

COVID-19

Fielded August 2020

Every month, IBM Watson Health® conducts a health poll that surveys approximately 3,000 Americans to gauge attitudes and opinions on a wide range of healthcare issues.

This health poll is powered by the IBM Watson Health PULSE® Healthcare Survey, an independently funded, multi-modal (land line, cell phone, internet) survey that collects information from approximately 80,000 U.S. households annually.

The results depicted in this report represent responses from 3,007 survey participants interviewed from August 1 – 15, 2020, with a margin of error of +/- 1.8%.

Executive summary

This health poll asked Americans about coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Of all respondents:

20%

said their physical activity is Significantly Better when compared to the beginning of the year or prior to the pandemic, while 8% said it is Significantly Worse.

91%

said that they wear a mask when in public. This rate tends to increase with increasing level of education.

19%

said their diet and eating habits are Significantly Better when compared to the beginning of the year or prior to the pandemic, while 5% said they are Significantly Worse.

20%

of those who said they do not wear a mask in public said the main reason was that it is Difficult to Breathe. Other reasons given were Don't Feel at Risk (18%), Don't Need (17%) and Masks Not Effective (16%). (Note: Small Sample Size)

14%

said their alcohol consumption is Significantly Better when compared to the beginning of the year or prior to the pandemic, while 5% said it is Significantly Worse.

86%

said they have someone to depend on, which is a decrease from the overall rate in February 2020 (90%), and this difference is statistically significant.¹

2020 PULSE Health Poll: COVID-19

Fielded August 1 - August 15, 2020

Using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means Significantly Worse and 5 means Significantly Better, how would you rate the following aspects of your health behaviors when compared to the beginning of the year before the COVID-19 pandemic? You can use any number in between 1 and 5.

Note: Bolded figures are statistically significant.

Question 1: Compare your physical activity to before the pandemic

	1 - Significantly Worse	2	3	4	5 - Significantly Better
<35	9.0%	17.7%	29.6%	23.1%	18.6%
35 - 64	7.9%	19.3%	30.1%	21.9%	20.3%
65+	6.7%	13.9%	36.1%	21.8%	19.1%
Total	7.8%	17.3%	31.7%	22.2%	19.5%
HS or Less	8.9%	16.0%	34.5%	21.6%	17.2%
Some College/Associate	7.7%	16.4%	33.9%	23.0%	17.9%
College+	7.0%	19.2%	27.6%	22.1%	22.8%
Total	7.8%	17.3%	31.7%	22.2%	19.5%
Silent Generation	5.2%	11.3%	30.0%	27.4%	22.2%
Baby Boomers	7.3%	18.4%	35.4%	20.3%	17.2%
Generation X	8.5%	17.7%	31.8%	20.2%	21.1%
Millennials	8.3%	17.6%	28.7%	24.5%	19.1%
Total	7.8%	17.3%	31.7%	22.2%	19.5%
<\$25k	13.2%	16.7%	34.5%	20.3%	12.6%
\$25k - \$49.9k	8.1%	18.6%	32.1%	19.9%	19.9%
\$50k - \$99.9k	4.3%	19.6%	31.3%	24.8%	19.5%
\$100k+	6.8%	14.1%	25.4%	24.2%	28.6%
Total	7.8%	17.3%	31.7%	22.2%	19.5%

2020 PULSE Health Poll: COVID-19

Fielded August 1 - August 15, 2020

Question 2: Compare your diet/eating habits to before the pandemic

	1 - Significantly Worse	2	3	4	5 - Significantly Better
<35	5.7%	15.4%	40.4%	23.4%	12.2%
35 - 64	5.6%	18.2%	35.1%	21.5%	18.3%
65+	2.6%	7.5%	38.6%	25.3%	25.0%
Total	4.8%	14.3%	37.5%	23.1%	18.6%
HS or Less	5.7%	12.8%	42.6%	19.7%	16.8%
Some College/Associate	4.4%	16.9%	36.6%	24.8%	15.7%
College+	4.3%	13.6%	33.8%	24.7%	22.5%
Total	4.8%	14.3%	37.5%	23.1%	18.6%
Silent Generation	2.7%	7.3%	30.4%	23.6%	34.6%
Baby Boomers	3.1%	10.6%	41.1%	25.5%	19.0%
Generation X	6.3%	17.9%	32.7%	22.1%	19.0%
Millennials	5.3%	15.9%	41.3%	21.8%	13.2%
Total	4.8%	14.3%	37.5%	23.1%	18.6%
<\$25k	6.8%	17.3%	36.5%	20.1%	16.3%
\$25k - \$49.9k	4.5%	14.9%	42.3%	19.4%	17.3%
\$50k - \$99.9k	4.6%	14.8%	36.0%	25.7%	18.1%
\$100k+	3.2%	9.3%	31.8%	29.9%	24.5%
Total	4.8%	14.3%	37.5%	23.1%	18.6%

