

Public perceptions of COVID-19
UF/ IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources
Data collected March 13-16, 2020

KEY FINDINGS

- 66.8% ranked COVID-19 as the #1 public health concern.
- 80.3% said they would get a vaccine for COVID-19 if it were available.
- Top 3 trustworthy sources were as follows:
 1. Healthcare provider
 2. Local TV news
 3. National network TV news
- When seeking information related to COVID-19, participants are most likely to visit CDC websites, DOH websites, personal healthcare provider, and WHO website.
- Participants had seen or heard information regarding COVID-19 in the past month from the following:
 - Conversations with friends or family - 76.7%
 - National network TV news channels (ABC, CBS, NBC, etc.) – 73.9%
 - Local TV news channels – 69.1%
 - Websites – 67.2%
 - National cable TV news channels (Fox News, MSNBC, CNN, etc.) – 60.6%
 - Facebook – 55.6%
- Participants were concerned about food prices and the economy.
 - I am concerned there will be an increase in food prices because of COVID-19 - 75.6%
 - I am concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on my state's economy - 86.8%
 - I am concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the U.S. economy - 91%
 - I am concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on the global economy– 87.3%
- Which of the following are recommended methods to prevent contracting COVID-19?
 - Apply sesame oil to your hands and arms – 97.1% did not select this answer
 - Avoid close contact with those that are sick – 96.7% selected this answer
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth – 94.3% selected this answer
 - Clean or disinfect frequently touched objects – 94.4% selected this answer
 - Increase your consumption of garlic – 96.6% did not select this answer
 - Take antibiotics – 92.6% did not select this answer
 - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – 97.6% selected this answer
 - Wear a face mask when in crowded areas – 52% did not select this answer
- Participants were more concerned about their loved ones contracting or dying from COVID-19, compared to themselves.
 - I am concerned I am personally at risk of contracting COVID-19 - 57.2%
 - I am concerned my loved ones are at risk of contracting COVID-19 – 77.5%
 - I am concerned about pets contracting COVID-19 – 26.2%
 - I am concerned about my likeliness of coming into contact with a person infected by COVID-19 – 73.4%
 - I am concerned I could die from COVID-19 – 44.2%
 - I am concerned my loved ones could die from COVID-19 - 66.9%
 - I am concerned others I come into contact with are not taking appropriate measures to avoid contracting COVID-19 – 84%





FAQ

What items were included in the survey?

Data was collected on the public's knowledge, response, concerns, and beliefs related to COVID-19. The public was also asked about what sources of information they have seen information related to the virus, in addition to what sources they seek and trust. The survey also included questions about public health concerns and vaccines.

Who completed the survey?

The survey was completed by 1,500 United States adults from across the country. The data is weighted to be representative of the U.S. adult population by age, race/ ethnicity, and gender.

How was the data collected?

The data was collected through an online Qualtrics panel. Qualtrics recruits randomly selected respondents that are representative of the general population.

When was the data collected?

Data was collected from March 13-16, 2020.

Was the survey content reviewed or vetted?

Yes, a panel of specialists with expertise in infectious diseases, coronavirus, economics, and science communication reviewed the survey before it was released. This review was particularly important for questions that sought to determine the participant's knowledge related to COVID-19.

Who was involved in the study and what were their roles?

Dr. Ricky Telg – Director of the UF/IFAS PIE Center, Professor of agricultural communication at the University of Florida; Co-Principal Investigator for study

Dr. Lauri Baker – Associate professor of agricultural communication at the University of Florida, Co-founder of the Center for Rural Enterprise Engagement, Affiliate faculty with the UF/IFAS PIE Center; Principal Investigator for study

Dr. Angela Lindsey – Assistant professor of family, youth and community sciences, Florida point-of-contact for the Extension Disaster Education Network, Affiliate faculty with the UF/IFAS PIE Center; Co-Principal Investigator for study

