



PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

Married and partnered Americans report deepening relationships amidst the pandemic

New BuzzFeed News/Ipsos poll finds coronavirus pandemic has done little to change sex and dating behavior

Topline Findings

Washington, DC, July 17, 2020 -- A BuzzFeed News/Ipsos poll finds that most Americans' interest in sex, and frequency of sexual activity, has remained unchanged since coronavirus-related stay-at-home orders began in early March. Furthermore, most are far less concerned about the current state of their sex life than other areas of concern related to the pandemic. Most Americans say they are not lonely right now, and half of single Americans say the pandemic has *not* made them want a relationship. For those in a relationship, partnered, or married, a plurality report being more in love with their partner than ever before, but around a quarter say they feel more annoyed with their partner than usual.

Detailed Findings

1. Most Americans' interest in sex has stayed the same since early March when stay-at-home orders began. Moreover, concern about their sex life is lower than other potential stressors.
 - Three in five Americans say their interest in sex has not changed during stay-at-home orders, and less than 1 in 5 say it has increased (18%).
 - Just 23% of Americans say they are concerned about their sex life, while two-thirds or more list the coronavirus pandemic (77%), people in their area not following social distancing guidelines (71%), and their area reopening too soon (67%) as concerns. More than half (54%) are concerned about household finances, and one third (34%) of those with a child in their household say the same for their current childcare situation.
2. Slightly more Americans are now reporting never having sex in-person in their average week, when compared to before stay-at-home orders were in place.
 - Thirty-eight percent of Americans report never having sex in an average week since stay-at-home orders began in early March, compared to 33% who reported the same before the pandemic, a difference of 5 percentage points.
 - Of those having sex in-person during stay-at-home orders, the vast majority have done so with a person they live with (79%), rather than a new partner (4%) or a previous partner that lives elsewhere (16%).
 - There are no significant differences when it comes to having sex virtually, masturbating, using dating apps, or watching sexual content online before and during stay-at-home orders.
3. The pandemic has brought few marital or relationship strains.
 - By a nearly three-to-one margin, more disagree than agree that the pandemic has made it hard to keep the spark alive in their relationship/marriage (66% and 23%, respectively).
 - Eight in ten (81%) feel they can be completely honest with their partner right now, and two-thirds agree that they are more in love than ever before.
 - Those who are unmarried but in relationships are split on whether their relationship has gotten more serious (43% agree, 40% disagree).

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- Around a quarter (27%) feel annoyed with their partner more than normal, and one in five report fighting with their partner more. However, just 9% say they have considered cheating or having an affair; of those considering, most have not acted on it (72%).
- 4. Most Americans do not feel lonely right now, but single Americans are more likely to agree that they do.
 - Nearly two thirds of Americans (61%) say they do not feel lonely right now. Older Americans are more likely to feel this way (72% ages 55 years and older) while younger Americans are less likely (51% ages 18-34). Single Americans are more likely to agree that they feel lonely (45%) than those who are married (26%) and the total population (32%).
 - Nonetheless, more single Americans disagree than agree that the coronavirus pandemic has made them wish they were in a relationship (47% and 39%, respectively).
- 5. Dating app usage in an average week among single and non-monogamous Americans has not changed significantly since early March, but half say *how* they use it has changed.
 - Single Americans or those who are not in a monogamous relationship/marriage during stay-at-home orders, mostly do not use a dating app during their average week (67%).
 - Half of Americans using dating apps say the pandemic has changed how they use it (49%).
 - Since early March, half (49%) have had sex in-person with someone they met on dating apps, and another 31% have had virtual sex. Around one third have met up in person (35%) or had a virtual date (39%) without having sex.

These are the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between May 26-27, 2020 on behalf of BuzzFeed News. For this survey, a sample of 1,004 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English. The poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents.

For full results, please refer to the following annotated questionnaire:

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Full Annotated Questionnaire

1. **[If single, widowed, or divorced/separated]** Are you currently in a relationship?

	Total (N=465)
Yes	24%
No	76%

2. **[If in a relationship (Q1=Yes), married, or in a domestic partnership]** Do you and your partner live together?

	Total (N=648)
Yes	88%
No	12%

3. **[If in a relationship (Q1=Yes), married, or in a domestic partnership]** How long have you and your partner/spouse been together?

	Total (N=648)
Less than six months	3%
6 months – under a year	2%
1 year – under 3 years	9%
3 years – under 5 years	7%
5 years – under 10 years	14%
10 years – under 20 years	20%
20+ years	45%
Prefer not to say	1%

4. **[If in a relationship (Q1=Yes), married, or in a domestic partnership]** Which of the following best describes you and your partner/spouse's relationship?

