



COVID-19 Survey Summary: August 14, 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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Contact and Concern

In a new milestone, half of Americans now say they know someone in the United States who has tested positive for the coronavirus, up from 41 percent a month ago to a new high. The virus has touched all regions of the country – 51 percent in the Midwest and South alike know someone who has tested positive, as do 49 percent in the Northeast and 47 percent in the West.

A racial and ethnic gap on this measure largely has disappeared, with 51 percent of whites and 47 percent of Blacks and Hispanics alike now saying they know someone who has tested positive. However, Blacks and Hispanics remain much more likely than whites to know someone who has died from the virus, 35 and 28 vs. 16 percent, respectively ([Axios/Ipsos 8/7-8/10](#)).

Pessimism about the trajectory of the pandemic, while still broad, has eased. Two-thirds of Americans think the coronavirus situation in the United States is getting worse, down from 72 percent last week. Views that it's getting a lot worse are down 11 percentage points in two weeks ([Gallup 7/27-8/2](#)).

Still, many worries about the virus remain elevated compared with their levels in early- to mid-June:

- Seven in 10 are at least somewhat concerned about their community reopening too soon, about the same as last week, but up from 64 percent in early June.
- Sixty-nine percent think it'd be at least a moderate risk to return to their normal pre-coronavirus life, also essentially unchanged from last week, but up from 57 percent in early June ([Axios/Ipsos 8/7-8/10](#)).
- Sixty percent of registered voters are very concerned about the spread of the virus in the United States, compared with 54 percent in mid-June ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#)).
- Nearly six in 10 are worried about getting the coronavirus, similar to recent weeks, but in mid-June, it was fewer than half ([Gallup 7/27-8/2](#)).

- Half of registered voters think the coronavirus in the United States is “not under control at all,” unchanged since July, but up from 33 percent in mid-June ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#)).

Seven in 10 Americans now say the coronavirus is a “real threat,” up from 56 percent in March; 27 percent say it’s been “blown out of proportion,” down from 38 percent. Three-quarters think it’s a good idea to pass a national mandate to require people to wear a mask in public places ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Fewer than four in 10 are confident that the country will be able to limit the impact of the outbreak over the next few weeks, about the same as in June, but lower than in May, April and March. As many, 38 percent, are not at all confident in the country’s ability to limit the outbreak, a number that’s steadily grown from 15 percent in March.

Among registered voters, 53 percent think reopening more of the economy now is not worth the potential health risk ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#)). More, 61 percent, are more concerned that states are lifting restrictions too quickly than too slowly, essentially unchanged since May ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)).

Back to School?

Fifty-five percent of Americans think it’s a bad idea to have students return to school, while 40 percent say it’s a good idea. The partisan divide in these views remains vast: Three-quarters of Republicans think it’s a good idea to send kids to school, while 83 percent of Democrats call it a bad idea ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Two-thirds of parents express concerns about schools in their communities reopening too soon (as do 74 percent of non-parents), and a similar share see sending their child back to school as a large or moderate risk to their health and well-being. Seventy-two percent are at least somewhat concerned about their child getting sick.

A quarter of parents say they’ve already sent their child back to school. Seventeen percent say their child has returned to distance-based classes, 5 percent are back to in-person school and 3 percent are back to a school taking a hybrid approach ([Axios/Ipsos 8/7-8/10](#)).

See more on back-to-school attitudes in last week’s [summary](#).

Pediatric Health Impacts

A CDC report found a low coronavirus-associated hospitalization rate for children compared with adults (8 per 100,000 vs. 164.5 per 100,000), but a similar rate of admission to intensive care units, one in three. Using data on confirmed coronavirus-associated hospitalizations in 99 counties in 14 states from March 1 to July 25, the study found 576 pediatric hospitalizations. Of the 208 cases with complete medical charts available, one in three was admitted to an ICU.

The median age for hospitalized pediatric cases was 8, and infants younger than 3 months accounted for 19 percent of cases. Compared with white children, hospitalization rates for Hispanic and Black children were nearly eight and five times higher, respectively. Specifically, among the 526 children for whom race and ethnicity information was included, 46 percent were Hispanic, 30 percent were Black and 14 percent were white ([CDC 3/1-7/25](#)).

