



COVID-19 Survey Summary: June 25, 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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Worry about coronavirus infection is at pandemic lows in two surveys released this week and vast numbers of Americans are returning to many of their pre-pandemic routines – albeit with the use of public transportation a notable exception.

Even as the public’s emergence from the pandemic proceeds, vaccine uptake has slowed, with coverage lagging particularly among young adults.

Among other newly released studies, one shows the largest decline in Americans’ life expectancy since World War II, with sharp racial/ethnic disparities and troubling comparisons with other rich countries. Another finds an association between birthdays and infection rates.

Internationally, a 17-nation study finds sharp cross-national differences in pandemic-related attitudes, but increases in many countries in the view that divisions in society have worsened since the pandemic. This peaks in the United States, and fewer here than elsewhere express optimism about the health care system’s ability to handle another global health emergency.

Vaccines

Polls released this week align with [CDC estimates](#) showing that the rate of new vaccinations has slowed considerably in recent weeks:

- In close convergence, 64 percent in one survey, 65 percent in another (among registered voters) and 66 percent in a third say they’ve received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine. The first estimate is unchanged from early May, while the second is up 6 percentage points since late May and the third is up 15 points from April ([AP-NORC 6/10-6/14](#), [Fox News 6/19-6/22](#), [Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).
- Among those who are not vaccinated, 46 percent say they definitely will not get a shot and 29 percent probably will not ([AP-NORC 6/10-6/14](#)). Asked another way, 2 percent of all adults still plan to get vaccinated as soon as possible, 9 percent plan to wait and see and 21 percent say it’s likely they will never get vaccinated if they can avoid it.

Half the public thinks the decrease in COVID-19 cases in the country is due mostly to the availability of vaccines, up from 20 percent in March. An additional 26 percent say vaccines have at least something to do with the decrease. About two in 10 say vaccines don't have much or anything to do with the drop in cases, down from three in 10 in March.

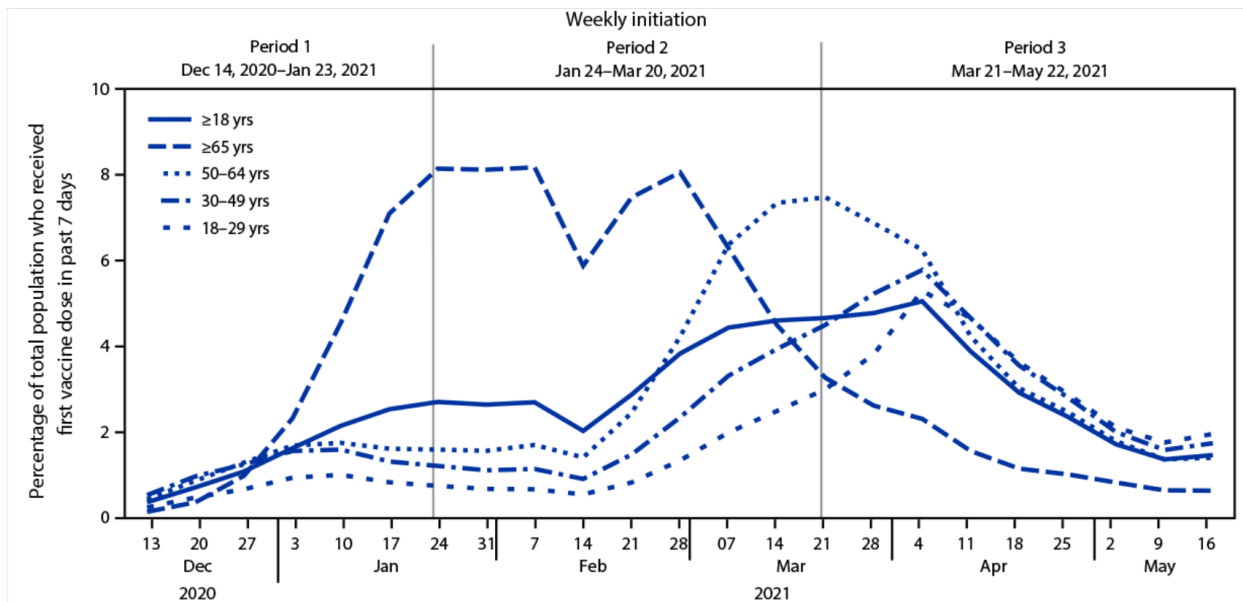
However, in a separate question, more than half say most (23 percent) or some (31 percent) of the decrease is just a product of the virus running its course and would have happened without the vaccines. That's down from about six in 10 in March.