	Total (N=648)
Monogamous	88%
Non-monogamous	3%
Open only under certain circumstances	3%
Polyamorous	2%
Prefer not to say	5%

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5. Currently, how sexually active are you?

	Total (N=1,004)
Not having sex	36%
Having sex regularly or frequently	27%
Having sex occasionally, but not regularly	27%
Prefer not to say	11%

6. Since coronavirus-related stay-at-home orders began in early March, has your interest in having sex...

	Total
Increased a lot	9%
Increased somewhat	9%
Stayed the same	60%
Decreased somewhat	5%
Decreased a lot	5%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	12%
<i>Increased (Net)</i>	18%
<i>Decreased (Net)</i>	10%

7. Before coronavirus-related stay-at-home orders began in early March, how often were you doing each of the following in one week, on average?

a. Having sex with a partner, in person

	Total
Never	33%
Once a week	25%
Twice a week	10%
3-4 times a week	11%
5+ times a week	3%
Prefer not to say	17%

b. Having sex with a partner, virtually (by phone or online)

	Total
Never	75%
Once a week	5%
Twice a week	3%
3-4 times a week	2%
5+ times a week	1%
Prefer not to say	13%

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c. Masturbating

	Total
Never	45%
Once a week	14%
Twice a week	11%
3-4 times a week	6%
5+ times a week	6%
Prefer not to say	18%

d. [If did not select “Monogamous” in Q4] Looking at/swiping through dating apps

	Total (N=435)
Never	64%
Once a week	8%
Twice a week	4%
3-4 times a week	10%
5+ times a week	4%
Prefer not to say	10%

e. Watching porn/look at sexual content online

	Total
Never	55%
Once a week	11%
Twice a week	7%
3-4 times a week	6%
5+ times a week	6%
Prefer not to say	15%

8. From early March until now, how often have you done each of the following in one week, on average?

a. Have sex with a partner, in person

	Total
Never	38%
Once a week	22%
Twice a week	10%
3-4 times a week	9%
5+ times a week	4%
Prefer not to say	17%

b. Have sex with a partner, virtually (by phone or online)

	Total
Never	77%
Once a week	5%
Twice a week	2%
3-4 times a week	3%
5+ times a week	2%
Prefer not to say	12%

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c. Masturbate

	Total
Never	47%
Once a week	14%
Twice a week	9%
3-4 times a week	7%
5+ times a week	6%
Prefer not to say	17%

d. [If did not select “Monogamous” in Q4] Look at/swipe through dating apps

	Total (N=435)
Never	67%
Once a week	7%
Twice a week	4%
3-4 times a week	6%
5+ times a week	6%
Prefer not to say	10%

e. Watch porn/look at sexual content online

	Total
Never	56%
Once a week	10%
Twice a week	7%
3-4 times a week	6%
5+ times a week	6%
Prefer not to say	15%

9. [If did not select “Never” or “Prefer not to answer” to “Have sex with a partner, in person” in Q8] Since early March, have you had sex with any person or people that you do not live with?

	Total (N=428)
No	79%
Yes, but not a new partner/with someone I had been with before the pandemic	16%
Yes, a new partner	4%
Prefer not to say	1%
Yes (Net)	20%

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10. [If did not select “Never” or “Prefer not to answer” to “Look at/swipe through dating apps” in Q8] Have you done any of the following with people you have met on dating apps since coronavirus-related stay-at-home orders began in early March?

Yes Summary

	Total (N=95)
Had sex, in person	49%
Video chatted or had a virtual date, but did not have sex	39%
Met up in person, but did not have sex	35%
Had virtual sex (by phone or online)	31%

a. Had sex, in person

	Total
Yes	49%
No	49%
Prefer not to say	2%

b. Had virtual sex (by phone or online)

	Total
Yes	31%
No	68%
Prefer not to say	1%

c. Met up in person, but did not have sex

	Total
Yes	35%
No	64%
Prefer not to say	1%

d. Video chatted or had a virtual date, but did not have sex

	Total
Yes	39%
No	56%
Prefer not to say	6%

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11. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Total Agree Summary

	Total
[If used dating apps at all since the pandemic began] The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way I use dating apps	(N=95) 49%
[If unmarried but in a relationship] My relationship has gotten more serious since the coronavirus pandemic began	(N=109) 43%
[If single/not in relationship] The coronavirus pandemic has made me wish that I was in a relationship or dating someone	(N=356) 39%
I feel lonely right now	32%
[If Gen Z or millennial] The coronavirus pandemic had made me reconsider having children/having more children	(N=355) 26%
[If in a relationship, married, or partnered] The coronavirus pandemic had made it hard to keep the spark alive in my relationship/marriage	(N=648) 23%
I know a couple who is likely to break up, separate, or divorce when the coronavirus pandemic ends	18%

a. I feel lonely right now

	Total
Strongly agree	11%
Somewhat agree	21%
Somewhat disagree	22%
Strongly disagree	39%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	7%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	32%
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	61%

b. **[If single/not in a relationship (Q1= "No")]** The coronavirus pandemic has made me wish that I was in a relationship or dating someone