Using publicly reported state data, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Children's Hospital Association found:

- As of Aug. 6, there were 380,174 child cases of COVID-19 in available data from 49 states, New York City, D.C., Puerto Rico and Guam, which represents about 9 percent of all cases. (States used different age ranges for children, mostly 0-17 or 0-19.)
- From July 9 to Aug. 6 alone, there were 179,990 new cases of COVID-19 in children.
- In the nine states that provided age distributions for coronavirus testing, children received 3 to 12 percent of all tests, and 3.7 to 18.6 percent of them tested positive for the virus.
- In the 20 states (and New York City) that provided information about age distributions for hospitalizations, children made up 0.5 to 5.3 percent of all hospitalizations, and 0.3 to 8.9 percent of all child COVID-19 cases resulted in hospitalization.
- Based on data from 44 states and New York City, children made up 0 to 0.4 percent of all COVID-19 deaths, with 19 states reporting no child deaths. From 0 to 0.5 percent of all child COVID-19 cases in these states resulted in death ([CHA/AAP 8/6](#)).

Religious Practice in a Pandemic

Although many state and local governments have exempted religious institutions from coronavirus restrictions, a poll conducted in mid-July found that the vast majority of Americans, 79 percent, thought houses of worship should be required to follow the same rules about social distancing and large gatherings as other establishments in their area. Evangelical Protestants were most apt to support giving houses of worship greater flexibility, but even in this group more than six in 10 said they ought to follow the same rules as other businesses and organizations.

Among those who typically attend religious services, just 13 percent thought their house of worship should be open normally, as it was before the outbreak. Twice as many, 28 percent, said it should be closed entirely. Most, 57 percent, said it should be open, but with modifications such as social distancing, mask requirements and limits on attendance. This aligned fairly closely with reality: Fifty-five percent said their house of worship was open with modifications, 31 percent said it was closed and 6 percent said it was open without restrictions. Eight in 10 said services were being streamed or recorded so people could watch online.

Sixty-four percent of those who attend religious services least monthly said they were very (34 percent) or somewhat (29 percent) confident they could attend in-person services without catching or spreading the coronavirus. At the same time, just a third of these regular attendees said they'd gone to a service in the previous month; far more – 72 percent – watched religious services online or on TV.

Aligning with coronavirus concerns more broadly, Black and Hispanic worshippers were less confident than whites that they could safely attend in-person services (49 and 51 vs. 72 percent, respectively). Nineteen percent of Blacks and 24 percent of Hispanics said they'd attended services in person in the previous month, compared with 39 percent of whites ([Pew 7/13-7/19](#)).

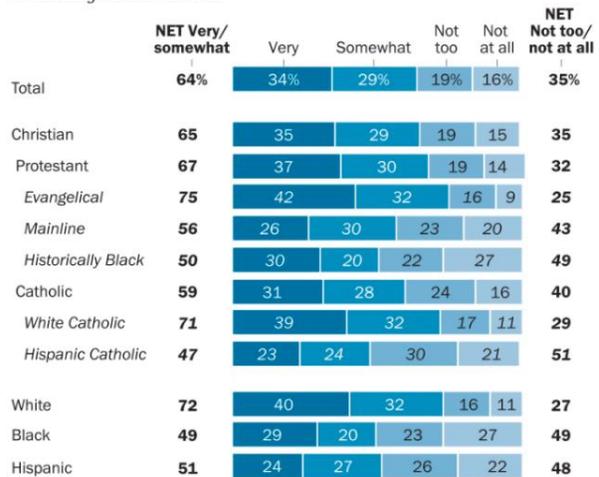
Daily Life

The number of Americans venturing outside the house (or avoiding doing so) is little changed in recent weeks:

