



COVID-19 Survey Summary: May 1, 2020

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). Surveys cited in this report are available in the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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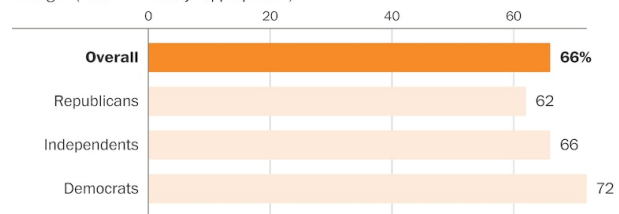
Reopening America

Even as an increasing number of states move to relax stay-at-home restrictions, polls this week continue to show broad support for these measures:

- Two-thirds of Americans think “current restrictions on how restaurants, stores and other businesses operate” in their state are appropriate and an additional 16 percent say they’re not restrictive enough. Seventeen percent call them too restrictive.
- Similarly, 64 percent say restrictions on the size of public gatherings in their state are appropriate and 22 percent say they’re not restrictive enough, while 14 percent feel they’re too restrictive.
- Republicans are most apt to view these measures as too restrictive, but still just about a quarter do ([Post/UMD 4/21-4/26](#)).

Across party lines, majorities say state restrictions on businesses are appropriate

Q: Do you think current restrictions on how restaurants, stores and other businesses operate in your state are appropriate, are too restrictive or are they not restrictive enough? (Percent who say “appropriate”)



Source: April 21-26 2020 Post-U. Md. poll among 1,008 adults with an error margin of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

EMILY GUSKIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

Without further testing for the coronavirus, 65 percent think it’s a bad idea for people to return to work, eight in 10 say it’s a bad idea for restaurants to open up for in-person dining, 85 percent say it’s a bad idea for students to return to school and 91 percent say the same about allowing large groups of people to attend sporting events ([NPR/PBS/Marist 4/21-4/26](#)).

About seven in 10 continue to say that returning to their normal, pre-coronavirus life would be a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being right now. Three-quarters are at least somewhat concerned about going back to their pre-coronavirus life too soon, and a similar number express the same about their community re-opening too soon. Three in 10 say they’re willing to accept a large or moderate risk to return to their normal life; 45 percent say they’d accept only a small risk and a quarter are unwilling to accept any risk ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Again, partisanship colors assessments of the threat of the virus, with Republicans less apt to view a return to their pre-coronavirus lives as a major health risk, less concerned about returning

to normalcy or their community re-opening too soon, and more willing to accept high risk in order to return to their pre-coronavirus lifestyles ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Americans aged 50 and older back a cautious approach to reopening the economy – two-thirds think the federal government should reopen the economy “by using widespread testing for the virus, so we can tell who can safely return to work” and 21 percent think they should reopen “only when it is safe to do so, such as when there is a vaccine.” Just one in 10 thinks the economy should be opened right away ([AARP 4/20-4/21](#)).

Overall, fewer than one in four Americans say that if restrictions were lifted tomorrow they’d be likely to go to a movie theater, bowling alley, bar or large sporting event. Three in 10 likely would fly on an airplane, go to a gym or health club or stay at a hotel. More, but fewer than half, likely would attend church (46 percent) or eat at a restaurant (44 percent). Forty-five percent of parents with school-aged children would be likely to send their children back to school. A slim majority would, however, get a haircut (51 percent), and 77 percent would go to work ([ABC/Ipsos 4/29-4/30](#)). (Results omit those who said they do not typically do these activities.)

Contact and Concern

Twenty-six percent say they personally know someone who has “tested positive” for the virus in the United States, up from two in 10 last week. Fifteen percent know someone who tried to be tested for the virus but was turned away, about the same as the past two weeks ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Twelve percent now say they know someone who has died due to the coronavirus. Blacks are three times as likely as whites to say they know someone who has died (28 vs. 9 percent), and a quarter in the Northeast know someone who has passed away, vs. 7 and 8 percent in the West and Midwest and 12 percent of Southerners ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Concern about the outbreak overall remains high, with nine in 10 at least somewhat concerned about the pandemic, but concern specifically about the possibility of getting sick has eased some – three quarters are at least somewhat worried about this, down from 82 percent two weeks ago ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Daily Life