Among those who have been vaccinated, about seven in 10 attribute most of the decline in cases to vaccines, while just 13 percent say it mostly is a natural outcome. This flips among those who say they won't get vaccinated: Just 6 percent in this group think the drop in cases is mostly due to the vaccine, while 55 percent cite the virus running its course ([Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).

Vaccine Coverage among Younger Adults

A CDC report finds vaccine coverage likely to lag among 18- to 29-year-olds if current rates persist. An analysis of data from Dec. 14 to May 22 finds that weekly vaccinations among adults younger than 30 peaked at 5 percent in early April – considerably below the peak among older adults – and since have decreased to 2 percent.

If current rates hold, the authors project that 58 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds will be vaccinated by the end of August, compared with 71 percent of those age 30-49, 86 percent in the 50-64 group and 95 percent of those 65 and older. The authors stress that high vaccination coverage is needed across all age groups to reduce the spread of COVID-19 ([CDC 12/14/20-5/22/21](#)).



Another CDC study investigated vaccine hesitancy among adults younger than 40. In eight national surveys from early March to early May, 52 percent had been vaccinated or definitely intended to get a shot, 23 percent said they probably would do so or were unsure and a quarter said they were unlikely to get vaccinated. Hesitancy was highest among Black Americans, those who live outside of metropolitan areas and those with less education, lower household incomes and no health insurance.

Those who said they probably or definitely would not get vaccinated were most apt to cite general distrust of vaccines (57 percent) or side effects (56 percent) as top reasons. Those who said they probably would get vaccinated or were unsure cited possible side effects (56 percent) and safety (53 percent) as leading reasons not to act.

Among the more persuadable group – those who were unsure or probably planning to get vaccinated – pluralities said they would be motivated to get the vaccine if they had more information on its safety (39 percent), more information on its effectiveness (29 percent), whether it would prevent them from spreading COVID-19 to friends and family (28 percent) or whether it would allow them to resume social activities (21 percent).

Fewer than half in this group, 45 percent, trusted the CDC as a source of vaccine information and 39 percent trusted primary healthcare providers. Fewer than 10 percent trusted employers, social media or religious organizations for vaccine information ([CDC 3/5-5/2](#)).

Changes in Life Expectancy

An analysis of provisional mortality data in 17 high-income countries finds that life expectancy in the United States decreased by 1.87 years from 2018 to 2020, its largest decline since World War II. That's 8.5 times the average decrease in the other high-income countries studied (-0.22 years). The shift widened the gap in life expectancy between the United States and its peer countries to 4.69 years, up from 3.05 years in 2018.

The reductions in life expectancy in the United States were higher among Hispanic people (-3.9 years) and Black people (-3.3 years) than white people (-1.4 years). Decreases among Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black adults were 18 and 15 times the average in other high-income countries. This study uses data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the Human Mortality Database ([BMJ, 2021](#)).

Vaccine Requirements

Forty-nine percent of registered voters say businesses should not be allowed to require customers to provide proof of vaccination or a negative test result; 44 percent say this should be permitted. At the same time, more support than oppose allowing employers to require employees to provide proof of vaccination, 51-42 percent ([Fox News 6/19-6/22](#)).