- Forty-seven percent say they've visited a non-grocery retail store in the past week, 44 percent have visited friends and relatives, 36 percent have gone out to eat and 17 percent have visited elderly relatives, all relatively stable recently after advancing from April lows ([Axios/Ipsos 8/7-8/10](#)).
- In the past 24 hours, half say they've visited a grocery store, a quarter have visited a restaurant, 23 percent have gone to someone else's home or apartment, 18 percent have visited a pharmacy, 13 percent have gone to a doctor's office, hospital or treatment center, 6 percent to a salon or barbershop, and 3 percent to the gym. The numbers engaging in these activities in the past 24 hours also generally hit lows in April, while holding relatively steady for the past month or longer.
- On the flip side, 78 percent have avoided going to events with large crowds in the past week because of concern about the coronavirus, three-quarters have avoided mass transit, six in 10 have avoided going to public places such as stores or restaurants and 51 percent have avoided small gatherings of friends and family. Again, all are also mostly unchanged for at least the past month ([Gallup 7/27-8/2](#)).

More than six-in-ten regular attenders at least somewhat confident they can safely attend religious services without catching, spreading COVID-19

Among U.S. religious attenders, % who say they are ___ confident that they could safely attend in-person religious services right now without spreading or catching the coronavirus



Note: Religious attenders are those who said, in a 2019 survey, that they typically attend religious services monthly or more often, or who said in the new survey that they attended religious services in person in the last month. The survey did not obtain enough interviews with members of non-Christian religious groups in this category to analyze separately. Those who did not answer are not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals indicated due to rounding. White and Black adults include those who report being only one race and are not Hispanic. Hispanics are of any race.

Source: Survey conducted July 13-19, 2020, among U.S. adults.
 Americans Oppose Religious Exemptions From Coronavirus-Related Restrictions

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When it comes to activities outside the home, seven in 10 Americans think it's a bad idea to allow large groups of people to attend religious, social or sporting events; six in 10 think it's a bad idea to allow children to take part in local or school sports; and 52 percent think it's a bad idea to open restaurants for people to eat in them. However, eight in 10 think it's a good idea to eat outside at restaurants and 58 percent think it's a good idea for people to return to work ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

In a bright spot, 36 percent of parents say the amount of time they're able to spend with their child has improved in the past few weeks; 11 percent say it's gotten worse ([Axios/Ipsos 8/7-8/10](#)).

Coping with the Pandemic

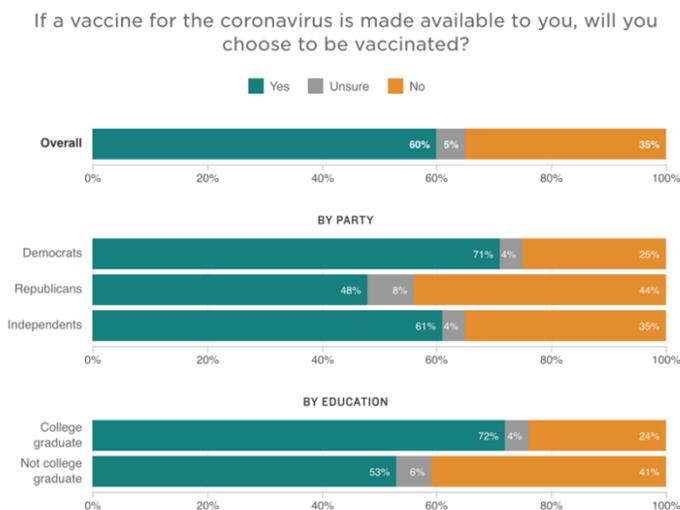
Nine in 10 Americans are very (55 percent) or somewhat (36 percent) hopeful that they'll be able to get their lives back to normal after the outbreak, though the share who are very hopeful has declined from 69 percent in April. In the meantime, the outbreak continues to take a toll: More than half say their daily stress level has gone up during the pandemic, including 34 percent who say it's gone up a lot, an increase of 7 points since April ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)). Nearly four in 10 also say they've gained weight in the past few weeks ([Axios/Ipsos 8/7-8/10](#)).

To help cope with the pandemic, nearly three-quarters say they're watching TV or movies on a daily basis and 57 percent say they're spending time outdoors every day. Fewer say they're praying (43 percent), exercising or talking on the phone or by videoconference with friends or family (34 percent each), reading scripture (17 percent), meditating (16 percent) or practicing yoga (2 percent) ([Pew 7/13-7/19](#)).