	Total (N=356)
Strongly agree	14%
Somewhat agree	25%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	31%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	14%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	39%
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	47%

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- c. **[If in a relationship (Q1=Yes), married, or in a domestic partnership]** The coronavirus pandemic has made it hard to keep the spark alive in my relationship/marriage

	Total (N=648)
Strongly agree	6%
Somewhat agree	16%
Somewhat disagree	27%
Strongly disagree	40%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	11%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>66%</i>

- d. **[If did not select “Never” or “Prefer not to answer” to “Look at/swipe through dating apps” in Q8]** The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way I use dating apps

	Total (N=95)
Strongly agree	18%
Somewhat agree	31%
Somewhat disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	15%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	11%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>49%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>40%</i>

- e. **[If Gen Z or millennial (birth year of 1981 or later)]** The coronavirus pandemic has made me reconsider having children/having more children

	Total (N=355)
Strongly agree	10%
Somewhat agree	16%
Somewhat disagree	21%
Strongly disagree	35%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	19%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>26%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>55%</i>

- f. **[If unmarried but in a relationship (Q1=Yes)]** My relationship has gotten more serious since the coronavirus pandemic began

	Total (N=109)
Strongly agree	11%
Somewhat agree	32%
Somewhat disagree	23%
Strongly disagree	16%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	17%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>40%</i>

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- g. I know a couple who is likely to break up, separate, or divorce when the coronavirus pandemic ends

	Total
Strongly agree	7%
Somewhat agree	11%
Somewhat disagree	15%
Strongly disagree	39%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	28%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>18%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>54%</i>

12. **[If selected “Somewhat agree” or “Strongly agree” to “The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way I use dating apps” in Q11]** You indicated that the coronavirus pandemic has changed how you use dating apps. In your own words, describe what you mean by that. Please be as specific and detailed as possible.

Open-ended responses provided separately

13. Please indicate the level of concern you have for each of the following.

Total Concerned Summary

	Total
The coronavirus pandemic	77%
People in your city/area not following social distancing guidelines	71%
Your city/area reopening too soon	67%
Your household finances	54%
[If parent of child under 18] Your current childcare situation	(N=221) 34%
Your sex life	23%

- a. The coronavirus pandemic

	Total
Very concerned	41%
Somewhat concerned	37%
Not very concerned	14%
Not concerned at all	6%
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	2%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>77%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>20%</i>

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b. People in your city/area not following social distancing guidelines

	Total
Very concerned	38%
Somewhat concerned	33%
Not very concerned	16%
Not concerned at all	10%
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	3%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>26%</i>

c. Your city/area reopening too soon

	Total
Very concerned	29%
Somewhat concerned	38%
Not very concerned	18%
Not concerned at all	12%
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	3%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>67%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>30%</i>

d. Your household finances

	Total
Very concerned	21%
Somewhat concerned	33%
Not very concerned	28%
Not concerned at all	16%
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	3%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>54%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>44%</i>

e. **[If parent of child under 18]** Your current childcare situation

	Total (N=221)
Very concerned	14%
Somewhat concerned	20%
Not very concerned	24%
Not concerned at all	38%
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	4%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>62%</i>

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f. Your sex life

	Total
Very concerned	7%
Somewhat concerned	16%
Not very concerned	30%
Not concerned at all	39%
Don't know/Prefer not to answer	8%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>23%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>69%</i>

14. **[If in a relationship (Q1=Yes), married, or in a domestic partnership]** Now, for each of the following, please indicate the level of concern you think your spouse/partner has for each of the following.

