



COVID-19 Survey Summary: May 29, 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). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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Daily Life

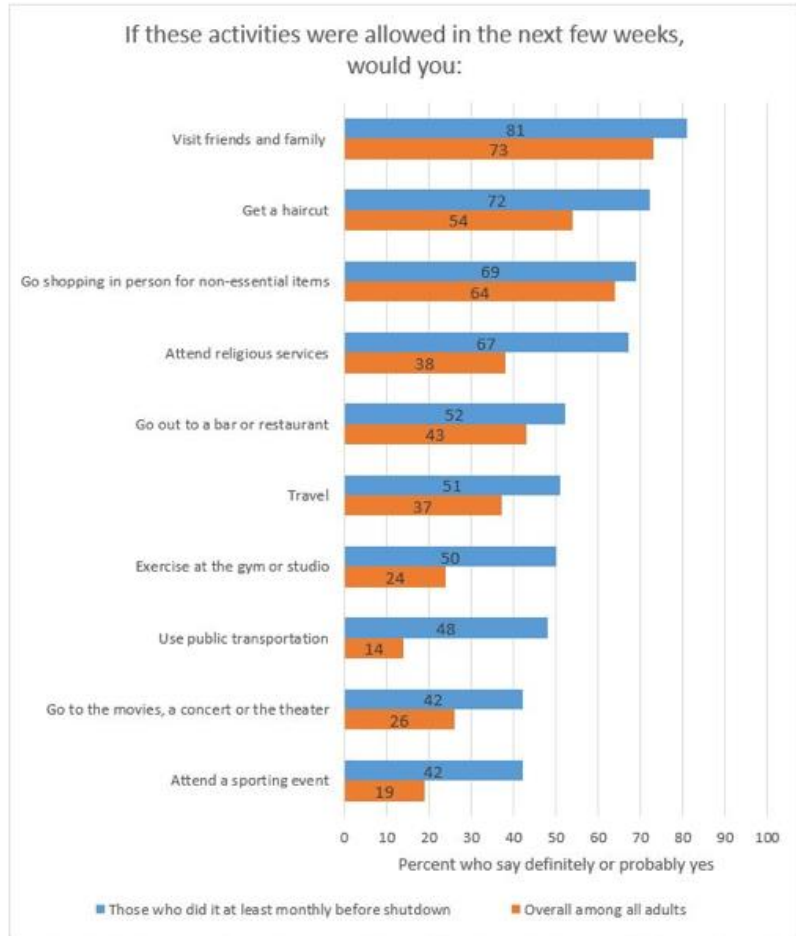
Even as restrictions ease throughout the country, most Americans continue to avoid public places and gatherings, although the numbers have subsided considerably. Sixty-three percent have avoided small gatherings in the past week, down 8 percentage points from the previous week and down 21 points from mid-April. Sixty-five percent have avoided public places, down 6 points in a week and down from 78 percent in mid-April ([Gallup 5/11-5/17](#)).

In another measure, 23 percent visited someone else's house in the previous 24 hours, up from a low of 12 percent in late March. Three in 10 visited their place of work, up from 24 percent in late March; a quarter visited a (non-grocery or pharmacy) store, up from 13 percent; and 21 percent went to a restaurant, up from 12 percent (whether to take out or dine in). Forty-seven percent visited a grocery store in the previous 24 hours and 16 percent visited a pharmacy, both about the same as in late March ([Gallup 5/11-5/17](#)).

If allowed in the next few weeks, visits with friends and family, haircuts and shopping for non-essential items top Americans' list of things they'll definitely or probably do, especially among those who say they regularly engaged in these activities before the shutdown began:

- Eighty-one percent of those who visited with friends or family at least monthly prior to the coronavirus outbreak say they'd definitely or probably do the same, if allowed, in the next few weeks.
- About seven in 10 of those who got haircuts at least monthly previously say they'd probably get one in the next few weeks, and seven in 10 regular non-essential shoppers say they'd definitely or probably get back to it in the next few weeks, if allowed.
- Two-thirds of those who attend religious services at least monthly say they probably would go to a service in the next few weeks, if allowed.

- However, just about half of those who regularly go to bars or restaurants, travel, exercise at a gym or studio or use public transportation would go back to those activities in the next few weeks, even if allowed.
- Fewer still, 42 percent of those who regularly attend movies, concerts or the theater, say it's probable or definite that they'll go back in the next few weeks. An identical share of regular sporting event attendees say the same ([AP-NORC 5/14-5/18](#)).



