



KFF COVID-19

Vaccine Monitor

News Release

KFF Launches New COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor to Track the Public's Confidence in the Vaccine and Experiences for the Duration of the Pandemic

First Survey Finds Enthusiasm for Getting Vaccinated Varies Across the Public; Most Fall into “As Soon As Possible” and “Wait and See” Categories, While Some Say “Only if Required” and “Definitely Not”

Republicans and Black Americans are More Likely to Be Hesitant but Even Among These Groups Reasons Vary

KFF has launched a new COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor to dive deeply into the public's views about the vaccine and experiences getting it for as long as the pandemic lasts.

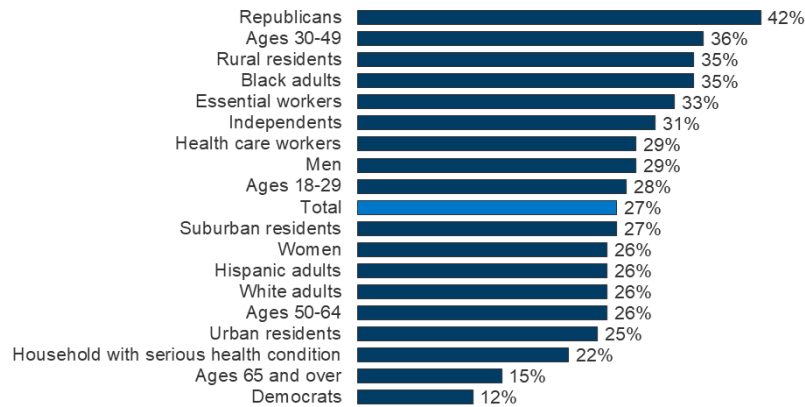
First results released today show that Americans' enthusiasm for getting a COVID-19 vaccination varies substantially across groups, with Republicans and Black Americans among those most hesitant.

Overall, 71% of the public says they definitely or probably would get a vaccine, up from 63% in September. Still about a quarter (27%) of the public is vaccine hesitant, saying they probably (12%) or definitely (15%) would not get a COVID-19 vaccination even if it were available for free and deemed safe by scientists.

Hesitancy remains highest among Republicans (42%), those ages 30-49 (36%), rural residents (35%), and Black adults (35%), a group that has been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Which Groups Are Most Likely To Be COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitant?

Percent within each group who say, if a COVID-19 vaccine was determined to be safe by scientists and available for free to everyone who wanted it, they would **probably not get it** or **definitely not get it**:



[KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor](#)

SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor (KFF Health Tracking Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 8, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

Some Black adults are hesitant for reasons that could change with more information. For example: 71% of those who say they won't get vaccinated say a major reason is that they are worried about possible side effects (which are expected to be mild) and half (50%) say they worry they could get COVID-19 from the vaccine. But nearly as many hesitant Black adults (47%) say they are hesitant to get the COVID-19 vaccine because they don't trust vaccines in general.

Among another large group of the hesitant - Republicans - top reasons for not getting vaccinated may be tougher to change, including believing the dangers of COVID-19 have been exaggerated (57% of hesitant Republicans cite this as a major reason), and that they don't trust the government to ensure a vaccine is safe and effective (56%). Nearly as many (54%) also worry about possible side effects.

KFF's COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor will track the public's attitudes and experiences with COVID-19 vaccinations, with a focus on sub-groups of Americans. Using a combination of surveys and focus groups, KFF will monitor changes in confidence in the vaccine, test messages, assess who are the most trusted messengers, and track the public's experiences with getting the vaccine throughout the distribution process. The Monitor is intended as a resource for everyone involved in vaccine distribution. Results will be released regularly and available on an online dashboard KFF is developing.

“Many who are hesitant are in wait- and see mode, and their concerns include worries about side effects and whether the vaccine can cause COVID-19, which may dissipate as people get more information and see the vaccine introduced successfully among people they know,” KFF President and CEO Drew Altman said.

