



## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

### Many are experiencing heightened state of anxiety during pandemic, with fear of second COVID-19 wave top of mind for Americans

New MDVIP/Ipsos poll finds that despite plethora of coronavirus concerns, the pandemic is a source of motivation to take steps to improve one's health

#### Research Findings

**Washington, DC, August 12, 2020** — A new MDVIP/Ipsos poll finds that four in five Americans are worried about a second wave of COVID-19 infections in their state/community (79%) – and seeing others not adhering to the latest safety guidelines (e.g., not wearing a mask, not physical distancing) causes just over seven in ten (71%) to worry a great deal/moderate amount. The constant barrage of coronavirus information in the media is adding to the unease – with nearly three in five (57%) saying they have had to take a break from the news and/or social media to help reduce stress/anxiety.

- Compared to their demographic counterparts, women, people with increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 and caregivers are significantly more likely to be worried about both a second wave of the disease and others not respecting public health guidelines.
- These same groups also stand out as being more likely to admit they have had to step away from the media to reduce stress and anxiety. News-related anxiety appears to decrease with age, with greater proportions of those under the age of 65 saying they have disconnected during the pandemic to reduce stress (66% of those age 35-49 and 59% age 50-64 vs. 45% of those age 65+).
- Concerns over a potential second wave (90%) and others not following health guidelines (84%) are also much more pronounced for adults over the age of 65 living in the Tri-State area.

The survey, which features a sample of roughly 1,500 adults ages 35 and over, found that more than half are also worried about contracting COVID-19 (56%), spreading the virus to others (60%), becoming hospitalized/dying from the virus (54%), and the long-term effects the virus may have on physical health (56%).

- Among older adults (65+) in the Tri-State area, the proportion who are worried about these factors increases to roughly two thirds.

The state of anxiety propelled by the pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of many. One in two Americans agree that they have been feeling more stressed, anxious and/or depressed during the pandemic (51%) and a third admit that there have been times during the pandemic/lockdown where they felt like they were losing their mind (32%). The virus has resulted in growing paranoia for some, with two in five stating that now, whenever they cough or have a headache or sore throat, they worry that they have COVID-19 (38%).

- Among parents (50% vs. 27% of those with no children), adults between the ages of 35-44 (54% vs. 15% of those age 65+), and caregivers (47% vs. 29% of those who are not caregivers), the proportion who have felt as though they are losing their minds jumps to roughly half.
- Parents, young adults, and caregivers are also significantly more likely to report recently feeling added stress/anxiety/depression and to worry excessively that they may have contracted COVID-19.



## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

- As with older adults in the national sample, adults over the age of 65 from the tri-state area are much less likely to say that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their mental/emotional health compared to the overall results.

Though sizeable proportions say they have a strong social support system to help them get through the pandemic (74%), a third acknowledge that the pandemic has had a negative impact on their relationships with family and/or friends (33%). This is particularly true for parents (45% vs. 30% of those with no children), young adults (44% of those age 35-44 vs. 29% of those age 65+), and caregivers (46% vs. 30% of those who are not caregivers). One in five have sought or are considered seeking help from a doctor and/or therapist for emotional support during the pandemic (19%).

- Parents (30% vs. 16% of those with no children), young adults (34% of those age 35-44 vs. 9% of those 65+), and caregivers (37% vs. 15% of those who are not caregivers) are twice as likely to have considered/sought professional help for emotional support compared to their demographic counterparts.

The pandemic has also impacted the physical health and lifestyle habits of Americans. More than a third (36%) say that they have developed unhealthy habits during the pandemic (e.g., overeating, drinking, not exercising) – with those age 35-44 (50%), caregivers (47%), and parents (46%) among those most likely to agree.

- Though the majority of adults have maintained their pre-pandemic habits, more than a quarter say that they are exercising less (27% vs. 25% who are doing more of this) since the social distancing/stay-at-home orders first began around March, and nearly as many say that they are not getting the recommended amount of sleep as often as they used to (24% vs. 24% who are doing more of this).

However, there is a silver lining. For nearly seven in ten (69%), the pandemic has been a source of motivation to take steps to improve their own health. Currently, one in four say that they are eating a healthy, well-balanced diet more now compared to before the pandemic (28% vs. 17% who are doing less of this), taking more vitamins/supplements (27% vs. 7% who are doing less of this), and managing/reducing stress more effectively (25% vs. 18% who are).