Although the number saying they have not dined out or visited elderly relatives has held steady and almost everyone continues to report that they are social distancing, cracks in resolve have appeared:

- The number who say they think they can maintain their current self-quarantine or social distancing for “as long as it takes” has declined from 54 to 48 percent in the past week.
- A quarter now report they’ve visited friends or family in the past week, up from 19 percent last week.
- Fewer now view in-person gatherings of friends and family outside their home as a large or moderate risk to their health; 81 percent felt that way two weeks ago, 73 percent do now ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Nonetheless, seven in 10 also now say they're wearing a mask when they leave the home at least some of the time, including 43 percent who say they're always doing so, up from 34 percent a week ago ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Restricted access to goods continues to ease – a third report difficulty purchasing hand sanitizer, down from a peak of 40 percent; 23 percent were unable to purchase protective equipment like masks or gloves in the past week, down from 30 percent two weeks previous; 20 percent were unable to buy toilet paper in the past week, down from a peak of 37 percent; and just 10 percent report difficulty obtaining basic foods, down from a high of 23 percent ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Americans are consuming a lot of coronavirus-related news, with some difficulties:

- More than half say they're spending two hours or more each day reading or watching news related to the coronavirus ([SSRS Panel 4/8-4/13](#)) and 87 percent say they are following news about the coronavirus outbreak very or fairly closely ([Pew 4/20-4/26](#)).
- Seven in 10 say they need to take breaks from news about the virus and 43 percent say keeping up with the news makes them feel worse emotionally ([Pew 4/20-4/26](#)).
- Sixty-four percent say they have seen at least some news and information about the coronavirus outbreak that seemed completely made up and half say they find it difficult to determine what is true and not true about the outbreak ([Pew 4/20-4/26](#)).

Health Impact

The mental health burden of the pandemic has eased some, with the fewest number of adults since mid-March reporting worsening mental health (28 percent) or emotional well-being (34 percent) ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

But that still leaves two-thirds of Americans who report having felt anxious, depressed, lonely or hopeless about the future at least once in the past week. These emotions are more apt to be reported by women and younger adults than their counterparts ([COVID Impact 4/20-4/26](#)).

In polling conducted in early April but just recently released, about one in 10 Americans say they'd avoid seeking treatment for a suspected coronavirus case due to concerns about the cost of care ([Gallup 4/1-4/14](#)). Sixty-four percent said potential out-of-pocket costs would be at least somewhat important in their decision to seek care if they had symptoms of coronavirus ([SSRS/Commonwealth Fund 4/8-4/13](#)).

Non-coronavirus related health care also has been greatly impacted. Thirty-two percent say they've canceled a doctor's appointment because of the outbreak and 36 percent have canceled or postponed dentist or other appointments ([COVID Impact 4/20-4/26](#)). Indeed, more than half

Two-thirds of Americans have experienced strong negative emotions in the past week amid the coronavirus pandemic

The new [COVID Impact Survey](#) finds a majority of Americans say they have felt anxious, depressed, lonely or hopeless on at least one of the past seven days. The poll finds younger adults and women are especially likely to say they have experienced an emotional response in the past week.

In the past 7 days, have you felt anxiety, depression, loneliness or hopelessness?

% who say they have on one or more days



of adults age 70 or older, 55 percent, report having experienced a disruption in their care during the first month of social distancing, including 15 percent who say they delayed or canceled an essential medical treatment ([John Hartford Foundation/SCAN Foundation/NORC 4/10-4/15](#)).

With the pandemic taking a particularly harsh toll on the nation's nursing homes, assisted living and residential care facilities, most adults over age 50 support requiring these facilities to enable video visitations for loved ones and to disclose any active cases of coronavirus infections. Support is also nearly universal among older Americans for making sure healthcare workers get the protective equipment they need, extending unemployment insurance, providing a federal income tax credit to family caregivers and temporarily increasing federal funding for food assistance for low-income families. ([AARP 4/20-4/21](#)).