Coronavirus Concerns

Concerns about the virus continue to drop. One poll finds 21 percent extremely or very worried about themselves or someone in their family being infected, down 14 points since the end of March to a pandemic low. In another, 23 percent are very concerned about someone in their family becoming seriously ill from the virus, also a low, down 17 points since March and 37 points since its peak in January ([AP-NORC 6/10-6/14](#), [Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).

Still, 57 percent say they're at least somewhat concerned about another surge happening if not enough people get vaccinated, though just a quarter are very concerned about this ([Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).

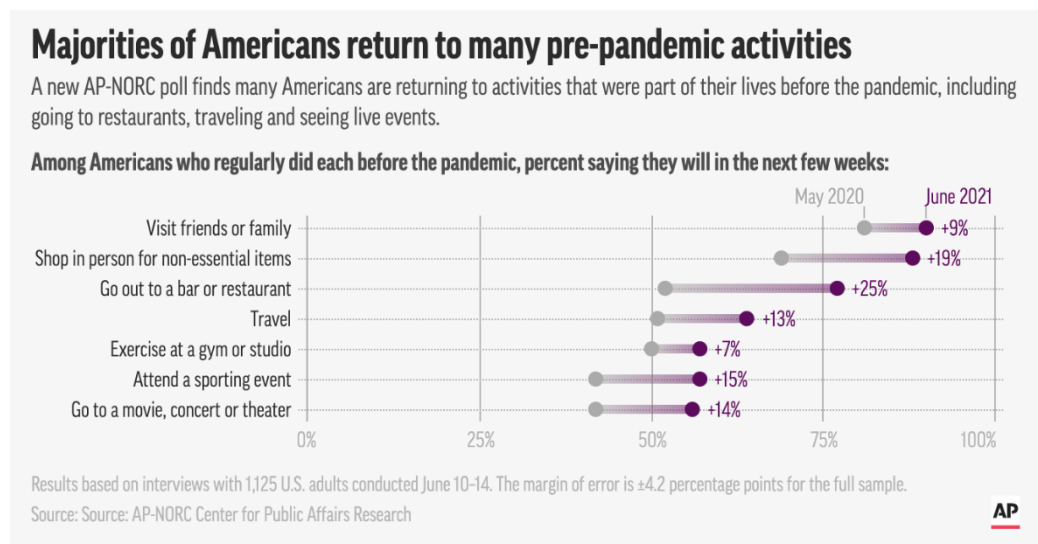
Resuming Activities

Polls this week also show continued evidence that fewer Americans are taking precautions against the virus:

- Fifty-seven percent always or often are staying away from large groups, down from 68 percent just more than a month ago and 77 percent in late February.
- Fifty-six percent are frequently wearing a face mask when around other people outside their home, down 26 points since late February. (Four in 10 say they're highly likely to wear a mask while participating in indoor activities in the next few weeks, vs. 28 percent for outdoor activities.)
- Half are always or often avoiding nonessential travel, vs. 72 percent in late February.
- Forty-four percent say they're frequently avoiding other people as much as possible, down 22 points in the same time period.

Many also are returning to their pre-pandemic routine. Roughly nine in 10 say that in the next few weeks they likely will visit friends and family (90 percent) or go shopping in person for non-essential items (88 percent). About three-quarters

plan to go out to a bar or restaurant (77 percent), get a haircut (75 percent) or attend religious



services in person (73 percent). (Results are among those who engaged in such activities regularly before the shutdown.)