- Adults with children living at home, those who are working full-time, those under the age of 55 (particular those age 35-44), and caregivers stand out as being significantly more likely to have increased their participation in a range of healthy lifestyle habits, including greater proportions who report they are currently eating better, exercising more, reducing stress levels and getting a good night's sleep.

Furthermore, the pandemic has inspired many Americans to prioritize adopting a preventative approach to their own health, with approximately half saying that getting their body weight under control (52%), getting an annual physical/check-up to stay on top of their health (49%), staying up to date on recommended vaccinations (50%), and getting screened for health conditions that may put them at higher risk for developing severe illness (46%) are now more important to them versus before the pandemic.

Taking such preventative measures in the future is now especially important for those who already have a primary care doctor, those who are at increased risk for developing severe illness from COVID-19, adults under the age of 55, those who say the pandemic has motivated them to improve health, and caregivers.



## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

- Though adults over the age of 65 are typically less likely to prioritize such preventative health strategies compared to younger adults, staying up to date with vaccines stands out as being especially important for this group (54% of adults 65+ nationally and 57% of adults 65+ from the Tri-State area).

## TODAY'S 'NEW NORMAL'

For many, the experience of living through the pandemic has resulted in a reassessment of everyday life for the better. Six in ten say that getting outside and appreciating nature/the outdoors (60%) has become a higher priority - and just over half say the same thing of connecting with family/friends (57%), eating a healthy, well-balanced diet (54%), and cutting frustrating people out of their lives (52%). Exercising regularly (45%), enjoying a new or existing hobby (45%), and giving back to the community (38%) have become bigger priorities for another two in five.

However, COVID-19 has also brought about new challenges and uncertainties into many areas of everyday life, reshaping how Americans view even the most routine situations. When it comes to places where they can contract the illness, Americans are most concerned about catching COVID-19 on public transportation (73%), in restaurants (72%), and in gyms/fitness centers (69%).

Hospitals/emergency rooms (68%) and urgent care/walk-in clinics (64%) cause greater anxiety than the doctor's office (56%), while a majority say that they are also concerned with catching the virus at the grocery store (61%), in schools/daycares (59%), and in hair salons/barbershops (60%). Family member/friend's houses (44%) and outdoor parks (29%) are seen as less of a threat, though at least a quarter worry about catching COVID-19 in such settings.

- While public transportation, restaurants, and gyms/fitness centers are most concerning for adults across many demographic groups, caregivers and adults between the ages of 35-44 rank hospitals/emergency rooms and urgent care/walk-in clinic among their top three. For parents, hospitals/emergency rooms and schools/daycares are among the most concerning.
- Though nationally, older adults are typically less anxious than those under the age of 65, adults from the Tri-State region are significantly more likely to say catching COVID-19 from these places is especially concerning to them personally. This includes 83% who fear getting COVID-19 from restaurants, 82% who worry about public transportation and 76% who worry about getting sick from going to a gym/fitness center.

Thinking about a variety of factors within the context of the ongoing pandemic, the economic stability of the U.S. (84%) is a top concern for Americans over the age of 35, though the level of uncertainty surrounding the pandemic (77%), the availability of a future vaccine (63%), and the health of parents/older relatives (61%) are also top of mind.

More than half say that they are especially concerned with their physical health (55%), while the ongoing pandemic has nearly as many worrying about supply/food shortages (48%), personal finances (47%), and social isolation/loneliness (45%). Two in five are currently concerned about their mental health (41%) and at least a quarter say the same of job security (32%) and relationships with spouse/family members (27%).

## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

- Those most likely to be especially concerned with the state of both their physical and emotional health include parents (62% and 56%, respectively), adults with increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19 (61% and 44%), adults between the ages of 35-44 (62% and 57%) and caregivers (66% and 51%).

## PRIMARY CARE DURING THE PANDEMIC

More than four in five (85%) adults surveyed say that they currently have a primary care doctor. Among them, only 4% say that they are considering changing their primary care doctor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (versus 93% who say no and 3% who are undecided).

- 14% report that they do not have a primary care doctor, though a quarter (26%) among these are now more interested in having one as a result of the pandemic.

Since social distancing/stay-at-home orders first began around March, nearly half (48%) say that they or someone in their household canceled/postponed an in-person doctor's appointment and nearly one in four (23%) say they or someone in their household canceled/postponed an elective procedure/surgery (e.g. colonoscopy, knee surgery) and/or imaging test (e.g. X-ray, MRI, mammogram).

