



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: May 15, 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 [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).*

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### Reopening America

Most Americans continue to express compunctions about reopening the economy, even as many states move forward with plans to reopen businesses and ease stay-at-home restrictions:

- Sixty-eight percent say their greater concern is that restrictions on public activity will be lifted too quickly, while 31 percent are more concerned that states will not lift restrictions quickly enough, essentially unchanged since early April ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).
- Three-quarters say the country should keep trying to slow the spread of the virus, even if it means keeping many businesses closed. A quarter instead say the country should reopen the economy, even if it results in more infections ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).
- Seven in 10 favor requiring Americans to stay in their homes except for essential errands, down from 80 percent in April. Majorities continue to back limiting gatherings to 10 or fewer (75 percent), requiring bars and restaurants to close (67 percent) and requiring people to postpone non-essential medical care (57 percent), although support for each has declined in the past month ([UChicago Divinity School/AP-NORC 4/30-5/4](#)).
- Fifty-eight percent say the current restrictions on how restaurants, stores and other businesses operate in their state are appropriate and 20 percent say they're not restrictive enough, while 21 percent say they're too restrictive. In late April, more – 66 percent – felt their state's restrictions were appropriate, with the rest divided ([Post/UMD 5/5-5/10](#)).

Partisanship is a strong factor in these views. Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents overwhelmingly favor keeping businesses closed to limit the spread of the virus, while Republicans and independents who lean toward the GOP divide, 49-50 percent ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)). Fifty-three percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents are more concerned that restrictions will not be lifted quickly enough than lifted too quickly, while nearly nine in 10 Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents are more concerned that restrictions will be lifted too quickly ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).

In another example, about a third of Republicans and GOP leaners say constraints on businesses in their state are too restrictive; just 9 percent of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents agree ([Post/UMD 5/5-5/10](#)).

Six in 10 overall think it is mostly or entirely the responsibility of the federal government to make sure there are enough COVID-19 tests available in order to safely lift restrictions on public activity, while 37 percent say it's mainly the responsibility of state governments. Republicans are more apt to feel it's up to state governments, while most Democrats see this as a federal responsibility ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).

Just a quarter overall think there currently is enough testing available in the country, including fewer than half of Republicans (48 percent) and just 10 percent of Democrats ([ABC/Ipsos 5/13-5/14](#)).

### Contact and Concern

Four in 10 now report knowing someone who “has been diagnosed with” or “has gotten” the coronavirus ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#), [Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)). Thirty-one percent know someone who has “tested positive” for the virus; 12 percent know someone who has died from it ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)); 14 percent say a family member has contracted it (up from 7 percent last month); and 2 percent say they’ve had it themselves ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)).

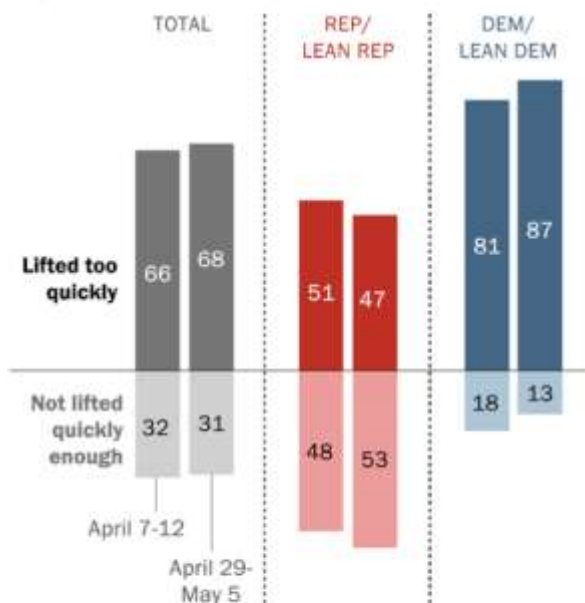
More than half of black adults, 54 percent, say they know someone who has been diagnosed with the virus, compared with 38 and 36 percent of whites and Latinos, respectively ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)). Racial and ethnic minorities in general are almost twice as likely as whites to say they or someone in their family has caught the coronavirus ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)).