Vaccination

Six in 10 Americans say that if a vaccine were made available to them, they'd choose to get vaccinated. (In data [last week](#), 65 percent said they'd get an FDA-approve vaccine if it were available at no cost.) Two-thirds of whites say they'd get vaccinated, compared with 49 percent of Latinos and 48 percent of Blacks.

There's a big split by education: Those with a college degree are 19 points more likely to say they'd get vaccinated than those without a degree, 72 vs. 53 percent.



Source: NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist Poll of 1,118 adults, conducted Aug. 3-11. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.6 percentage points. Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.
Credit: Ruth Talbot/NPR

Partisanship is a factor as well; intention to get vaccinated is 71 percent among Democrats, 61 percent among independents and 48 percent among Republicans. There's a 19-point gender gap among Democrats, with 84 percent of Democratic men saying they'd get the vaccine vs. 65 percent of Democratic women; and a 12-point gap between independent men and women (66 vs. 54 percent). Republican men and women are about equally likely to say they'd get vaccinated ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Government Response

A majority of Americans, 52 percent, think the United States is handling the pandemic worse than other countries; three in 10 think it's handling it about the same as other countries, while 15 percent think it's doing a better job.

Fifty-seven percent think President Trump is doing a bad job dealing with the outbreak, similar to views in late June ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)). Two-thirds do not trust the information they hear from him about the virus, up from 60 percent in March ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Nearly six in 10 think the measures taken by the federal government to slow the spread of the virus have not gone far enough, nearly double the number who think they've been appropriate (58 vs. 30 percent). One in 10 says the measures have gone too far ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)). Asked another way, 54 percent of registered voters think the federal government did not take the coronavirus seriously enough; 29 percent think it reacted appropriately and 13 percent say it overreacted ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#)).

Views of state governors and the measures they've taken to slow the spread of the virus are more positive, but have declined. Fifty-seven percent say their governor has done a good job dealing with the outbreak, down from 65 percent in late June. Sixty-two percent trust the information they hear from their state and local government about the coronavirus, down from 72 percent in March ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Forty-four percent think the measures taken by their state have been appropriate, down from 50 percent. (Of the rest, 36 percent think these measures don't go far enough, up from 31 percent; and 19 percent think they go too far, essentially unchanged.)

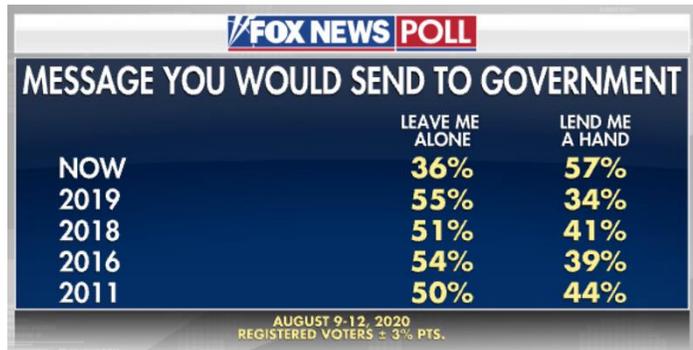
In states led by Democratic governors, half think the measures taken have been appropriate, compared with 38 percent in Republican led states. Nearly half in Republican-led states think their state's measures don't go far enough, compared with a quarter in states with Democratic governors. Measures in states led by Democrats are 10 points more apt to be seen as going too far, 23 vs. 13 percent.

Perceptions of the performance of federal health agencies and trust in the information health officials provide also have declined. Currently, 46 percent say health agencies are doing a good job dealing with the outbreak, down from 57 percent in early June and a high of 66 percent in April ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)). Three-quarters say they trust the information they hear from public health experts about the virus, down from 84 percent in March ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Just a quarter think the American public has done a good job dealing with the outbreak, essentially unchanged since late June but down 20 points compared with earlier that month ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)).

Forty-five percent of registered voters are very or somewhat confident that President Trump can put the country on the road to recovery from the pandemic. Presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden has a similar score, 48 percent. But more are very confident in Trump, 30 percent, than are very confident in Biden, 16 percent ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)). That said, in direct matchups, more registered voters back Biden over Trump to do a better job handling the coronavirus by double-digit margins ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#); [NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

The pandemic has left far more Americans looking for a helping hand from the government than previously. When asked what message they would send to the federal government right now, 57 percent of registered voters say it would be “lend me a hand” compared with 36 percent who say it would be “leave me alone.” This question has been asked seven times in the past nine years, and the previous high for those asking the government to lend a hand was 44 percent, 13 points lower than now, in October of 2011.