Apart from appointment cancellations, sizeable proportions have also had to adjust other aspects of their healthcare routines due to the pandemic. This includes nearly a third (30%) who opted to make a telehealth appointment (e.g., video conference, phone) to be treated by their doctor and one in ten (9%) who contacted their doctor by phone and/or email to discuss a COVID-19 question or concern.

Additionally, 15% have delayed seeking medical treatment from their doctor over fears of contracting the disease while one in ten (10%) tried scheduling an in-person appointment with the doctor, but the doctor's office was closed due to COVID-19.

Overall, Americans see the relationships with their physician in a favorable light. Three quarters agree that they currently have a doctor whom they can count on to help during a health crisis like COVID-19 (74%) and nearly as many say they have a doctor who will coordinate their care if they end up in the hospital with COVID-19 (70%).

- In contrast, only 24% say that they were proactively contacted by their doctor's office about the status of the practice and fewer received a personalized phone call and/or email from their doctor's office with health information about COVID-19 (14%).
- Those most likely to have received a personalized call from their doctors – including adults over the age of 65+, adults with increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, and caregivers – also stood out as being significantly more likely to say they had a doctor they could count on to help throughout the pandemic and to coordinate their care.

Thinking about the relationship with their physician, one in two say that having a primary care doctor who really knows them and their medical history well (51%) is now more important to them than it was before the pandemic. The pandemic has caused similar proportions to now also place greater emphasis on having a primary care doctor who offers telehealth services (45%) and who is available 24/7 (42%).



## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

- For caregivers, the pandemic has had an especially profound impact on such expectations, with at least six in ten saying it is now more important to them to have a doctor that knows them well (66%), who offers telehealth services (64%) and who is available 24/7 (60%).

When it comes to their relationship with a primary care doctor moving forward, four in five (82%) say that they would be very/somewhat likely to follow up with their doctor to monitor their health if they had COVID-19. Roughly half of those surveyed also aim to increase their use of telehealth services (54%), talk to their doctor about what they can do to maintain/achieve a healthier lifestyle (52%), and ask their doctor if they are at high risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 (49%).

- Caregivers are particularly likely to say they expect to move in this direction – including 71% who plan to increase their use of telehealth services and 70% who plan to discuss maintaining their health with their physician. Those who agree the pandemic is motivation to improve their health also stand out here.

Nearly three quarters (72%) say that they are likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine once it becomes available and one in two (52%) plan to create/update an advance directive/living will in case they become incapacitated due to COVID-19. Getting the vaccine is particularly appealing to those over the age of 65 (80% vs. 69% of those 35-64).

## COVID-19 KNOWLEDGE

Nearly three quarters agree that there is so much conflicting information about COVID-19, it's hard to know who/what to trust (72%). Americans are most likely to get health information regarding COVID-19 from local (51%) and national news outlets (44%), public health organizations (43%), public health and medical experts (42%), and state/local governments (40% vs. 19% who turn to the federal government).

In contrast, only 29% turn to their own primary care doctor for information – though physicians rank first when it comes to most trusted sources of information (91% are confident in their physician when it comes to learning more about COVID-19).

- Those who already have a primary care doctor (94% vs. 73% of those with no doctor), adults at risk for developing serious complications from COVID-19 (92% vs. 84%), and adults over the age of 65 (94% vs. 86% of those 35-44) are among those most likely to have confidence in physicians as sources of information.

Confidence is also high when it comes to information provided by public health and medical experts (83%), public health organizations (74%), reputable academic institutions (73%), and consumer health websites (73% e.g., WebMD, Healthline). Americans are least likely to have faith in the federal government (40%) and social media (19%) when it comes to learning more about COVID-19.

Generally, Americans are self-assured when it comes to their awareness and knowledge of the virus, with 87% saying they feel well informed about protecting themselves/preventing serious illness from COVID-19. More specifically, at least nine in ten believe they are very/somewhat knowledgeable when it comes to recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19 (92%), understanding how COVID-19 is transmitted (92%), knowing what to do if they feel sick and suspect it might be COVID-19 (91%), and how to prevent the virus from spreading if exposed (89%). Four in five also report being knowledgeable when it comes to



## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

knowing their risk level for severe illness/developing complications (84%) and managing life at home if they or someone in their family has COVID-19 (82%).