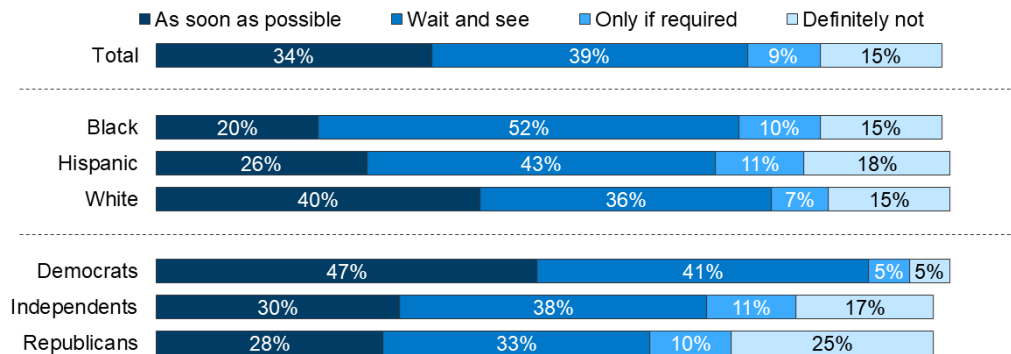
The initial Monitor survey identifies four broad categories of enthusiasm for getting a vaccination that pose different messaging challenges:

- A third of the public (34%) are in the most enthusiastic “as soon as possible” group, who want to get vaccinated as soon as they can. This group is disproportionately made up of Democrats, seniors, white adults, and people with college degrees. Some in this group may become frustrated if they are not among the priority groups receiving early vaccinations.
- The “wait and see” group is the largest, comprising 39% of the public, and generally want to see how vaccinations work for other people before getting it themselves. This group looks like the public at large, and their willingness to get vaccinated may depend on what they learn during its initial rollout, including news reports about its effectiveness, safety and side effects.
- The “only if required” group is the smallest, representing 9% of the public, and say they would only get vaccinated if required for work, school or other activities. Most (61%) of this group are essential workers who work outside their homes during the pandemic, a category considered high risk for exposure.
- The most resistant group, representing 15% of the public, says they would “definitely not” get vaccinated, even if it were deemed safe and available for free. This group is disproportionately made up of Republicans and of people with no more than a high-school level education.

“Many Americans who are hesitant are simply reserving judgment before they are ready to get vaccinated. However, nearly one in four Republicans don’t want to get vaccinated because they don’t believe COVID poses a serious threat,” KFF Executive Vice President Mollyann Brodie said. “It will be a real challenge to undo COVID denialism among this slice of President Trump’s political base.”

Most Black Americans Want To “Wait And See” Before Getting COVID-19 Vaccination; 1 In 4 Republicans Say “Definitely Not”

Percent of the public who fall in each group by COVID-19 vaccine enthusiasm:



SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor (KFF Health Tracking Poll, Nov. 30-Dec. 8, 2020). See topline for full question wording.

[KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor](#)

Those who are more hesitant to get vaccinated for COVID-19 are also more likely to harbor misconceptions about the pandemic and related public health measures, which may make them less receptive to public health messages generally, including those about the importance of vaccinations.

For example, two-thirds (68%) of the “definitely not” group and more than a third (37%) of the “only if required” group incorrectly believe that wearing a face mask does not protect the wearer from coronavirus. Similarly, more than half (54%) of the “definitely not” group and about three in ten (29%) of the “only if required” group believe that wearing a face mask is harmful to one’s health.

Personal Health Care Providers are the Public’s Most Trusted Sources for Vaccine Information

As with many health topics, the poll finds people’s personal health care providers are at the top of the list as a trusted source of vaccine information, ahead of any national, state, or local messengers.

More than eight in ten (85%) say they trust their own doctor or health care provider to provide reliable information on a COVID-19 vaccine, while about seven in ten also trust national messengers like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (73%), the Food and Drug Administration (70%), and Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Dr. Anthony Fauci (68%), as well as their local public health department (70%).

