaccination among all health care workers at facilities that receive Medicare or Medicaid funds, 67 percent support the federal testing/vaccine mandate for employers with 100 or more employees and 66 percent support requiring vaccinations for all federal workers or contractors. Majorities also support vaccine mandates for students to attend school, ranging from 70 percent for college and university students to 65 percent for students age 5-11. Sixty-nine percent approve of Gov. Phill Scott's handling of the pandemic ([UNH 11/15-11/22](#)).

In New Hampshire, 82 percent of adults say they're either fully (80 percent) or partially (2 percent) vaccinated. Among those who've gotten a shot, 37 percent say they've received a booster dose and an additional 46 percent say they probably or definitely will do so. Parents express far more hesitancy when it comes to vaccinating their children: Sixty percent say their child age 5-17 will get vaccinated or already has done so, while 35 percent say it's unlikely. Eight in 10 parents who lean against vaccinating their child cite doubts about safety.

Granite Staters split 47-50 percent on the Biden administration's testing/vaccine requirement for larger employers. Modest majorities support requiring college and university students (55 percent) and middle and high school students age 12 and older (53 percent) to get vaccinated to attend school in person; fewer than half (48 percent) support vaccine requirements for students age 5-11. Short-term outlooks about the pandemic are largely pessimistic: Within the next month, just 13 percent of Granite Staters think the



situation will be better, vs. 38 percent who think it will be worse. This shifts to 20-34 percent better-worse in three months, 51-12 percent in six months and 56-8 percent in 12 months ([UNH 11/11-11/15](#)).

International Results

In Chile, 45 percent are concerned about the possibility of catching the coronavirus, down 7 points in a month but still 11 points higher than its pandemic low in early October. Sixty-three percent approve of the government's handling of the pandemic, 6 points off its high, last reached in mid-October ([Cadem 11/16-11/19](#)).

In the Netherlands, 31 percent think the pandemic never will be completely under control, doubling to 63 percent among unvaccinated adults. Forty-three percent overall think it'll be more than a year; 9 percent, a year; and about one in 10, by spring 2022. Eighty-nine percent have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine. Among them, 83 percent would definitely or probably get a booster, up 4 points since September ([I&O Research 11/12-11/15](#)).

In Great Britain, 41 percent of adults with a child age 12-15 at home say their child has been vaccinated, up 13 points since late October; an additional 43 percent say it's very or fairly likely. Six percent of adults have had to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative test in the past week; among them, frequently reported settings include a theater or comedy performance (20 percent), a nightclub or bar (18 percent), a sporting event (17 percent) or a work or training event (16 percent). Few reported seeing everyone or almost everyone wearing a face covering while shopping (18 percent) or riding public transportation (24 percent).

Among economic concerns, 62 percent say their cost of living has increased in the past month. Majorities in this group cite a rise in the price of food (86 percent), gas or electricity bills (78 percent) and fuel (76 percent). (Seasonal spending patterns relating to gas and electricity may affect these results.) Forty-one percent reporting shortages of any goods in the past two weeks, little changed ([Office for National Statistics 11/3-11/14](#)).

Eight percent of Kenyans call the pandemic the main problem facing the country, down 8 points since June. That ranks fourth, behind high cost of living (31 percent), unemployment (28 percent) and corruption (10 percent); 8 percent also cite famine/hunger. Still, the pandemic's economic impacts persist: Among those with monthly incomes, roughly one-third across income groups report earning less now than before the pandemic ([Tifa 11/7-11/13](#)).

About four in 10 Russians report that they or family members had the flu or SARS this fall or are sick now. Six in 10 say it's difficult to distinguish the flu or acute respiratory virus infections from the coronavirus without going to a doctor. Among those who say they ever have had either, 50 percent usually treat themselves and 38 percent usually see a doctor. In the future, however, 51 percent say they would prefer to see a doctor and 37 percent would rather treat themselves. Fifty-five percent pay more attention to symptoms of the flu and SARS due to the pandemic, though just three in 10 have gotten a flu vaccine (17 percent) or intend to do so (13 percent) ([FOM 11/5-11/7](#)).

In Sweden, 2 percent of adults vaccinated against the coronavirus report experiencing a breakthrough infection ([Novus 10/28-11/5](#)).

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

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