Economic Impact

It's clear that the coronavirus-driven devastation of the job market has touched many Americans, although estimates of the impacts vary based on question format:

- In one gauge, 55 percent of workers say they've lost a job or had their incomes reduced as a result of the pandemic. That rises to three-quarters of those who were working part-time in February and 68 percent of hourly wage earners ([KFF 4/15-4/20](#)).
- In another measure, half of adults who weren't unemployed or retired before the outbreak say they or someone in their household has lost hours or a job because of it, up sharply from 18 percent last month ([NPR/PBS/Marist 4/21-4/26](#)).
- Thirty percent of households report at least some decrease in income since social distancing restrictions began, and an additional 9 percent report no longer earning an income at all ([NORC 4/16-4/20](#)).
- These polls find that racial and ethnic minorities, those without a college degree and younger adults are particularly hard hit.

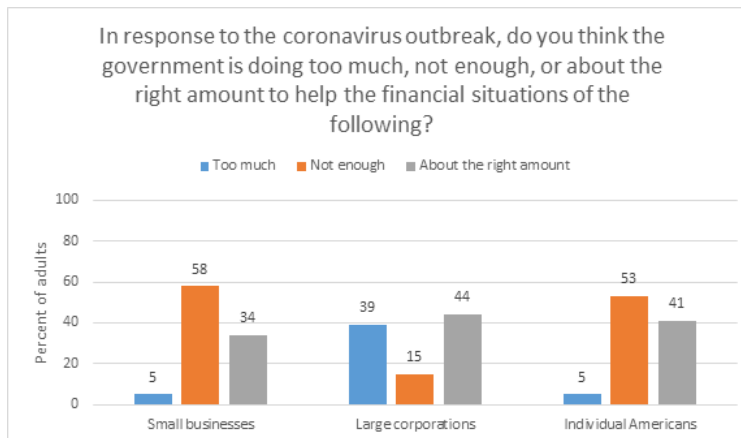
Still there is room for some optimism. Eighty-six percent of those who lost their job expect to be hired back in the next six months, and 81 percent of those who had their hours or pay cut expect to get them back in a similar period ([KFF 4/15-4/20](#)). Six in 10 expect that their income will return to pre-coronavirus levels in one to five months ([NORC 4/16-4/20](#)).

A third now say their ability to do their job effectively has been diminished, down from a peak of 47 percent in early April. And while 44 percent are concerned about their job security, that's down from a high of 56 percent ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Still, nearly nine in 10 Americans, 87 percent, are at least somewhat concerned about the economy collapsing during the coronavirus outbreak, including about six in 10 who are extremely or very concerned about this. Unlike worries about the personal health risk of the virus or returning to pre-coronavirus life, concerns about the economy transcend party lines ([Axios/Ipsos 4/24-4/27](#)).

Government Response

Majorities think the government is not doing enough to help the financial situation of small businesses (58 percent) and individual Americans (53 percent); far fewer say it's not doing enough to help large corporations (15 percent) ([AP-NORC 4/16-4/20](#)).



Aligning with President Trump's recent calls to halt immigration, nearly two-thirds of Americans support temporarily blocking nearly all immigration into the United States during the coronavirus outbreak, including nearly half of Democrats, 67 percent of independents and 83 percent of Republicans ([Post/UMD 4/21-4/26](#)).

Approval of the president's handling of the coronavirus pandemic overall continues to hover in the mid-40s, while slightly more than half disapprove. Sixty-four percent think their governor is doing a better job than Trump in handling the pandemic, including 86 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of independents, vs. a quarter of Republicans ([NPR/PBS/Marist 4/21-4/26](#)).

Election Concerns

In newly released data from mid-April, two-thirds of adults say it's at least somewhat likely the coronavirus outbreak will significantly disrupt Americans' ability to vote in the presidential election in November, though majorities also are at least somewhat confident the vote will be conducted fairly and accurately (59 percent) and all citizens who want to vote will be able to (63 percent). Seven in 10 favor "allowing any voter to vote by mail if they want to" ([Pew 4/7-4/12](#)).

Another poll also found majority support for increasing access to vote-by-mail for the presidential election. "If the country is facing a coronavirus outbreak in November," six in 10 favor allowing people to vote by mail without needing to provide a reason, while 23 percent oppose. Support is lower for online voting (44 percent in favor, 39 percent opposed) or only allowing mail-in ballots without any in-person voting (48 vs. 31 percent) ([AP-NORC 4/16-4/20](#)).