While more people report knowing someone who has had the coronavirus, some worries have eased. Forty-two percent are very concerned that someone in their family may get seriously ill from the virus, vs. 50 percent last month ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)). About two in 10 continue to be very worried that they personally will become infected and seriously ill ([Post/UMD 5/5-5/10](#)).

Forty-four percent think the worst of the coronavirus outbreak is behind us, up sharply from 17 percent in early April. Still, about half, 52 percent, think the worst is yet to come. The shift in views since last month is driven largely by Republicans – in April seven in 10 felt the worst was yet to come, while now seven in 10 say the worst is behind us ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

### Broad concern that states will lift public COVID-19 restrictions too quickly; divide between Republicans, Democrats grows

% who say their greater concern is that restrictions on public activity imposed by state governments in response to the coronavirus will be ...



Note: No answer responses not shown.  
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted April 29-May 5, 2020.

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Republicans also are far less apt than Democrats to view the coronavirus outbreak as a major threat to the health of the U.S. population as a whole (43 vs. 82 percent) or to their personal health (27 vs. 47 percent). The share of Republicans who view the outbreak as a major threat to the health of the U.S. population as a whole has declined 9 points since late March, while among Democrats it's risen slightly from 78 percent ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).

## Daily Life

More Americans appear to be venturing outside their doorstep, and assessments of the risk of doing so continue to decline:

- Just more than a third say they've left the house in the past seven days to "visit friends, family or neighbors," up 13 points since last month ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)). A similar 32 percent say they have visited friends or relatives in the past week, up from 26 percent last week to the most in seven weeks ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).
- Nine in 10 continue to report social distancing, but the number who've self-quarantined in the past week (i.e., "stayed at home and avoided contact with others for 14 days") has declined from 55 percent in early April to 36 percent now ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).
- The number who say they've avoided public or crowded places has declined from 80 percent in April to 75 percent now ([COVID Impact 5/4-5/10](#)), and those who have left their homes in the last week to exercise (50 percent) or see a doctor (17 percent) have increased slightly in the past month ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).
- Perceptions of the risk of everyday activities such as grocery shopping, gathering with friends outside the home and "doing your job" continue to ease ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).

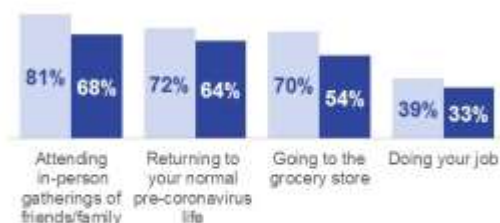
### Perceived risk and self-quarantining numbers falling

Activities outside the home perceived as less risky than a month ago, with increasing numbers making social visits

#### How much of a risk to your health and well-being do you think the following activities are right now?

% Large/Moderate risk

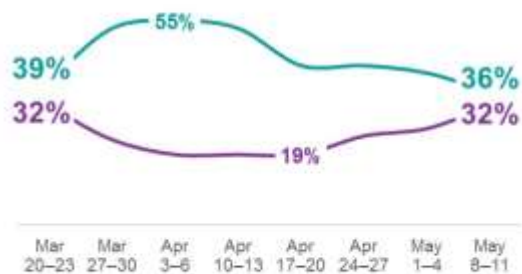
■ Mid-April ■ May 8-11



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#### Have you done the following in the last week?

■ Self-quarantined ■ Visited friends or relatives



Sixty-four percent think that returning to their pre-coronavirus life right now would be at least a moderate risk to their health and well-being, down from 72 percent three weeks ago. Three in 10 say they'd be willing to accept that much risk for themselves and their families. Forty-six percent would accept a small risk and 23 percent are unwilling to accept any risk ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).

Asked another way, about six in 10 say that based on what they know about the outbreak in their area they would not feel comfortable returning to their regular routine today. Among those who express discomfort, most (61 percent) say the existence of a vaccine would make them feel much more comfortable returning to their routine, half say the availability of effective treatments would do the same and 43 percent say the availability of testing for anyone who wants it would make them feel much more comfortable returning to their routine ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

Forty percent of Americans say their ability to access food and household needs has worsened over the past week, down from a peak of 66 percent in mid-March ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)). But Americans are paying more for these supplies, with April [Consumer Price Index](#) data showing the largest single-month increase in grocery prices since 1974.

