



## COVID-19 Survey Summary: August 19, 2022

*The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past two weeks, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).*

Two-thirds of Americans say the pandemic is not over, as many expect cases to rise again this fall and winter and confidence in coronavirus vaccines has waned, new polling finds. Yet high-level concerns are low, a pandemic high have returned to their normal life and consistent mask wearing is at a new low.

In one poll, just 53 percent express confidence in the vaccines' protection against serious illness in breakthrough infections, down 13 points from 10 months ago. In another, 46 percent are very or moderately confident that the vaccines offer protection against new variants, down especially steeply, from 71 percent in July 2021.

Still, many more see coronavirus vaccines as effective rather than as ineffective in preventing serious illness. And while 64 percent see breakthrough infections as likely, far fewer – about a quarter – see this as evidence of vaccine inefficacy.

With school soon back in session, the public splits on vaccine mandates for students. In data from May, more than half of principals and a third of teachers reported being harassed over a coronavirus-related school policy.

Among other results, a steady 56 percent approve of Joe Biden's handling of the pandemic, far exceeding his approval on other issues.

State results from Wisconsin, a 19-country multinational study and international results from Germany and Great Britain also are included in this week's summary.

### Concerns

High-level concern about the coronavirus is muted; in one measure, 9 percent are extremely concerned, 17 percent very concerned. (A third are somewhat concerned.) Top concerns are spreading the virus to people who are at higher risk of serious illness, cited by 28 percent of those with concerns; developing long COVID, 17 percent; and dealing with restrictions or being hospitalized, both 14 percent. One in 10 apiece cites dying or being reinfected ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)).

In another measure, 35 percent are at least somewhat worried about catching the coronavirus, steady since October 2021 albeit up from a low last summer. More, 53 percent, are worried about the spread of new variant strains ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

In July, while three in 10 were very or somewhat worried about contracting the coronavirus in the coming months, more were concerned about specific implications. About half worried that the health of someone in their family would be seriously affected. Four in 10 said the same about their own health, as many cited the risk of long COVID ([Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)).

Twelve percent say the coronavirus is one of the top three issues that worries them, tied for seventh in a list of 18 items. As many also call it one of the top issues facing the country ([FiveThirtyEight-Ipsos 7/21-8/1](#)). In a July survey of Hispanic adults, 17 percent called it one of their top three worries, fifth in a list of 18 items ([Axios-Ipsos 7/21-7/28](#)).

### Risk Assessments

Just a quarter are very confident they can protect themselves from getting infected while in public, down 10 percentage points since April. About half are somewhat confident and another quarter are not confident ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

That said, while a net of half see contracting the coronavirus as a moderate or large health risk, that includes just 15 percent who see it as a large risk. Among activities, steady and low shares see a large risk in taking a vacation (11 percent), returning to normal pre-coronavirus life (9 percent) attending in-person gatherings (8 percent) or dining in at a restaurant (6 percent). A quarter see a large risk in traveling on an airplane or on mass transit ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)).

### Expectations & Return to Normalcy

New daily coronavirus [cases](#) are trending down and [hospitalizations](#) remain mostly flat. Even so, the share who say the coronavirus situation is getting better has fallen 22 points since April to 41 percent ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)). In two polls, two-thirds say the pandemic is not over, both about even with their level last spring ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#), [Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

Two-thirds expect cases to increase in the fall and winter, 27 percent expect no change and 8 percent expect a decrease. Democrats are more apt than Republicans to expect cases to increase ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)). About eight in 10 overall agree that we will never fully be rid of the coronavirus in their lifetime, steady since July ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)).

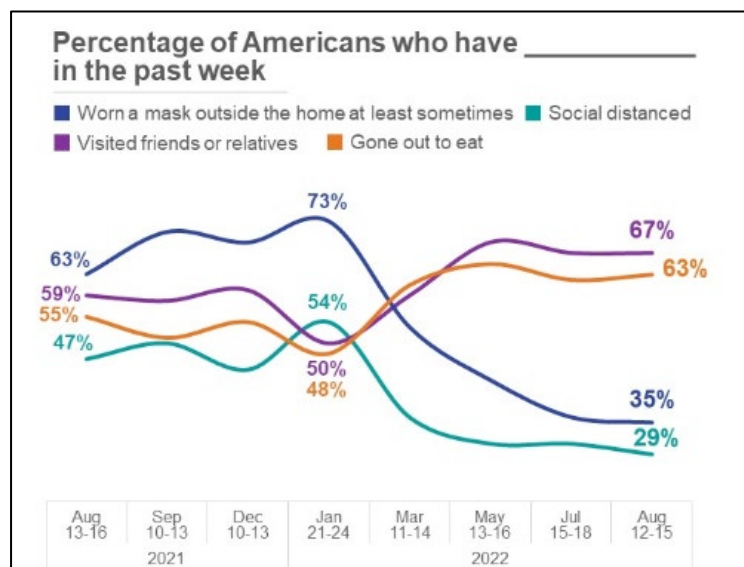
Highs or matching highs in three polls say their lives are back to normal ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#), [Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#), [Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)). Among those who have not returned to normal, in one, three in 10 expect to do so eventually ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)). In another, about two in 10 overall expect to return to normal within the next year. As many expect to do so either in more than a year (19 percent) or never (18 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)). In a third,

in July, nearly six in 10 expected to return to normal in the next year ([Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)).