- Though few differences exist across demographic groups, adults over the age of 65 are much more likely to say they are aware of their risk level for severe illness/developing complications (91%) compared to those between the ages of 35-64 (81%) who say the same thing.

Self-isolation (75%), calling their physician (70%), and going to a COVID-19 testing center (58%) are the top three actions Americans would take if they believed they were exposed to someone with COVID or started showing symptoms. Older adults (age 65+) are particularly likely to call their doctor in this situation (78%) – and this is even more prevalent among adults 65+ living in the Tri-State region (82%).

Putting their knowledge to the test, most Americans correctly identify the statement “social distancing isn’t necessary if you’ve already had COVID-19” as false (83% vs. 8% who believe this is true and 9% who don’t know). Another eight in ten are correct in saying the statement “if you don’t have a fever or cough, you don’t have COVID-19” is false (81% vs. 9% who say this is true and 11% who don’t know).

Three quarters (75%) believe the notion that “younger people in good health won’t get severely ill from COVID-19” is false, which is correct - and 67% recognize that the claim “if you can hold your breath for 10 seconds without discomfort, you don’t have COVID-19” is false (vs. 10% who incorrectly think this is true and 22% who don’t know).

Fewer are aware that “obesity is a major risk factor for severe illness and death from COVID-19” (56% who correctly say this is true vs. 20% who say this is false and 25% who don’t know) and less than half correctly identify the following statement as false: “The flu and COVID-19 are caused by the same family of viruses” (42% vs. 34% who think this is true and 23% who don’t know).

## SAMPLE COMPOSITION

Nearly seven in ten Americans surveyed are potentially ‘high risk’ for developing serious complications from COVID-19 – meaning that they have been diagnosed or are at risk for at least one of the following ailments: high blood pressure, heart disease, asthma, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, and cancer.

Roughly one in four have been tested for COVID-19: only 3% of those surveyed tested positive for COVID-19, while another 21% tested negative. Very few (3%) report being hospitalized due to the illness. Three in ten (30%) have self-quarantined for at least two weeks and 12% believe they have contracted coronavirus at some point but were never tested to confirm.

Not quite one if five are currently caregivers (16%), meaning they provide care for an adult family member or friend with a chronic illness or condition that prevents them from handling daily activities on their own.

- Caregivers are most likely to be between the ages of 35-44 (26%) and have children living at home (30%).

Nearly three quarters of caregivers say that the COVID-19 pandemic made it more difficult for them to provide this type of care (72%) and another 72% agree that social distancing and less in-person contact have been difficult emotionally for the person they care for.



## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

- Among this group, eight in ten (85%) agree that being a caregiver has encouraged them to take better care of their own health and 88% have taken extra precautions to protect both themselves and the person they care for.
- Nearly one in two (49%) caregivers say that the person they care for has had trouble getting treated by his/her doctor due to the pandemic. Three in five (61%) have helped the person they care for connect with their doctor via telemedicine (e.g., using video, phone)

### About the Study

These are the findings from an Ipsos poll conducted July 9 - 14, 2020 on behalf of MDVIP. For the survey, a sample of 1,535 adults ages 35 and over from the continental U.S., Alaska and Hawaii was interviewed online, in English. An additional national sample of 305 adults age 65 and over from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut was interviewed. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll has a credibility interval of  $\pm 2.9$  percentage points for all respondents, and  $\pm 6.4$  percentage points for older adults (65+) in the tri-state region.

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 ( $n=1,535$ ,  $DEFF=1.5$ , adjusted Confidence Interval= $\pm 4.4$  percentage points).

For more details on the research, go to: <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/many-are-experiencing-heightened-state-anxiety-during-pandemic-fear-second-covid-19-wave-top-mind>

### For more information on this news release, please contact:

Chris Jackson  
Vice President, US  
Public Affairs  
+1 202 420-2025  
[chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)

Marie-Pierre Lemay  
Director, US  
Public Affairs  
+1 613 793-1622  
[marie.lemay@ipsos.com](mailto:marie.lemay@ipsos.com)

2020 K Street, NW, Suite 410  
Washington DC 20006  
+1 202 463-7300

Contact: **Chris Jackson**  
Senior Vice President, US, Public Affairs, Ipsos  
Email: [chris.jackson@ipsos.com](mailto:chris.jackson@ipsos.com)  
Tel: +1 202 420-2025

**GAME CHANGERS**





## PUBLIC POLL FINDINGS AND METHODOLOGY

### About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest market research company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP [www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)