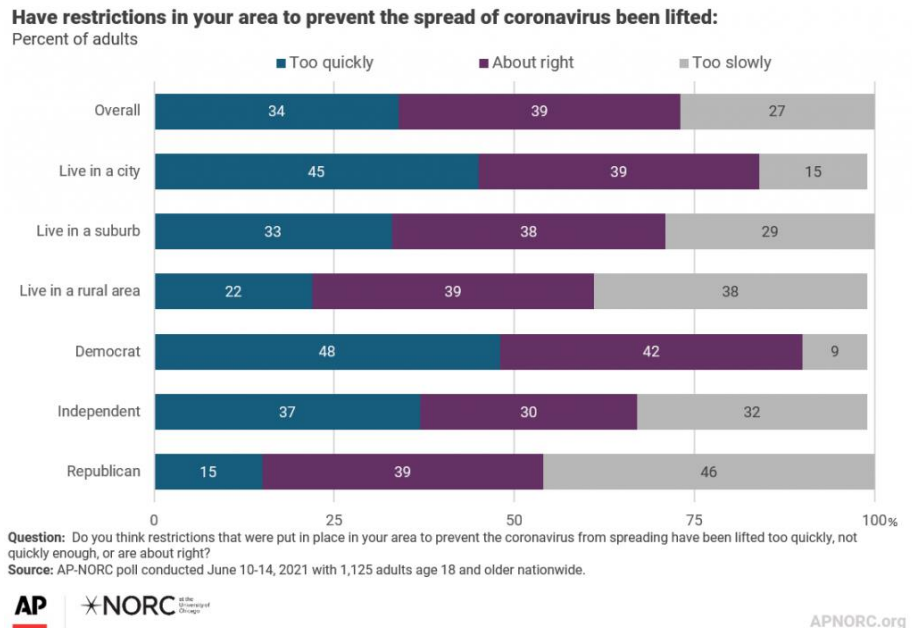
Fewer but more than half of those who regularly did so before the pandemic plan to travel (64 percent), attend a sporting event (57 percent), exercise at the gym or studio (57 percent) or go to the movies, a concert or the theater (56 percent). But many of those who regularly used public transportation before the shutdown remain reluctant to use it now – just 44 percent say they definitely or probably will do so in the next few weeks ([AP-NORC 6/10-6/14](#)).

All told, eight in 10 registered voters say they’re at least somewhat comfortable going out in public places such as restaurants and stores right now, up from 52 percent a year ago. However, half think the pandemic permanently has changed the way we live in the United States, compared with 42 percent who think the changes are just temporary and 6 percent who think the pandemic didn’t really change things at all ([Fox News 6/19-6/22](#)).

Coronavirus Restrictions

Four in 10 adults are satisfied with the speed with which local coronavirus restrictions have been lifted; a third think they’re being lifted too quickly and 27 percent say not quickly enough. A quarter are extremely or very concerned that lifting restrictions will lead to increased infection in their area, vs. 54 percent in May 2020.

Forty-five percent of urban residents say restrictions have been lifted too quickly, vs. 33 percent in the suburbs and 22 percent in rural areas. Nearly half of Democrats (48 percent) think restrictions have been lifted too quickly, while about as many Republicans (46 percent) say it’s been too slow ([AP-NORC 6/10-6/14](#)).



Mask Guidance

Six in 10 say they trust the face mask guidance issued by the CDC either a great deal (29 percent) or some (32 percent). Twenty-seven percent do not trust it at all.

Nearly four in 10 say that even with the change in guidance they're still wearing a mask about as often as they did before, a third say they're wearing a mask less, 12 percent are not wearing a mask at all anymore and 15 percent say they rarely wore a mask to begin with.

Forty-one percent of vaccinated people still are wearing their mask about as often as before, as are 52 percent of those who have not been vaccinated but plan to – compared with just a quarter of those who don't plan to get vaccinated. About half in that group rarely wore masks in the first place ([Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).

Financial Impacts

Americans' assessments of their personal finances have recovered fully from their pandemic losses. Sixty-nine percent rate their personal finances positively, essentially even with their level at the onset of the pandemic and within sight of their record high in weekly data since December 1985 ([CCI 6/20](#)).

Twenty-seven percent say they're falling behind financially, down 5 points since last August. Fifty-six percent say their financial situation is holding steady, up 6 points in the same period, and 17 percent are getting ahead, unchanged ([Fox News 6/19-6/22](#)).