State Results

In state polls released in the past week:

In comparatively hard-hit New Jersey, six in 10 personally know someone who has gotten the virus, far higher than the national average. Seven in 10 say the outbreak has had a major impact on their life, 68 percent say their daily stress has increased and 60 percent are very concerned that a family member will become seriously ill from the virus, again all higher than national averages. Roughly half of those who planned a trip to the Jersey Shore this summer think they probably or definitely won't be able to keep those plans ([Monmouth University 4/16-4/19](#)).

In New Hampshire, eight in 10 say they have made major changes to their daily routine because of the coronavirus and roughly three-quarters are at least somewhat worried that they or someone in their immediate family might catch the coronavirus. Fewer than half are confident in the federal government's ability to respond to the outbreak and 55 percent disapprove of Trump's handling of the situation ([UNH 4/16-4/20](#)).

In California, three-quarters think residents "should continue to shelter in place for as long as is needed to curb the spread of the coronavirus, even if it means damage to the economy" compared with stopping shelter-in-place to stimulate the economy, even if it increases the spread. About six in 10 express willingness to "share personal information about [their] health, movements, and contacts with local and state public health officials in order to help them understand and combat the spread of coronavirus," while 22 percent are unwilling to share. Nearly nine in 10 say they are avoiding unnecessary trips out of the house at least most of the time and 78 percent say they routinely wear masks in public spaces ([CHCF 4/17-4/22](#)).

International Results

In recent international polls:

In Sweden, where the government has not shut down businesses or K-12 schools, daily life has nonetheless changed in many ways. Almost all Swedes age 18-79 (93 percent) report they've reduced their physical meetings with others, and seven in 10 say they've cut down on their physical contacts a lot ([Novus 4/23-4/24](#)). A quarter of employed Swedes report working from home, and that rises to half in Stockholm, which is viewed as the epicenter of the virus in the country ([Novus 4/9-4/21](#)). In general, Swedes seem on board with the government's approach – about eight in 10 think Sweden will cope with the coronavirus well ([Novus 4/25-4/27](#)).

In India, 57 percent say they have food and medicine supplies, or the money for those supplies, for two weeks or less. Fewer than 1 percent report seeing flu-like symptoms in either themselves, someone in their household or someone in their neighborhood, fewer than half (42 percent) agree with a statement that they are afraid that either they or someone in their family may catch the coronavirus, and 38 percent agree with a statement that the coronavirus is exaggerated. Nearly all, 94 percent, agree that the Indian government is handling the crisis well ([CVoter 4/15-4/22](#)).

In Germany, more now report meetings with friends, relatives and colleagues in the past week. In early April, when coronavirus cases were peaking, 70 percent said they had not met with others for the past seven days; now fewer than half say the same. Groups more likely to refrain from private encounters are those who feel strongly threatened by the coronavirus, Bavarians and those who live with others ([Mannheim University 4/29](#)). Approval of the special powers given to the federal government to combat the pandemic has dropped from six in 10 in March, when the coronavirus crises peaked, to four in 10 this month ([Mannheim University 4/23](#)).

In Russia, one in three (33 percent) reports that their biggest fear is someone in their family getting the virus (including themselves), one in six (16 percent) chiefly fears losing their income or job and half are equally afraid of both ([VCIOM 4/23](#)). One in five (21 percent) believes that

their chances to catch the virus are high; if they do get infected, 48 percent foresee a difficult experience. Three-quarters support government measures to address the epidemic ([VCIOM 4/14](#)).

In early-April results from Thailand, when asked whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements, 84 percent said they're afraid that they or someone in their family will catch the coronavirus and about nine in 10 expressed willingness to sacrifice some of their human rights to help prevent its spread. Three in 10 agreed that the threat is exaggerated, down from 40 percent in mid-March. Just 19 percent agreed that the Thai government is handling the virus well ([Infosearch 4/5-4/9](#)).

The same group of statements was tested in Malaysia, also in early April. Fewer, 68 percent, expressed fear that they or someone in the family might catch the virus; about eight in 10 agreed that they would sacrifice some of their rights to fight its spread. Roughly half agreed that the threat is exaggerated, but that's also declined in the past month. In contrast to Thailand, nine in 10 Malaysians agreed that the government is handling the outbreak well ([Central Force International 4/5-4/8](#)).

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

Correction: An earlier version of this report misstated the percentage of Indian adults reporting flu-like symptoms in themselves, their household and their neighborhood.

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