2020 PULSE Health Poll: COVID-19

Fielded August 1 - August 15, 2020

Question 3: Compare your alcohol consumption to before the pandemic

	1 - Significantly Worse	2	3	4	5 - Significantly Better
<35	5.7%	12.1%	26.0%	11.1%	12.5%
35 - 64	3.5%	9.7%	24.5%	13.7%	15.6%
65+	5.0%	2.3%	20.1%	5.5%	13.6%
Total	4.5%	8.2%	23.6%	10.6%	14.2%
HS or Less	5.8%	8.6%	20.9%	7.6%	10.4%
Some College/Associate	3.5%	7.5%	23.5%	11.3%	13.8%
College+	4.3%	8.3%	26.1%	12.7%	17.9%
Total	4.5%	8.2%	23.6%	10.6%	14.2%
Silent Generation	6.3%	1.7%	14.3%	7.0%	13.7%
Baby Boomers	5.3%	5.1%	22.8%	6.5%	12.1%
Generation X	2.9%	9.2%	24.6%	12.6%	17.0%
Millennials	5.1%	11.7%	26.0%	13.4%	13.4%
Total	4.5%	8.2%	23.6%	10.6%	14.2%
<\$25k	4.3%	8.1%	15.6%	7.7%	13.1%
\$25k - \$49.9k	5.2%	10.5%	23.1%	7.9%	11.5%
\$50k - \$99.9k	4.6%	7.6%	28.7%	12.1%	13.3%
\$100k+	3.2%	6.9%	30.4%	18.8%	22.4%
Total	4.5%	8.2%	23.6%	10.6%	14.2%

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Fielded August 1 - August 15, 2020

Question 4: Do you wear a mask or face covering when in public?

	Yes	No
<35	92.9%	6.8%
35 - 64	88.9%	10.7%
65+	93.6%	5.3%
Total	91.3%	8.1%
HS or Less	86.6%	13.0%
Some College/Associate	91.3%	7.7%
College+	95.5%	4.1%
Total	91.3%	8.1%
Silent Generation	91.7%	6.0%
Baby Boomers	92.9%	6.7%
Generation X	89.9%	9.6%
Millennials	91.4%	8.4%
Total	91.3%	8.1%
<\$25k	90.1%	9.3%
\$25k - \$49.9k	88.7%	10.4%
\$50k - \$99.9k	93.6%	6.3%
\$100k+	92.8%	6.2%
Total	91.3%	8.1%

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Question 5: What is the main reason for not wearing a mask or face covering in public (Note: Small Sample Size)

Difficult to breathe	20.2%
Don't feel at risk	18.3%
Don't need	16.8%
Think masks are not effective/masks don't work	16.0%
Other reason [specify]	13.7%
Medical reasons	7.7%
Government cannot tell me what to do/Infringes on my freedom	5.9%

Note: Care should be taken when interpreting Q5 due to small sample sizes.

Note: Bolded figures are statistically significant within the Waves.

Note: Bolded figures are statistically significant between the waves.

Question 6: Is there someone that you can depend on who will listen to you, support you emotionally or talk with you about your problems or concerns? (Both February¹ (Wave 1) and August (Wave 7))

	Wave 7, 2020		Wave 1, 2020	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
<35	83.5%	11.9%	87.6%	9.5%
35 - 64	82.1%	15.2%	89.4%	9.3%
65+	93.7%	5.3%	92.8%	5.8%
Total	85.9%	11.5%	89.6%	8.5%
HS or Less	80.8%	15.8%	85.2%	12.2%
Some College/Associate	86.1%	11.1%	87.2%	10.7%
College+	90.1%	8.0%	93.7%	5.0%
Total	85.9%	11.5%	89.6%	8.5%

Wave 7, 2020

Wave 1, 2020

	Yes	No	Yes	No
Silent Generation	93.2%	6.5%	93.2%	6.6%
Baby Boomers	90.6%	8.3%	92.0%	6.5%
Generation X	81.9%	14.7%	88.4%	10.0%
Millennials	83.6%	12.3%	88.4%	9.0%
Total	85.9%	11.5%	89.6%	8.5%
<\$25k	73.8%	20.2%	83.4%	13.7%
\$25k - \$49.9k	84.1%	12.9%	88.2%	10.1%
\$50k - \$99.9k	93.0%	6.4%	91.3%	6.9%
\$100k+	93.2%	5.7%	96.7%	2.6%
Total	85.9%	11.5%	89.6%	8.5%

Footnotes:

1. February 2020 PULSE Survey sample size of 7,527 Americans interviewed between February 3-29, 2020, with a margin of error of +/- 1.1%

Learn More

Explore other PULSE Health Polls here:
<https://www.ibm.com/watson-health/learn/pulse-health-polls>

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