Total Concerned Summary

	Total (N=648)
The coronavirus pandemic	70%
People in your city/area not following social distancing guidelines	67%
Your city/area reopening too soon	61%
Your household finances	48%
[If parent of child under 18] Your current childcare situation	(N=192) 34%
Your sex life	22%

a. The coronavirus pandemic

	Total
Very concerned	37%
Somewhat concerned	34%
Not very concerned	19%
Not concerned at all	8%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	3%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>70%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>27%</i>

b. People in your city/area not following social distancing guidelines

	Total
Very concerned	33%
Somewhat concerned	34%
Not very concerned	20%
Not concerned at all	11%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	3%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>67%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>30%</i>

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c. Your city/area reopening too soon

	Total
Very concerned	27%
Somewhat concerned	35%
Not very concerned	23%
Not concerned at all	12%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	4%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>61%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>35%</i>

d. Your household finances

	Total
Very concerned	19%
Somewhat concerned	29%
Not very concerned	28%
Not concerned at all	20%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	4%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>48%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>48%</i>

e. **[If parent of child under 18]** Your current childcare situation

	Total (N=192)
Very concerned	14%
Somewhat concerned	20%
Not very concerned	25%
Not concerned at all	38%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	3%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>34%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>63%</i>

f. Your sex life

	Total
Very concerned	5%
Somewhat concerned	17%
Not very concerned	34%
Not concerned at all	35%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	8%
<i>Concerned (Net)</i>	<i>22%</i>
<i>Not concerned (Net)</i>	<i>69%</i>

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15. [If in a relationship (Q1=Yes), married, or in a domestic partnership] Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Total Agree Summary

	Total (N=648)
I feel like I can be completely honest with my partner/spouse right now.	81%
I am more in love with my partner/spouse than ever before.	66%
Since the coronavirus pandemic began, I feel like I have discovered a new side to my partner/spouse.	36%
I feel annoyed with my partner/spouse more than normal.	27%
My partner/spouse and I are fighting more than we normally do.	20%
Since the coronavirus pandemic began, I have considered cheating or having an affair.	9%

a. My partner/spouse and I are fighting more than we normally do.

	Total
Strongly agree	4%
Somewhat agree	16%
Somewhat disagree	21%
Strongly disagree	54%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	5%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>76%</i>

b. I feel annoyed with my partner/spouse more than normal.

	Total
Strongly agree	6%
Somewhat agree	21%
Somewhat disagree	28%
Strongly disagree	40%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	5%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>27%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>68%</i>

c. I feel like I can be completely honest with my partner/spouse right now.

	Total
Strongly agree	54%
Somewhat agree	27%
Somewhat disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	4%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>81%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>15%</i>

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- d. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, I have considered cheating or having an affair.

	Total
Strongly agree	3%
Somewhat agree	5%
Somewhat disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	78%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	5%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>9%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>86%</i>

- e. Since the coronavirus pandemic began, I feel like I have discovered a new side to my partner/spouse.

	Total
Strongly agree	9%
Somewhat agree	27%
Somewhat disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	26%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	9%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>36%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>55%</i>

- f. I am more in love with my partner/spouse than ever before.

	Total
Strongly agree	31%
Somewhat agree	35%
Somewhat disagree	16%
Strongly disagree	7%
Don't know/Prefer not to say	11%
<i>Agree (Net)</i>	<i>66%</i>
<i>Disagree (Net)</i>	<i>23%</i>

16. [If selected “Strongly agree” or “Somewhat agree” to “Since the coronavirus pandemic began, I have considered cheating or having an affair” in Q15] You indicated that you have considered cheating or having an affair since the coronavirus pandemic began. Have you acted on that/are you currently having an affair?

	Total (N=59)
Yes	26%
No	72%
Prefer not to say	1%

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17. What's your sexual orientation?

	Total
Straight	89%
Lesbian	1%
Gay	2%
Bisexual	3%
Queer	*
Asexual	1%
Pansexual	1%
Other	*
Prefer not to say	3%



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of a Ipsos poll conducted between May 26-27, 2020, on behalf of BuzzFeed News. For this survey, a sample of 1,004 adults age 18+ from the continental U.S., Alaska, and Hawaii was interviewed online in English.

The sample for this study was randomly drawn from Ipsos' online panel (see link below for more info on "Access Panels and Recruitment"), partner online panel sources, and "river" sampling (see link below for more info on the Ipsos "Ampario Overview" sample method) and does not rely on a population frame in the traditional sense. Ipsos uses fixed sample targets, unique to each study, in drawing a sample. After a sample has been obtained from the Ipsos panel, Ipsos calibrates respondent characteristics to be representative of the U.S. Population using standard procedures such as raking-ratio adjustments. The source of these population targets is U.S. Census 2016 American Community Survey data. The sample drawn for this study reflects fixed sample targets on demographics. Posthoc weights were made to the population characteristics on gender, age, race/ethnicity, region, and education.

Statistical margins of error are not applicable to online non-probability polls. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error and measurement error. Where figures do not sum to 100, this is due to the effects of rounding. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points for all respondents. Ipsos calculates a design effect (DEFF) for each study based on the variation of the weights, following the formula of Kish (1965). This study had a credibility interval adjusted for design effect of the following (n=1,004, DEFF=1.5, adjusted Confidence Interval=+/- 5.0 percentage points).

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