Questions: Before the coronavirus outbreak, about how often did you: / If these activities were allowed in the next few weeks, would you personally:
 Source: AP-NORC Poll conducted May 14-18, 2020 with 1,056 adults

As more are venturing out, Americans also are increasingly turning to low-contact services:

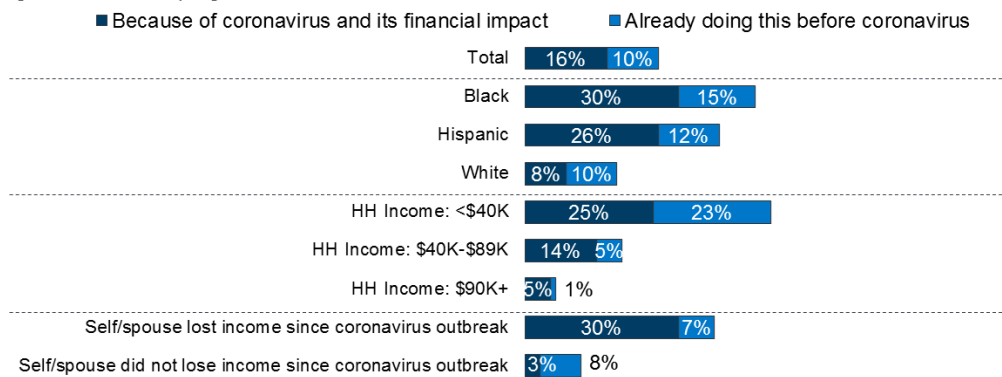
- Forty-four percent say they've picked up takeout from a restaurant more often than they did a month ago, up from 26 percent in late March/early April.
- Thirty-six percent say they've relied more on curbside pickup than they did last month, up from 19 percent.
- Twenty-seven percent have had virtual visits with doctors more often, up from 12 percent; and 9 percent say they've had medicine or medical supplies delivered more often, up from 4 percent.
- Twenty-three percent say they've had delivery from a restaurant more frequently, up from 13 percent.
- There's less change in use of grocery deliveries. Eleven percent said they were doing this more in late March/early April, vs. 14 percent now ([Gallup 5/11-5/17](#)).

Food insecurity remains a concern. A quarter say they or someone in their household has skipped or reduced meals or relied on charity or government food programs since February, including 16 percent who say this was directly because of the coronavirus and its impact on their financial situation. (Ten percent already were doing this before the pandemic hit.) Blacks, Hispanics and people who have lost income as a result of the coronavirus are particularly apt to report difficulties affording food because of the pandemic ([KFF 5/13-5/18](#)).

Figure 9

Large Shares Of Blacks, Hispanics, And Lower-Income Households Report Skipping Meals, Relying On Charity Due To The Coronavirus

Percent who say, since February, they or someone in their household skipped meals or relied on charity or government food programs:



NOTE: For second question, percentages based on total. Second question asked of those who reported skipping meals or relying on charity or government food programs.

SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted May 13-18, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Health Impacts

Using measures commonly employed by healthcare professionals to screen patients for mental health problems, the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) finds a sharp rise in the number of Americans reporting signs suggestive of clinical anxiety or depression. Specifically:

- In the past week, 28 percent had symptoms of anxiety disorder. For comparison, in the first half of 2019, just 8 percent reported symptoms suggestive of anxiety disorder in the previous two weeks.
- A quarter, 24 percent, had symptoms of depressive disorder in the past week, more than triple the number with symptoms in the 2019 data (7 percent).
- A third of Americans, 34 percent, have symptoms of one or both disorders, triple the 11 percent in 2019 results ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/14-5/19](#); [NCHS 2019](#)).

(See state-level findings on anxiety and depression in State and Local Results, p. 6)

Young Americans are particularly impacted. About half of adults aged 18-29, 48 percent, showed symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder (or both) in the past week, compared with 38

percent of 30-39 year-olds, about a third of 40-59 year-olds and fewer than a quarter of those aged 60 or older.

Thirty-eight percent of women report symptoms of depression or anxiety, compared with 30 percent of men. There are racial and ethnic differences, as well: Four in 10 Hispanic and black adults report symptoms of anxiety or depression in the past week, compared with about three in 10 whites and Asians ([NCHS](#); [U.S. Census Bureau 5/14-5/19](#)).

At the same time, the number of Americans who say worry or stress related to the coronavirus has negatively impacted their mental health has eased since April, from 45 to 39 percent; the share who report a major impact has slightly declined from 19 to 12 percent. Women, city or suburban residents and those with job or income losses since the pandemic began continue to be more adversely impacted than others ([KFF 5/13-5/18](#)).