Somewhat fewer, but still a majority, put at least a fair amount of trust in their state government officials (58%), President-elect Joe Biden (57%), and pharmaceutical companies (53%), while about a third (34%) say they trust President Trump.

Trust in personal doctors is high among all racial and ethnic groups and across partisan groups. When it comes to government sources of information, however, a much larger share of Democrats than Republicans say they trust such sources to provide reliable information about a COVID-19 vaccine, with independents generally falling in the middle.

The survey suggests the race to develop a vaccine is helping to improve the public's views of pharmaceutical companies. Most (58%) of the public say that drug companies working on a COVID-19 vaccine are equally interested in the public good and making a profit. That contrasts sharply with the public's view in July that found the majority of the public (76%) say drug makers generally care mostly about profits.

Designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at KFF, the survey was conducted from Nov. 30-Dec. 8 among a nationally representative random digit dial telephone sample of 1,676 adults, including oversamples of adults who are Black (390) or Hispanic (298). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by landline (391) and cell phone (1,285). The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the full sample. For results based on subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher.

The **KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor** is an ongoing research project tracking the public's attitudes and experiences with COVID-19 vaccinations. Using a combination of surveys and focus groups, this project will track the dynamic nature of public reactions as vaccine development unfolds, including vaccine confidence and hesitancy, trusted messengers and messages, as well as the public's experiences with vaccination as distribution begins.

Filling the need for trusted information on national health issues,
KFF is a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, California.

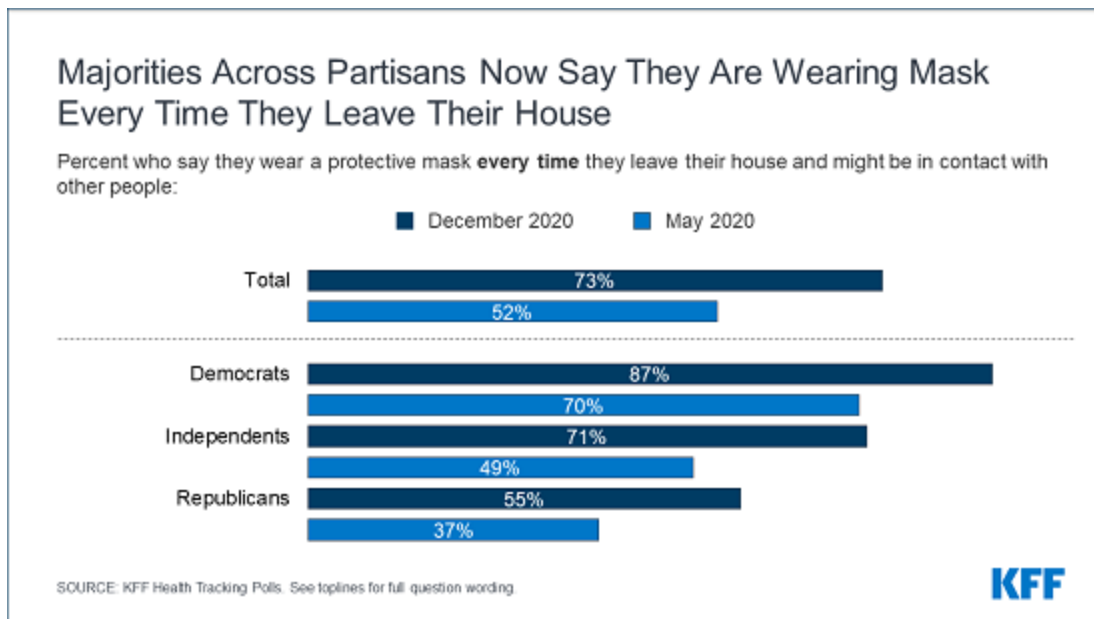
KFF Just Released

Poll: Large Majorities Now Say They Wear Masks Regularly and Can Continue Social Distancing for At Least Six Months if Needed, though Republicans Remain Less Likely to Take Such Precautions

At Least Two-thirds of the Public Favor Changes to Expand Coverage and Negotiate Drug Prices Put Forward by President-Elect Biden

As winter sets in and COVID-19 cases and deaths reach records in most parts of the country, more Americans say they wear masks every time they leave home now (73%) than said so in May (52%), a new KFF Health Tracking Poll finds.