Fifty-one percent call it a good time to buy things, a 15-month high ([CCI 6/20](#)). Still, inflation pressures in the economic recovery are a concern. Seven in 10 say recent increases in grocery prices have caused financial hardship for their family, including 29 percent who report serious hardship. An identical 29 percent report serious hardship because of increased gas prices, 27 percent because of increased health care costs and 23 percent because of a higher mortgage or rent expenses.

Sixty-two percent call the additional unemployment benefits provided by the federal government last year “a necessary lifeline for unemployed Americans.” Thirty-five percent instead say they “were unnecessary and amounted to a paid vacation for too many people.”

That said, a slim majority, 53 percent, think the additional federal unemployment benefits some people are getting today are hurting the economic recovery by discouraging people from looking for jobs, while 45 percent think they're helping by supporting people looking for work ([Fox News 6/19-6/22](#)).

Pandemic Origins

Asked about possible origins of the coronavirus, people by 2-1, 60-31 percent, say it's more likely that it was “created by scientists in China and leaked from their laboratory” than that it “evolved from nature and spread to humans at a Chinese animal market” ([Fox News 6/19-6/22](#)).

Alcohol Use Among Older Adults

In newly released results from a January poll, 27 percent of adults age 50-80 reported a decrease in their alcohol use during the pandemic, 14 percent reported an increase and six in 10 said

there'd been no change. Increase in alcohol use during the pandemic was more common among those who said a reason they drank alcohol was to help with pain (49 percent), to cope with stress (48 percent), out of boredom (46 percent) and to help with mood (38 percent). By contrast, just 11 percent who reported drinking for social reasons said they'd increased their drinking.

Older adults who reported a lack of companionship in the past year were more likely to say their alcohol use had increased than those who hardly ever lacked companionship (19 vs. 12 percent), as were those who reported frequently feeling isolated compared with those who hardly felt isolated (19 vs. 10 percent) ([UM National Poll on Healthy Aging January](#)).

Influence of Religion

After doubling last spring amid the pandemic, the share of Americans who think religion as a whole is increasing its influence on American life has declined steadily, now to 16 percent, about where it was pre-pandemic. More than eight in 10 instead now say religion is losing its influence, up from 58 percent in April 2020 ([Gallup 5/3-5/18](#)).

Birthday Parties and COVID-19 Cases

A study finds an association between birthdays, which likely correspond to informal social gatherings, and a rise in COVID-19 infections, especially in areas with high rates of community spread. Among counties in the top 10 percent of COVID-19 prevalence, households with a recent birthday had 8.6 more diagnoses per 10,000 individuals compared with households without a recent birthday, corresponding to a 31 percent relative increase in the likelihood of infection.

The authors also found that risks of contracting COVID-19 were higher after a child's birthday than after an adult's birthday. The results suggest that small gatherings in areas with high community transmission likely accelerated the spread of the coronavirus in 2020. The analysis uses private insurance health care data of 2.9 million households from January to November 2020 ([Whaley et al., 2021](#)).

Government Response

Sixty-four percent of registered voters approve of how Joe Biden is handling the pandemic ([Fox News 6/19-6/22](#)) and six in 10 adults say he has done a "good job" dealing with the outbreak, both essentially unchanged. Fifty-eight percent say their state's governor has done a good job, also little changed, and 55 percent say the same of health agencies in the federal government, up 5 points since March ([Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).

Fewer – 44 percent – approve of how their state government is handling the outbreak. That's up 5 points since late February to match the level last August, but still well below the peak of 63 percent in April 2020. An identical 44 percent approve of their city or local government's response, essentially unchanged since February, but also off the April 2020 peak (63 percent).

Even fewer, 38 percent, approve of the federal government's response, but that's up from a low of 23 percent in August 2020 and roughly matches the April 2020 high (40 percent) ([AP-NORC 6/10-6/14](#)).