Four in 10 Americans have personally deferred medical care because of the coronavirus, and about half say they or someone in their household have delayed or skipped care ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/14-5/19](#); [KFF 5/13-5/18](#)). Among those who say they or someone in their household has postponed or skipped medical care, about seven in 10 expect to get it in the next three months, and almost no one says that the care will be skipped entirely ([KFF 5/13-5/18](#)).

Beyond results covered in this summary, the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey offers a wealth of [data tables](#), including statewide and metro-area estimates, on a range of topics including education, employment, food security, health and housing.

Contact and Concern

In newly released data from early May, 14 percent of Americans are “pretty sure” they’ve had COVID-19, even though they were not diagnosed; 2 percent say they’ve been diagnosed; and 2 percent say they’ve taken a blood test indicating COVID-19 antibodies. Thirty-eight percent have taken their temperature at home to check if they might have the virus ([Pew 4/29-5/5](#)).

Economic Impacts

About half of U.S. adults report a loss of employment income in their household since March 13. Thirty-six percent expect that someone in their household will lose employment income in the next four weeks because of the coronavirus. A quarter missed last month’s rent or mortgage payment or lack confidence that their household can make next month’s payment in time. All are little changed since last week ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/14-5/19](#)).

Loss of employment income is reported by 55 percent of households with a minor child. Adults in these households are more apt than those without children to describe this as a permanent loss of employment, such as layoffs or business closures, rather than a temporary change, such as a furlough. Adults in households with minor children also are more likely than others to report sometimes not having enough food to eat, and express less confidence in their ability to make June’s mortgage or rent payment ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/14-5/19](#)).

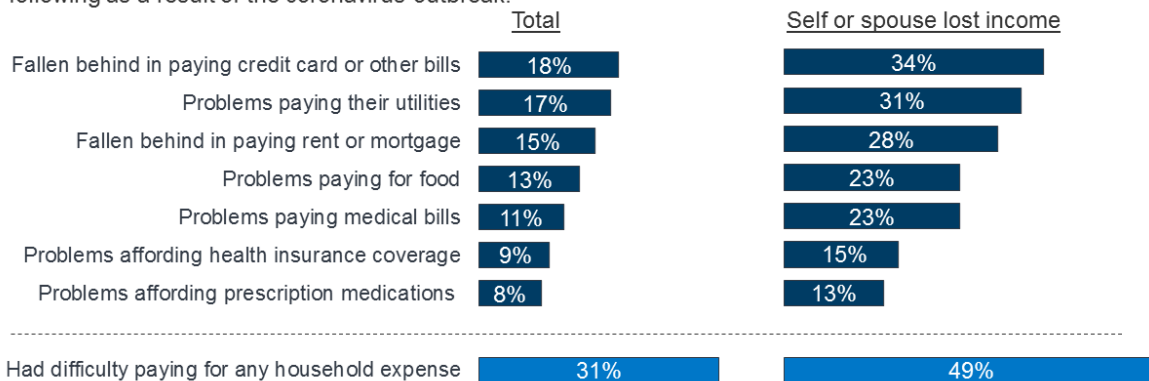
Of those who say they or someone in their household has been laid off, 65 percent think that person will definitely or probably be able to get the job back once the outbreak is over, and five percent say they already have. That’s a decline from mid-April, when 78 percent thought the person who was laid off would definitely or probably get their job back ([AP-NORC 5/14-5/18](#)).

Three in 10 overall say their household has had a problem keeping up with bills or affording household or medical expenses since February as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, including half of those who have lost a job or income because of the pandemic ([KFF 5/13-5/18](#)).

Figure 6

Large Shares Say They Have Fallen Behind Or Had Difficulty Affording Household Expenses Since February

Percent who say, since February, they or any other adult in their household has experienced each of the following as a result of the coronavirus outbreak:



NOTE: 34% of the public said that they or their spouse lost their job or income due to the coronavirus.
 SOURCE: KFF Health Tracking Poll (conducted May 13-18, 2020). See topline for full question wording.



Broader economic attitudes, however, have stabilized. For the first time since early March, Americans’ ratings of the national economy did not decline. Still, just 23 percent now rate the national economy positively, 46 points fewer than before the pandemic ([Bloomberg CCI 5/20-5/24](#)).