Nearly three in 10 continue to say that in the past month they've worried that food would run out before they got money to buy more, and 22 percent say it was often or sometimes true that "the food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more," compared with 12 percent in a 2018 survey ([COVID Impact 5/4-5/10](#)).

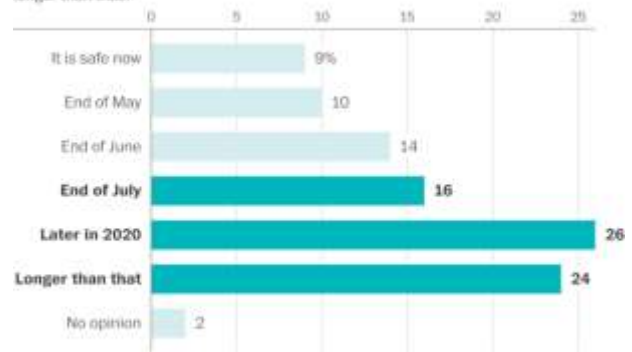
Just three in 10 parents of school-aged children say they currently would be willing to send their child to school. In terms of other activities, majorities express willingness to go grocery shopping (91 percent), go to work (71 percent) and get a haircut at a barbershop or salon (56 percent). Fewer say they're willing to stay in a hotel (45 percent), attend church (42 percent), eat at a restaurant (41 percent), go to a mall (38 percent), fly on an airplane (29 percent), go to a movie theatre (29 percent), go bowling (28 percent), go to a gym (27 percent), go to a bar (24 percent) or attend a sporting event in a large stadium (19 percent) ([ABC/Ipsos 5/13-5/14](#)). (Results omit those who said they do not typically do these activities.)

About two-thirds expect it will take until July or later for the outbreak to be controlled enough that people can safely attend gatherings of 10 or more people. Last month, fewer than half felt it would take that long. Just two in 10 think these gatherings are safe now or will be before May ends, down from three in 10 last month ([Post/UMD 5/5-5/10](#)).

Use of masks continues to increase; 77 percent now say they're sometimes (28 percent) or always (50 percent) wearing a mask when they leave the house. But the number who say they're always maintaining a distance of six

**Most Americans doubt gatherings will be safe for months**

Q: When do you expect the coronavirus outbreak to be controlled enough that people can safely attend gatherings of 10 or more people? Gatherings are safe now, they will be safe by the end of May, by the end of June, by the end of July, later in 2020 or will it take longer than that?



Source: May 5-10, 2020, Washington Post-University of Maryland poll of 1,007 U.S. adults with a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.5 percentage points.

EMILY GLUSKIN/THE WASHINGTON POST

feet from others has declined from 67 percent two weeks ago to 60 percent now ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).

Regardless of their own reported behavior, broad majorities feel that it's necessary for people in their community to stay at least six feet apart from others in public (86 percent), wear a mask when coming close to people outside their home (80 percent), stay at home as much as possible (78 percent) and avoid gatherings with friends they don't live with (75 percent). Fifty-five percent feel people in their community are handling social distancing practices appropriately; a third feel they're not taking them seriously enough and one in 10 says they're taking them too seriously ([Post/UMD 5/5-5/10](#)).

More than half of Americans with jobs continue to leave the house for work at least once a week. Among them, six in 10 are concerned that they could be exposed to the virus at work and thus expose others in their household. Thirty-six percent think it is likely that they've already been exposed to the virus at work, and 17 percent say that someone in their workplace has been diagnosed with COVID-19 ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).

Eight in 10 who work outside the home feel their employers have done enough to ensure employees are safe where they work. Nine in 10 say their employer has provided access to soap and water for handwashing, 85 percent say they've encouraged workers to stay home if they feel sick, 82 percent have been provided hand sanitizer, 71 percent say their employer has given them face masks and six in 10 say they've reduced the number of employees expected to physically come in to the workplace ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).