Forty-two percent say the American public has done a good job dealing with the outbreak, about the same as in April, up from a low of 26 percent last August ([Monmouth 6/9-6/14](#)).

State Results

In Texas, 68 percent of adults say they have received a coronavirus vaccine or intend to do so, leaving 29 percent who don't plan to get vaccinated. Fifty-one percent support allowing hospitals to require their employees to get vaccinated, with 45 percent opposed. By contrast, 66 percent oppose allowing businesses to require proof of vaccination from their customers. More registered voters approve than disapprove of how Gov. Greg Abbott is handling the response to the coronavirus, 53-45 percent, up from an even split, 47-48 percent, last July. Views of President Biden are even more positive – 58-37 percent, approve-disapprove ([Quinnipiac 6/15-6/21](#)).

In New Hampshire, the share who feels high levels of pandemic-related stress is down from 53 percent in November to 22 percent today. Three-quarters approve of Gov. Chris Sununu's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the most since October 2020. Sixteen percent anticipate that the state's economy will recover fully from the pandemic within three months, 22 percent think it will happen within six months, 33 percent within twelve months and 29 percent longer than that. The share who think recovery will take longer than a year is down from 58 percent in February to its lowest in data since July 2020.

Face mask use has decreased dramatically. In the sharpest declines, 37 percent say they always wear a mask while shopping at a grocery store or pharmacy, down from 82 percent in May; and three in 10 say they always wear one while getting takeout from a restaurant, down 39 points. People who have not received a vaccine are less apt than vaccinated adults to report wearing masks ([UNH 6/17-6/21](#)).

In Iowa, two-thirds are confident the pandemic will continue to decline, while 28 percent remain worried about a new surge of cases or deaths. Iowans are divided on a new law that bars cities, counties and schools from requiring masks; 49 percent favor it, while 46 percent are opposed. There's a similar division on a new law that bars vaccine passports, 47-46 percent. Sixty-four percent say that when they see someone wearing a face mask in a public place indoors they think they are acting responsibly; two in 10 think they're somewhat overreacting and 7 percent think they're overreacting in a way that is problematic ([Des Moines Register/Mediacom 6/13-6/16](#)).

International Results

Most adults across 17 advanced economies say their country is more divided now than before the pandemic. Assessments of coronavirus restrictions, economic recoveries and overall responses to the pandemic are mixed, though with countries with fewer recorded COVID-19 deaths generally earning higher marks for their performance.

Across the countries surveyed, a median of 61 percent say divisions in their society have worsened since the start of the pandemic, including half or more in 13 of the 17. This ranges from 88 percent in the United States to about two in 10 in New Zealand and Taiwan and 12 percent in Singapore. This view has increased significantly since last summer in 12 of 13 countries in which trend data are available, including especially sharp increases in Canada (+32 points), Japan (+32) and the Netherlands (+30).

A median of 41 percent think the coronavirus restrictions in their country were about right, with the rest saying they did not go far enough (37 percent) or went too far (18 percent). People in the Asia-Pacific region are more apt to say restrictions were about right, while those in North American and European countries are more apt to express a preference for more restrictions.

Views of economic recoveries from the pandemic also vary widely. At one end of the spectrum, about three-quarters in Sweden, Singapore and Australia think their economies are recovering in ways that show the strengths of their economic systems. Conversely, 80 percent of adults in Spain and 77 percent in Japan are pessimistic about their country's recovery.

Most countries earn positive marks in assessments of their coronavirus response generally. A median of 60 percent say their country has done a good job dealing with the outbreak, reaching more than nine in 10 in Singapore, New Zealand and Taiwan – all countries which had fewer than 100 recorded coronavirus deaths at the time of the surveys. The number of coronavirus deaths in one's country is strongly associated with ratings of the country's response overall.