The climate for small businesses, while still grim, shows improvement. Fifty-nine percent of small businesses report a decrease in revenues in the past week, four in 10 report disruptions in their supply chain, 31 percent say they’ve temporarily closed a location for at least one day in the past week and 16 percent have had to decrease the number of paid employees. All these have declined since the weekly survey started four weeks ago, and are at least numerically lower than they were last week ([U.S. Census Bureau 5/17-5/23](#)).

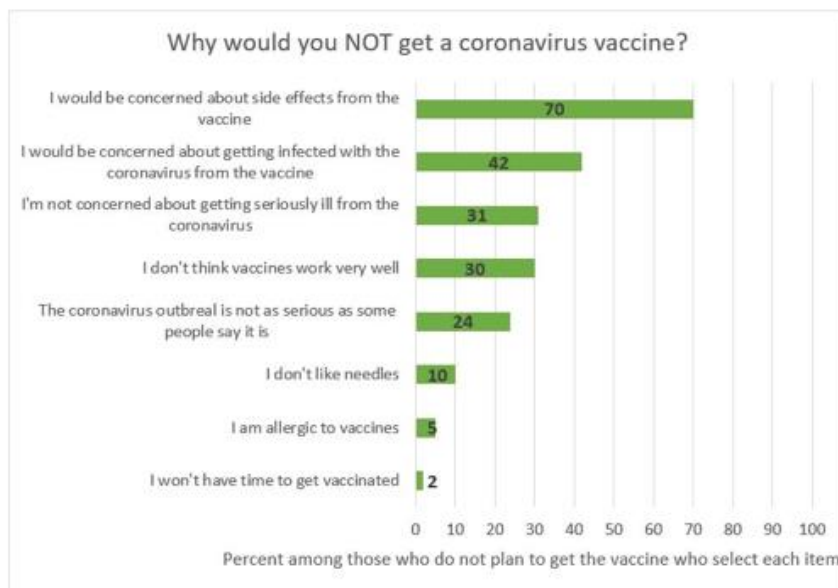
Vaccination

If a vaccine against the coronavirus becomes available, half say they plan to get it, two in 10 say they will not get the vaccine and 31 percent are not sure. (As reported [last week](#), in early April and late May, using a different scale, 42 percent said that if a vaccine were available today

they'd definitely get it; an additional three in 10 said they probably would.) Older Americans, Democrats and those more worried that they or someone in their family may get the virus are more apt to say they'd get vaccinated, while blacks and Hispanics are less apt than whites to say so ([AP-NORC 5/14-5/18](#)).

Among those who say they would not get vaccinated, seven in 10 cite concerns about side effects as one reason. Forty-two percent cite worries about getting infected with the virus from the vaccine, 31 percent say they're not concerned about getting seriously ill from the coronavirus and 30 percent don't think vaccines work well. (Multiple responses were accepted.)

Among those who say they would get the vaccine, most say they'd do so to protect themselves, their family, their community, and to feel safe around other people ([AP-NORC 5/14-5/18](#)).



Question: ASKED OF THOSE WHO SAY THEY WOULD NOT GET VACCINATED: Which of the following are reasons you would not get a coronavirus vaccine? Select all that apply.
Source: AP-NORC Poll conducted May 14-18, 2020 with 1,056 adults

Government Response

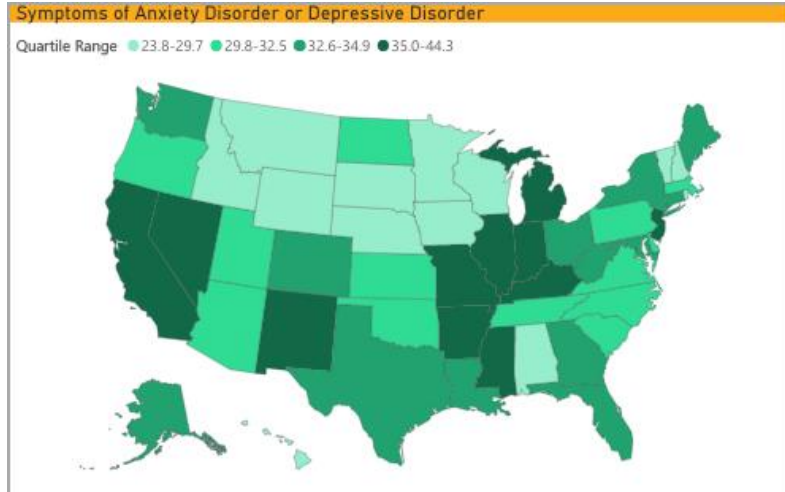
Although states face large budget shortfalls because of the pandemic, some potential cuts that might ease these deficits are widely unpopular. About three-quarters or more oppose their state government decreasing spending on K-12 public education (80 percent), police and safety (75 percent) and Medicaid (74 percent). Fewer, but more than half, oppose cuts to social services (60 percent), higher education (55 percent), prisons and jails (54 percent) and environmental protection (53 percent). However, a 57 percent majority supports cutting spending on transportation to deal with a budget shortfall because of the coronavirus ([KFF 5/13-5/18](#)).