Religious practice has been impacted greatly. Among those with a religious affiliation, just 7 percent report attending in-person services, compared with 27 percent in 2019. Instead, 38 percent have participated in an online prayer or other group activity, 30 percent have talked over the phone or by video with a religious or spiritual leader and one in 10 has attended a drive-through religious service ([UChicago Divinity School/AP-NORC 4/30-5/4](#)).

Half of Americans think in-person religious services should be allowed in some form, including 42 percent who say they should be allowed but with physical distancing or restrictions on crowd size and 9 percent who say they should be allowed without any restrictions. A third say prohibiting in-person religious services because of coronavirus violates freedom of religion ([UChicago Divinity School/AP-NORC 4/30-5/4](#)).

### Economic Impact

About nine in 10 (88 percent) continue to view the coronavirus outbreak as a major threat to the nation's economy. Many fewer, 41 percent, view it as a major threat to their personal finances, down from 49 percent in late March ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)). Three in 10 say someone in their household has been laid off because of the outbreak, essentially unchanged since last month ([Monmouth 4/30-5/4](#)), and about half continue to say that the outbreak has caused financial hardship for their household ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).



Just a third say economic conditions in the country are good, down five points in the past month and 35 points since a March survey before the outbreak took hold. While a majority, 57 percent, thinks the economic problems caused by the coronavirus are a temporary obstacle and the economy will soon recover, that's down 10 points since last month ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

The April Survey of Consumer Expectations by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York finds widespread deterioration in expectations about most economic outcomes, including housing prices, unemployment, expected earnings and income growth. Thirty-nine percent report that their households' current financial situation is worse than it was a year ago, up from 30 percent in March; 44 percent expect home prices to decline over the next year ([FRBNY SCE 4/2-4/30](#)).

The survey also finds sharp declines in household spending – 51 percent say they have made a large purchase in the past four months, down from 60 percent last year; and the number who say they've spent money on vacations or trips is nearly half what it was a year previous (13 vs. 24 percent). Expectations about future non-essential spending also have declined relative to last year ([FRBNY SCE HSS 4/2-4/30](#)). Retail sales fell a record 16.4 percent in April ([U.S. Census Bureau](#)).

On the positive side, the number who report that their ability to do their job effectively has gotten worse over the past few weeks has declined from 47 percent in early April to 30 percent now, and the number who say their 401k or retirement plan has gotten worse has dropped from a high of 46 percent to 36 percent now ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)). The Bloomberg Consumer Comfort Index did not decline significantly this week for the first time in two months, though it's its lowest since September 2014 ([Bloomberg CCI 4/15-5/10](#)).

### Health Impacts and Views of the Healthcare System

The number of Americans reporting worsening mental health (25 percent) or emotional well-being (30 percent) in the past week are at their lowest levels since mid-March. Restricted access to health care has declined – 21 percent say their ability to access care has gotten worse in the past week, down from a peak of 31 percent at the end of March ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).

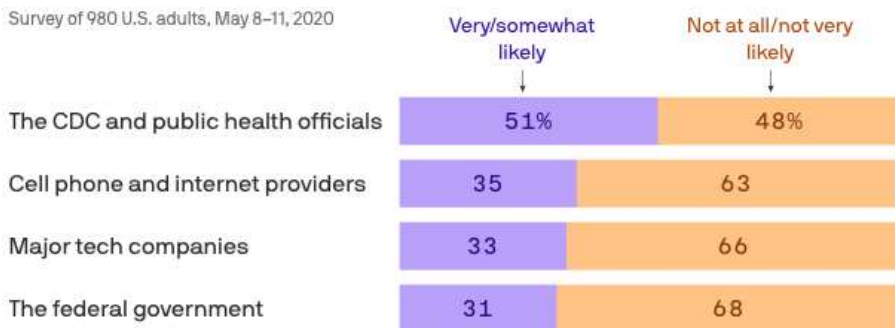
Nearly half, 49 percent, say they've felt nervous, anxious or on edge in the past two weeks, down from 57 percent in early April, but higher than the 44 percent who said so in March. Thirty-five percent report not being able to stop or control worrying in the past two weeks, also down from early April (41 percent), but somewhat higher than the number who reported the same in March (31 percent) ([USC UAS 4/15-5/12](#)).