A year and a half ago, in February 2019, just 34 percent sought a helping a hand from the government. The 23-point increase since then includes a 31-point jump among Republicans (to 45 percent), a 17-point increase among Democrats (to 71 percent) and a 15-point rise among independents (to 47 percent).

Echoing this desire for greater aid, two-thirds of registered voters are in favor of Congress passing additional unemployment benefits to help people who lost their jobs because of the coronavirus, more than double the number (27 percent) who oppose it ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#)).

Voting

Registered voters are split on whether it will be easy or difficult to vote in the upcoming presidential election, 50 vs. 49 percent. In 2018, far more – 85 percent – thought voting would be easy ([Pew 7/27-8/2](#)).

Nearly six in 10 registered voters think it’s a good idea to make it easier for voters to cast their ballots by mail this year, including nine in 10 Democrats, vs. 20 percent of Republicans ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)). A similar share (60 percent) favor allowing all U.S. citizens to vote by mail if they want to ([Fox News 8/9-8/12](#)).

Nearly half overall say they are either very (32 percent) or somewhat (17 percent) likely to cast their own ballot by mail, with Democrats far more likely to say so than Republicans, 72 vs. 22 percent ([Monmouth 8/6-8/10](#)).

Half say the coronavirus pandemic will be either a major (34 percent) or minor factor (16 percent) in deciding how they vote for president, up from 34 percent in April. Half of Blacks say the pandemic will be a major factor, compared with 36 percent of Latinos and 29 percent of whites. Among Democratic women, 46 percent say the pandemic will be a major factor; among Republican women, just 16 percent say the same ([NPR/PBS/Marist 8/3-8/11](#)).

Cross-Country Comparison

A multinational poll conducted from March to May finds that the early pandemic hit adults in the United States harder than in other high-income countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Among the findings:

- One-third in the United States said they'd experienced stress, anxiety and great sadness that was difficult to cope with by themselves during the outbreak, a significantly higher share than in other countries, where no more than a quarter said the same.
- Among those who said they needed or wanted to get professional help to deal with these feelings, 31 percent in the United States said they were able to get care, significantly fewer than in Australia (54 percent) and Canada (47 percent).
- About three in 10 in the United States faced negative economic effects of the pandemic, such as being unable to pay for basic necessities, using up personal savings or having to borrow money or take out a loan – significantly higher than in the other countries surveyed.
- Roughly a quarter in the United States (27 percent), Australia (26 percent) and Canada (23 percent) said they'd lost a job or source of income, higher than in France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden or the United Kingdom.
- A third rated President Trump's handling of the coronavirus pandemic positively (as "very good" or "good"). In other countries, positive ratings of national leaders' pandemic response ranged from a low of 53 percent (in Sweden) to 94 percent (in Germany) ([The Commonwealth Fund 3/30-5/25](#)).

State Results

In Wisconsin, concern about contracting the coronavirus has increased after declining in May and June – 27 percent of registered voters are very worried, up 8 points since June. Seven in 10 agree that masks should be required in all public places. Views about school re-openings are divided – 45 percent say they're comfortable letting students return to school, 48 percent are uncomfortable. Fifty-four percent disagree that schools and businesses should stay open even if coronavirus cases rise. Sixty-one percent approve of Gov. Tony Evers' handling of the

coronavirus outbreak; four in 10 approve of Trump's response. Forty-six percent say they plan to vote in person in November, 35 percent plan to vote absentee by mail and 12 percent say they will vote early in person ([Marquette Law School 8/4-8/9](#)).

International Results

In Brazil, three-quarters think it is too early for students to return to in-person classrooms, but half think young adults should return to work, provided they are wearing a mask. There is an even split in views about whether the return of football (soccer), even without fans in attendance, is appropriate (45 percent) or too hasty (46 percent). Supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro, who has downplayed the threat of the virus, are more apt to back a return to school and work for young people and a resumption of games.