A small minority (11%) say they wear masks only some of the time or never. This group is more likely to be white (70%), male (65%) and Republican (54%).



In addition, 7 in 10 Americans (70%) say that they can continue to follow social distancing guidelines to limit COVID-19's spread for at least another six months if necessary. Only small shares say they could follow such guidelines less than another month (4%) or not at all (9%).

There are big partisan differences, with an overwhelming majority of Democrats (87%) and just half of Republicans (50%) saying they can follow these guidelines at least six months or until a vaccine is widely available. One in five (20%) Republicans say they can't follow the guidelines at all.

The willingness to wear masks and follow social distancing comes as two thirds (68%) of the public worry that they or someone in their family will get sick from coronavirus. This marks the highest level of concern recorded since KFF began asking the question in February. As in the past, Democrats worry more about this risk than Republicans.

In addition, half (51%) of adults say that worry or stress related to the pandemic has had a negative impact of their mental health, similar to July (53%). This includes a quarter (25%) who say it has had a major impact. Women and young adults are more likely than men and older adults to report negative mental health impacts.

Fielded just before the Food and Drug Administration approved any COVID-19 vaccines, the poll finds half (51%) of the public say the “worst is yet to come” in the pandemic, up from a low of 38% in September. Democrats are more than twice as likely as Republicans to feel that way (72% v. 32%), with independents in the middle (50%).

“Republican denialism mirroring President Trump, even in the face of a growing epidemic in red states, has become a real public health challenge that the incoming administration will need to take on,” KFF President and CEO Drew Altman said.

The poll also gauges the public’s views on several proposals to negotiate drug prices and to expand access to affordable health coverage that President-elect Biden promoted during the 2020 campaign.

On drug prices, nearly 9 in 10 (89%) favor allowing the federal government to negotiate with drug companies to get a lower price for both Medicare and private insurance. This includes large shares of Republicans (84%) and independents (87%) as well as nearly all Democrats (97%).

On coverage expansions, large majorities support guaranteeing health insurance coverage to lower-income people in states that have not expanded their Medicaid program under the Affordable Care Act (76%); having a government-administered “public option” health plan available to all Americans (71%); expanding government financial help for those who buy their own insurance on the ACA marketplace (66%); and lowering the age when people become eligible for Medicare from 65 to 60 (65%).

There is a wider partisan divide on the coverage proposals, with Democrats generally most supportive and Republicans least supportive – though about half of Republicans favor guaranteeing coverage to low-income people in states that have not expanded Medicaid (54%) and lowering Medicare’s age of eligibility (51%).

A large majority (80%) – including majorities across parties – also favor protecting patients from surprise medical bills from out-of-network providers, which is the subject of bi-partisan legislation being worked on in Congress.

As part of his campaign, President-elect Biden focused on protecting and building upon the Affordable Care Act to expand access to affordable health coverage. Most of the public wants the incoming administration and Congress either to build on the ACA (48%) or keep it as is (14%). Fewer want to scale it back (9%) or repeal it entirely (20%).

As with the ACA overall, there are large partisan divisions, with most Democrats and independents wanting to build on what the law does or keep it as is, while most Republicans want to scale it back or repeal it entirely.

Designed and analyzed by public opinion researchers at KFF, the survey was conducted from Nov. 30-Dec. 8 among a nationally representative random digit dial telephone sample of 1,676 adults, including oversamples of adults who are Black (390) or Hispanic (298). Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish by landline (391) and cell phone (1,285). The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3 percentage points for the full sample. For results based on subgroups, the margin of sampling error may be higher.

Filling the need for trusted information on national health issues, KFF (Kaiser Family Foundation) is a nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, California.

Contact:

Craig Palosky | (202) 654-1369 | cpalosky@kff.org