Looking ahead, majorities across each country are optimistic about their health care system's ability to handle a future global health emergency, with a median of 75 percent holding this view. This drops to 55 percent in the United States, a low among countries surveyed ([Pew](#)).

In other international results, a new survey of Japanese voters finds limited, albeit growing, support for the Tokyo Olympics, with 34 percent saying it should be held this summer, up from 14 percent in May. Still, 62 percent want it to be canceled or postponed and 83 percent say they "feel unsafe" about holding the games this summer. Just more than half, 53 percent, think no spectators should be allowed at the games and 42 percent think the number of spectators should be limited ([Asahi Shimbun 6/19-6/20](#)).

In a separate Japan poll, three-quarters of adults think the country's vaccination process has been slow and 52 percent think the vaccine rollout has been going poorly. Only about a quarter think the vaccine program is going smoothly, with 21 percent expressing no opinion. Twelve percent say they have been vaccinated and an additional 57 percent say they would get vaccinated as soon as they're eligible, leaving 24 percent who would "wait and see" and 4 percent who would not get the vaccine. In terms of expectations, 53 percent think a resurgence of the coronavirus is likely, vs. 27 percent who think it will be kept under control. (The rest, 20 percent, are unsure.) ([Mainichi Shimbun 6/19](#))

In Chile, 82 percent of adults have received at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, up 5 points since last week. More than six in 10 (63 percent) have received two doses. The rest are split between saying they'll get the vaccine as soon as it's available to them (7 percent), adopting

a “wait and see” approach (5 percent) or not getting the vaccine at all (6 percent). Fifty-six percent are worried about catching the coronavirus, down 5 points in a week, and 37 percent approve of how the government is handling the pandemic, little changed since late May ([Cadem 6/16-6/17](#)).

In South Korea, a third of adults say they are vaccinated, including 78 percent of those age 60 and older. Among the rest, more than eight in 10 say they definitely (61 percent) or probably (23 percent) will get vaccinated, up from about seven in 10 in May, leaving 11 percent who are not inclined to get a vaccine. Pfizer is the most trusted vaccine developer, with 73 percent rating it as very or somewhat trustworthy, compared with 55 percent for AstraZeneca and 50 percent for Janssen. Assessments of the government’s response to COVID-19 are positive, with 64 percent saying it’s doing a good job, up 14 points since May ([Gallup Korea 6/15-6/16](#)).

In Great Britain, 83 percent of adults have received at least one dose of a vaccine, including six in 10 who have received two doses, up from 55 percent last week. In all, 95 percent of adults have received a vaccine or say they’re likely to get one. As vaccinations rise, adherence to some social distancing measures continues to ease. Two-thirds of adults say they always or often maintained social distance with people outside their home in the past week, a low in data since September; and 10 percent say they stayed home except for work, exercise or essential errands, its lowest in data since last May. Britons continue to report very widespread use of face masks when outside their home (96 percent) and handwashing when returning from public places (85 percent) ([Office for National Statistics 6/9-6/13](#)).

In a newly released poll in Turkey, 43 percent of adults said the country’s 10 p.m. curfew on weekdays violates their rights and freedoms, while 57 percent think it’s needed to control the spread of the coronavirus. Forty-three percent also say the 9 p.m. curfew for businesses such as cafes and restaurants is a violation of their rights, while half say the curfew on Sundays is a restriction of their rights and freedoms ([Istanbul Economic Research 6/2-6/5](#)).

In Canada, eight in 10 adults say their province was cautious (46 percent) or somewhat cautious (35 percent) in its plan to reopen. A quarter say they regularly will wear a mask in crowded places after their community fully opens, 44 percent say they will occasionally do this and 20 percent say they won’t mask up after reopening. Roughly three-quarters support making it mandatory to show proof of vaccination for travel or large gatherings and more than eight in 10 are open to having an annual COVID-19 booster vaccine ([Nanos 5/30-6/2](#)).

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

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