When it comes to economic impacts, more than six in 10 Brazilians say they've had their job or source of income impaired because of the coronavirus, including more than eight in 10 young people (age 16 to 24). However, more Brazilians overall are leaving the house to go to work – 50 percent in the past few weeks, up 13 points since mid-June; and while 58 percent say they've failed to pay any bills in the past month, that's down 5 points from a month ago. Forty-three percent say they or someone close to them has contracted the coronavirus, little changed since July ([PoderData 8/3-8/5](#)).

In Germany, where daily cases have increased slightly compared with late May and June, concern about the coronavirus has also edged up slightly; 28 percent express great or very great concerns that they could infect themselves or family members, compared with 24 percent in early June. However, by more than 2-1, more think current coronavirus related restrictions are sufficient than think they do not go far enough, 59 vs. 28 percent (with 11 percent saying they go too far). At the same time, 53 percent think the controls to ensure compliance with these measures are insufficient, while 35 percent call them sufficient.

Six in 10 Germans overall, and 58 percent of parents of school-aged children, think that schools are not well prepared for the new school year. When it comes to how schools should reopen, 52 percent of parents favor fully in-person schooling while 44 percent favor switching between in-person and home-based learning. Just 4 percent back lessons that mostly or only take place at home. Eight in 10 parents support mandatory masks in school, but only 20 percent think they need to be worn during classes.

Nearly all – 93 percent – support the recent announcement by the Federal Minister of Health mandating tests for travelers from coronavirus hotspots, but just four in 10 back the decision for the public to assume the costs of these tests. Six in 10 rate the economic situation in Germany negatively and most (70 percent) are concerned that the economy could deteriorate further. Fewer – one in four – are worried about their personal economic situation ([ARD 8/2-8/4](#)).

In Great Britain, 62 percent strongly support rules making it mandatory to wear face coverings in shops and supermarkets and 53 percent strongly support targeted lockdown measures for local areas affected by coronavirus outbreaks; in both cases most of the rest say they “tend to support” these measures, with very few opposing them. Almost all adults who have left their home (96

percent) say they've worn a face covering to slow the spread of coronavirus, up from 84 percent last week and 71 percent the week before. Thirty-seven percent say they'd feel comfortable eating indoors at a restaurant, up 10 points in three weeks; and 21 percent of those who've left the house in the past week say they've visited a café, pub or restaurant, up 11 points in the same time period. Seven in 10 say they'd feel comfortable attending an in-person appointment with a healthcare professional and six in 10 would feel comfortable attending a hospital appointment if their doctor asked them to. Fifty-three percent say they're seeing family members less than they did prior to the pandemic and 64 percent are seeing friends less. Still, more than seven in 10 say they met up with other people to socialize in the past week; of them, 52 percent said they always maintained social distance ([Office for National Statistics 7/29-8/2](#)).

Figure 1: Adults in Great Britain feel more comfortable visiting an indoor restaurant this week than in previous weeks
Great Britain, July 2020 to August 2020



Source: Office for National Statistics - Opinions and Lifestyle Survey

In Turkey, where daily coronavirus cases also have ticked up, 79 percent say they're concerned about the coronavirus, up 17 points since late June to the highest level since the outbreak began ([Istanbul Economic Research 7/29](#)).

In Australia, a poll conducted in May but just released found most Australians had adopted measures to combat the spread of coronavirus, including social distancing (95 percent), washing hands or using hand sanitizer more frequently than usual (84 percent), cancelling personal gatherings (77 percent), avoiding public spaces (75 percent) and changing their travel plans (55 percent). People born overseas were more likely to adopt some measures than native-born Australians, including avoiding public transportation (62 vs. 49 percent) and wearing a face mask (42 vs. 20 percent). Thirty-nine percent of employed Australians said they had worked from home in the past four weeks (a 2019 survey found 32 percent of employed Australians regularly work from home) and one in five overall reported keeping their children home from school. More than six in 10 reported feeling concerned or very concerned about their personal health due to the spread of COVID-19 ([Australian Bureau of Statistics 5/10-5/23](#)).

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

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