About nine in 10 say hospitals and medical centers in their area have done an excellent or good job responding to the coronavirus outbreak, a bipartisan result including nearly identical shares of Republicans and Democrats ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).

### Potential Mitigation Strategies

About half, 51 percent, say they'd be at least somewhat likely to participate in a voluntary cell phone-based contract tracing system established by the CDC and public health officials. Fewer say they'd be likely to do so if the system instead was established by cell phone and internet providers (35 percent), major tech companies (33 percent) or the federal government (31 percent) ([Axios/Ipsos 5/8-5/11](#)).

### How likely are you to use a cell phone-based contact tracing system established by...



Two-thirds say that if a vaccine to prevent coronavirus were widely available at low cost they would try to get it, while a third say they would not try to get vaccinated ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)). In a different question last week, 74 percent said they'd be likely to get vaccinated, while 25 percent said they were not likely to do so ([ABC/Ipsos 5/8-9](#)).

In the new result, 81 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of independents and half of Republicans say they'd try to get vaccinated. It's 81 percent among those 65 and older, declining to 68 percent of 50- to 64-year-olds and 52 percent of adults 35-49. It's 63 percent among those 18-34 ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

Seven in 10 say they'd be likely to take a blood test to test for immunity or resistance to COVID-19, about the same number as said so last month. At the same time, the number who say they'd be likely to use a Q-tip to swab their cheek or nose to get tested for the virus has declined from 71 percent in April to 64 percent now ([COVID Impact 5/4-5/10](#)).

### Government Response

More than half the public, 54 percent, continues to say the federal government has done a poor job preventing the spread of COVID-19. Most also say the government is not doing enough to address the possibility of a second wave this year (58 percent), the limited availability of testing (57 percent) and the potential for the death toll to exceed 100,000 (56 percent) ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

More than half continue to disapprove of how President Trump has handled the crisis ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#); [Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)). Forty-one percent say he's done an excellent or good job responding to the outbreak, down from 48 percent in March ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)). Only 36 percent view the president as a trusted source of information about the outbreak ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)). Along with social media, more than half (54 percent) identify the Trump administration as one of the two most common sources of misinformation about the virus ([Gallup 4/14-4/20](#)).

Views about the government's response are sharply partisan:

- About eight in 10 Democrats say the federal government is doing a poor job preventing the spread of the virus, while a similar number of Republicans feel it's doing a good job.
- Three-quarters of Republicans think the government is doing enough to address a potential second wave and the availability of testing; about one in 10 Democrats agrees.
- Eighty-four percent of Republicans trust the information they get from the president about the outbreak, compared with 4 percent of Democrats ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

Views of public health officials also are colored by partisanship, albeit less sharply:

- Sixty-eight percent of Republicans and GOP leaners and three-quarters of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents rate the response of “public health officials such as those at the CDC” positively, but while leaned Democrats’ views are virtually unchanged, positive ratings from leaned Republicans have declined by 16 percentage points since late March ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).
- Eight in 10 Democrats say they trust Dr. Anthony Fauci and the CDC as sources of information about the outbreak. Fewer Republicans, albeit still majorities, say the same – 61 and 72 percent, respectively ([CNN 5/7-5/10](#)).

Fifty-five percent disapprove of the protests of stay-at-home orders that have taken place in some states while 31 percent approve ([UChicago Divinity School/AP-NORC 4/30-5/4](#)).

### State Results

In general, governors have earned broad support for their handling of the coronavirus pandemic, and that continues to be the case in the aggregate, with 71 percent approving of their governors’ performance overall and 56 percent saying their state government has handled restrictions on businesses “about right.” But some governors, especially those that are pushing to open their state’s economy, are facing backlash. For example:

- In Georgia, where Gov. Brian Kemp has led moves to reopen the economy, just 39 percent approve of his response to the pandemic. Sixty-five percent say the state government is lifting restrictions on businesses too quickly. By contrast, in Ohio, where Gov. Mike DeWine has been cautious about lifting restrictions, 86 percent back his response.
- Sixty percent in Florida support Gov. Ron DeSantis and 57 percent in Texas support Gov. Greg Abbott for their handling of the pandemic. Fifty-nine percent of Texans (and nearly half of Floridians) feel their state government is lifting restrictions too quickly.
- Three-quarters in states with Democratic governors approve of their governor’s handling of the outbreak ([Post/Ipsos 4/27-5/4](#)).