### Protective Measures

Few continue to take preventative measures regularly. While 56 percent say their life is being disrupted by the coronavirus, a pandemic-low 47 percent have worn a mask outside their home in the past week ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)). In another measure, 35 percent wear a mask at least sometimes when leaving the home, steady in the last month while down from about three-quarters in January ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)). In July, 43 percent said they wore a mask when indoors with people outside of their household at least sometimes, down 8 points since April and 31 points since January. Forty-three percent also agreed that everyone age 2 and older should wear a mask in such a situation ([Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)).

Thirty-two percent are avoiding large crowds; 25 percent, public transportation; 22 percent, public places; and 16 percent, small gatherings ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)). High and steady shares in the past week have visited friends or relatives (67 percent), gone out to eat (63 percent) or visited a retail store (62 percent). Three in 10 have social distanced and two in 10 have cancelled or skipped large gatherings, both steady since July ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)).



### Coronavirus Experiences

Half of adults have or suspect they have contracted the coronavirus since January 2020; among them, about three in 10 say they've had it more than once ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)). In July, 54 percent thought they'd had it since April 2021. Of this group, 17 percent had it more than once ([Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)). Thirty-eight percent know someone who has been reinfected in the past few weeks. In one poll a steady 43 percent know someone who has died; another puts this at 54 percent ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#), [Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)).

### Vaccines

One study finds that 74 percent have received at least one dose of the vaccine, largely steady the last year ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)). Another finds 78 percent fully vaccinated (and fewer than 1 percent partially vaccinated). In both, about three-quarters of the fully vaccinated had received at least one booster shot ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#), [Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)). The [CDC](#), whose estimates of initial uptake exceed those of probability-based polling, indicates that

nine in 10 have received at least one dose of the vaccine, 77 percent are fully vaccinated and half of the fully vaccinated have received a booster.

Among the vaccinated, roughly eight in 10 apiece are likely to get a booster shot annually if recommended and to get a vaccine that's updated against new variants ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)).

### Breakthrough Infections & Vaccine Confidence

Among vaccinated people who have had a coronavirus infection, two-thirds say it happened after getting vaccinated ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)). In July, about seven in 10 overall knew someone who tested positive for the coronavirus after being fully vaccinated and boosted, and 64 percent saw breakthrough infections as at least somewhat likely. Fifty-seven percent disagreed that breakthrough infections are evidence the vaccines do not work. Twenty-three percent agreed, with two in 10 neutral.

While seven in 10 said it is likely an unvaccinated person will contract the coronavirus in the coming three months, fewer, but still a substantial 53 percent said it's likely for a vaccinated person without a booster shot ([Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)). Fifty-three percent agree that the vaccines are effective in preventing serious illness in the case of a breakthrough infection, down 13 points since October 2021. Fifteen percent disagree, with three in 10 unsure ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)).

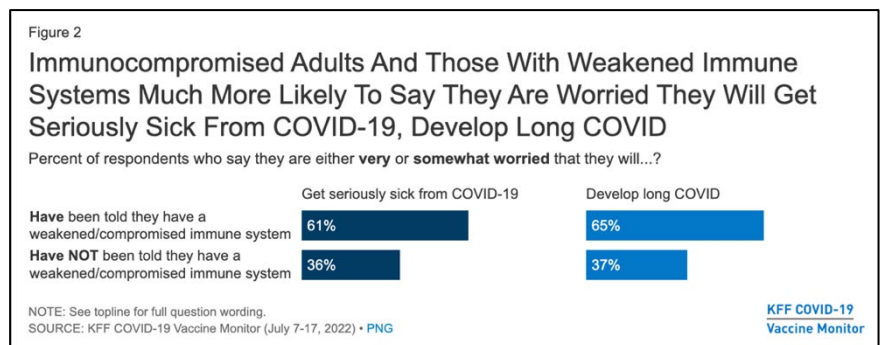
Forty-six percent are very (6 percent) or moderately (40 percent) confident that vaccines offer protection from new variants – down from 71 percent in July 2021 ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

### Paxlovid

A quarter are at least somewhat familiar with Paxlovid, the antiviral pill used as a coronavirus treatment, steady since November 2021 ([Axios-Ipsos 8/12-8/15](#)). In a July poll, two in 10 were somewhat (18 percent) or very (3 percent) familiar with Paxlovid; among them, six in 10 thought it was both safe and effective ([Annenberg Public Policy Center 7/12-7/18](#)).

### The Immunocompromised

A July poll found that one in 10 Americans have been told by a doctor they were immuno-compromised or have weakened immune systems. They were more apt than others to worry about getting seriously



sick (61 vs. 36 percent) or developing long COVID (65 vs. 37 percent) from a coronavirus infection. Accordingly, eight in 10 reported making adjustments as restrictions such as mask

mandates have been lifted. This includes four in 10 wearing a mask, 14 percent staying home and one in 10 social distancing or avoiding crowds ([KFF 7/7-7/17](#)).