State and Local Results

In addition to nationwide estimates, the [National Center for Health Statistics](#) reports statewide estimates of the number of adults with symptoms of anxiety or depression. Among the results:

- The prevalence of these symptoms is notably high in the middle of the country, including 44 percent in Mississippi and 35 to 37 percent in Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas, Illinois and Michigan.

- Top-quartile states also include New Jersey (39 percent), California (39 percent), New Mexico (37 percent), Washington, D.C. (37 percent) and Nevada (37 percent).
- Iowa, Alabama, Rhode Island and Nebraska have the lowest prevalence of adults with symptoms of anxiety or depression, roughly a quarter in each state ([NCHS](#); [U.S. Census Bureau 5/14-5/19](#)).



In California, where (like most states) many social distancing restrictions have eased, support for sheltering in place has declined, especially among rural residents. Overall, 66 percent support sheltering in place as long as is needed despite the economic consequences, down from 75 percent four weeks ago, and support among rural residents has dropped 20 points to 52 percent. Majorities overall express confidence in state and county public health departments and Gov. Gavin Newsom when it comes to coronavirus in the state ([CHCF/Ipsos 5/15-5/19](#)).

In Detroit, more than four in 10 of those who were working before the pandemic began have lost their jobs, at least temporarily; and among those who are still working, 27 percent have had their hours reduced. As is the case nationally, low-income residents, people with less education and racial and ethnic minorities in the city have been hit particularly hard. More than half of Detroit residents, 53 percent, know someone who has had the coronavirus, and about four in 10 know someone who has died from it ([DMACS 4/23-5/7](#)).

International Results

In Brazil, which now trails only the United States in total number of coronavirus cases, 65 percent of adults with cell phones say it is more important for people to stay at home and reduce the spread of the virus, even if it damages the economy, but this is down from 76 percent in early April. Twenty-eight percent instead say it is more important for people to end social isolation and stimulate the economy, even if it contributes to the spread of the virus, up from 18 percent. Six in 10 favor implementing a lockdown in order to slow the spread of the virus, with 36 percent opposed. Despite the spread of cases, more are now leaving their homes to do non-essential activities, four in 10, compared with three in 10 in late April ([Datafolha 5/25-5/26](#)).

In Great Britain, about two-thirds say the coronavirus has reduced their freedom and independence. Still vast majorities continue to say they're practicing social distancing when outside their home and avoiding contact with older and vulnerable adults. A quarter expect it'll be more than a year before life returns to normal, up from one in 10 after the first week of

lockdown. Just four in 10 feel they have enough information about the U.K.'s plan to deal with COVID-19, the lowest since the lockdown began ([Office for National Statistics 5/14-5/17](#)).

In India, 57 percent of households with a wage earner report a loss of income since the nationwide coronavirus lockdown began. As in the United States, those with less education and lower incomes are particularly likely to have lost their jobs because of the pandemic. Indians aged 45-60 also are especially apt to report a job loss. Fifty-seven percent think it'll be more than a year before the country's economy recovers. Fewer – 40 percent - think it'll take that long for their personal finances to recover ([CVoter 5/8-5/12](#)).

In Japan, a slim majority (53 percent) approves of the government's moves to lift the state of emergency for the entire country; 31 percent say it's too soon, while 6 percent say it's too late. More say virus transmission prevention should be a higher priority than local economic activity, 42 vs. 23 percent; 33 percent couldn't say. Six in 10 disapprove of how Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's administration has handled the coronavirus crisis, up 11 points in two-and-a-half weeks ([Mainichi Shimbun 5/23](#)).

A poll conducted in April at the height of Italy's epidemic, but just recently released, found Italians broadly supportive of the government-imposed lockdown, with nine in 10 saying the restrictions on movement and work were useful and a similar number saying the government's instructions were clear. About seven in 10 reported that on an average day they did not leave their home during the lockdown ([Istat 4/5-4/21](#)).

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

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