In a Wisconsin poll conducted before the state Supreme Court threw out the state's stay-at-home order, seven in 10 registered voters said the decision to close schools and businesses and restrict the size of public gatherings was appropriate, down from 86 percent in late March. A quarter now feel it was an overreaction, up from 10 percent. Approval of Gov. Tony Evers' response to the pandemic declined from 76 to 64 percent. More trust the governor over the Legislature to decide when to begin reopening the state, 53 vs. 33 percent, and just 31 percent support demonstrations against the stay-at-home restrictions. Fifty-six percent are more concerned that Wisconsin will reopen too soon, while four in 10 are more concerned that it will not reopen soon enough. Just 18 percent think the outbreak will be under control by the end of May, down sharply from 44 percent in March ([Marquette Law School 5/3-5/7](#)).

In North Carolina, large majorities view the coronavirus as a major threat to the U.S. economy (84 percent), their state's economy (71 percent) and the health of the U.S. population (65 percent). Far fewer see it as a major threat to their personal financial situation (36 percent) or personal health (33 percent). Most say the people in their household, their school system, their community and local and state government are reacting about right to the coronavirus outbreak. Fewer, 49 percent, say the federal government is reacting appropriately; instead 31 percent feel it isn't taking the outbreak seriously enough, while 13 percent say it's overreacting ([High Point University 4/16-5/1](#)).

In California, seven in 10 continue to support sheltering in place "for as long as is needed to curb the spread of coronavirus, even if it means continued damage to the economy" and six in 10 express willingness to share personal information about their health, movement and contacts with local and state public health officials to help combat the virus. As the state considers moving from blanket shelter-in-place restrictions to a more targeted quarantine-and-isolate approach, 81 percent of those who live with at least one other person say that if they had to isolate themselves, they have access to a separate bedroom and 58 percent have access to both a separate bedroom and bathroom, but among low-income Californians, that drops to 74 and 38 percent, respectively ([CHCF/Ipsos 5/1-5/5](#)).

### International

More than nine in 10 Russians support proposed government payments including 5,000 rubles per month for every child younger than three (92 percent), a one-time 10,000-ruble payment for each child aged 3 to 15 years old (95 percent), doubling the minimum childcare allowance for non-working citizens (93 percent) and providing a subsidy for families with children aged 3 to 7 that are living below the poverty level (91 percent). Perhaps in part given the popularity of these subsidies, nearly three-quarters say President Vladimir Putin is trying to do everything possible to resolve the crisis ([VCIOM 5/12](#)).

In India, the number who agree that the coronavirus is exaggerated has declined to three in 10 from 38 percent in mid-April. Forty-four percent are fearful that they or someone in their family may actually catch the coronavirus, essentially unchanged; and more than three-quarters continue to strongly agree that the Indian government is handling the coronavirus well ([CVoter 5/8](#)).

In Japan, a poll conducted before the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe lifted much of the country's emergency restrictions found that two-thirds backed the government's extension of the state of emergency. Four in 10 approve of Abe's government, down slightly since early April ([Mainichi Shimbun 5/6](#)).

In Great Britain, 75 percent are worried about the pandemic's effect on their life; it was 80 percent the previous week. Forty-two percent say their well-being has been affected, vs. 48 percent the week before. Expectations for when life will return to normal continues to be pushed back – 46 percent think it will be longer than six months, up from four in 10 the previous week. More than eight in 10 expect the general economic situation will get worse in the next 12 months; fewer, four in 10, say the same about their household finances. More Britons say they think the country will be united and kind after recovering from the pandemic than think it was prior to the outbreak ([Office for National Statistics 4/24-5/3](#)).

Four in 10 Canadians say their mental health is worse than it was before the pandemic. Asked what personal impacts concern them most, 39 percent mention financial hardship or debt, 30 percent say economic impact/loss of jobs, 23 percent are concerned about spreading the virus and 22 percent mention mental health concerns ([Nanos 4/25-4/27](#)).

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

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