## Education

Around half support vaccine requirements for students in college (54 percent), high school (53 percent), middle school (51 percent) and elementary school (48 percent). For each, support fell 5 to 9 points from last July, except for elementary school students, for whom vaccines were not available last summer. Parents are less apt than non-parents to support vaccine requirements ([Gallup 7/26-8/2](#)).

In newly released results from a January survey, 57 percent of principals and a third of teachers had been harassed about a school coronavirus policy; half of principals and 28 percent of teachers had experienced harassment about a school mask

requirement. As previously [covered](#), being harassed regarding school coronavirus policies was significantly associated with stress, burnout and intention to leave the job for principals and teachers alike.

FIGURE 7  
Educators' Experiences of Harassment About Politicized Topics, by School Policy

	All principals (%)	All teachers (%)
Experienced harassment about politicized topics	61	37
Harassed about any school policy related to COVID-19 mitigation measures	57	32
A requirement that staff and students wear masks	49	28
A ban on requiring students and staff at my school to wear masks	16	8
COVID-19 vaccine requirement for students	14	6
COVID-19 vaccine requirement for staff	13	8
A ban on requiring COVID-19 vaccines for students and staff	6	4

About six in 10 principals and teachers alike agreed that states and school districts should be allowed to institute mandates including mask and vaccine requirements. Just two in 10 teachers and principals supported bans on these mandates ([RAND 1/22](#)).

In newly released results from a May poll, more adults supported than opposed a face mask requirement in their local schools, 45 vs. 35 percent. Two in 10 were neutral. Two-thirds of Democrats supported such a requirement, compared with two in 10 Republicans ([Education Next-Ipsos 5/2-5/30](#)).

## Governmental Approval

Fifty-six percent approve of the way Biden is handling the pandemic, steady since March and exceeding his approval on any other issue by at least 13 points. More trust the Democratic Party than the Republican Party to do a better job handling the pandemic, 36-20 percent, but a third trust neither party (one in 10, both) ([ABC-Ipsos 8/5-8/6](#)). Few registered voters, 3 percent, say the coronavirus will be the most important issue in deciding their vote for Congress in the midterm elections, steady since June ([Fox News 8/6-8/9](#)).

## State Results

In Wisconsin, 55 percent of registered voters are at least somewhat concerned about the coronavirus in the state, up 10 points since mid-June ([Marquette Law School 8/10-8/15](#)).

### Multinational Results

In a study of 19 countries last spring, a median of 68 percent said their country has done a good job dealing with the coronavirus outbreak. This included majorities in 18 of the 19 countries, peaking at 88 percent in Singapore. Since last summer, positive evaluations increased in nine countries, rising by 20 points or more in Spain and Belgium. Positive assessments fell in Singapore, South Korea and Australia.

A median of six in 10 across all 19 countries said their country is now more divided than before the pandemic, including about eight in 10 in the United States, the Netherlands and Germany. Majorities in Singapore, Malaysia and Sweden said their country is more united.

Majorities in every country said getting vaccinated is at least somewhat important to be a good member of society, peaking at 93 percent in Singapore and lowest at about two-thirds in France and the United States. The study finds a positive relationship between this gauge and vaccine uptake ([Pew 2/14-6/3](#)).

**COVID-19 response assessments are more positive in many countries**

*% who say their country has done a **good** job dealing with the coronavirus outbreak*

	Summer 2020	Fall 2020	Spring 2021	Spring 2022	2021-2022 change
Belgium	61	—	50	73	▲23
Spain	54	—	44	64	▲20
Japan	55	—	35	52	▲17
U.S.	47	41	42	58	▲16
France	59	54	47	62	▲15
Italy	74	—	59	74	▲15
Sweden	71	—	67	82	▲15
Germany	88	77	51	64	▲13
Canada	88	—	65	70	▲5
UK	46	48	64	68	▲4
Netherlands	87	—	58	61	▲3
Greece	—	—	60	61	▲1
Singapore	—	—	97	88	▼9
South Korea	86	—	70	57	▼13
Australia	97	—	95	76	▼19

Note: Statistically significant changes in bold. In 2020, U.S. surveys were conducted over the phone.  
Source: Spring 2022 Global Attitudes Survey, Q11.  
"Partisanship Colors Views of COVID-19 Handling Across Advanced Economies"

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### International Results

In Germany, 53 percent of eligible voters say current coronavirus measures are appropriate. The rest split evenly between saying they go too far or not far enough. Seven in 10 are in favor of the current policy requiring a five-day quarantine following a positive coronavirus test. About three in 10 favor lifting the rule ([ARD-Infratest Dimap 8/1-8/3](#)).

In Great Britain in late July, 42 percent were at least somewhat worried about the coronavirus, up 10 points since mid-June. A third had worn a face covering outside the home in the past week and three in 10 always or often maintained social distance with people outside their home, both steady ([Office for National Statistics 7/20-7/31](#)).

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

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