

# The Weekly Digest

A single source for consumer sentiment, news, and resources related to what's happening in the country today

May 12, 2021

This week, while the number of new COVID-19 cases in the US continues to decline, so too does the number of vaccines being administered. Providers are inoculating on average 2.2 million people per day, a 35% decrease from the peak of 3.4 million a month ago. While many news headlines continue to point to the slowdown being driven by a portion of the population who does not see the vaccine as necessary to return to normalcy (see: Chart of the Day), a recent article from the New York Times suggests declines are also due to structural barriers preventing portions of more socially vulnerable Americans from accessing the vaccine. Among those who are open to the vaccine, people who have higher incomes are being vaccinated at higher rates—93 percent of adults in households earning \$150,000+ had been vaccinated as of April 30, while only 76

percent of those earning less than \$25,000 had gotten at least one shot.

Vaccination status has now become the latest in a long list of factors that have divided our country. As the nation continues to reopen, and businesses look to rebound from lockdown, it will be critical for brands to find ways to reconnect with customers without alienating certain portions. Recent data from Wunderman Thompson shows that younger consumers are looking for brands to play a role beyond product, and to take active measures to improve the quality of consumers' lives. Most recently, brands have manifested this desire in the form of empathy, which given the circumstances of the last 18 months, has shown positive signs of resonating with consumers (see: Spotlight On: Brands bringing empathy to Mother's Day).

Number of Daily New Diagnoses in the U.S.

**35,025**

Trajectory of New Diagnoses: **Decreasing**

Source: Analysis based on [Johns Hopkins data](#)

Number of COVID-19 Cases in the U.S.

**32,780,283**

As of 10:54am Source: [Johns Hopkins](#)

7 day average of newly vaccinated people in US

**2.19M/day**

Trajectory of New Vaccinations: **Decreasing**

As of 5/12/21 – Source: [NYT](#)

Percentage of US population vaccinated:

Given at least one shot: **46%**

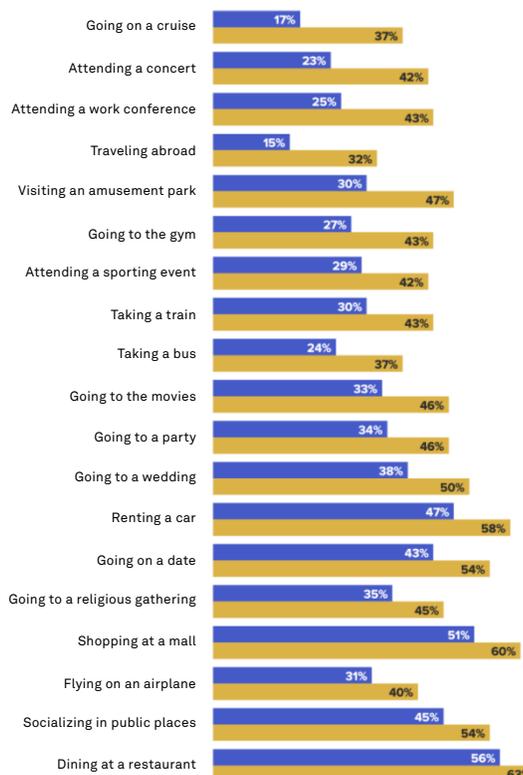
Fully vaccinated: **35%**

As of 5/12/21 – Source: [NYT](#)

Estimated herd immunity range: 70%-90%

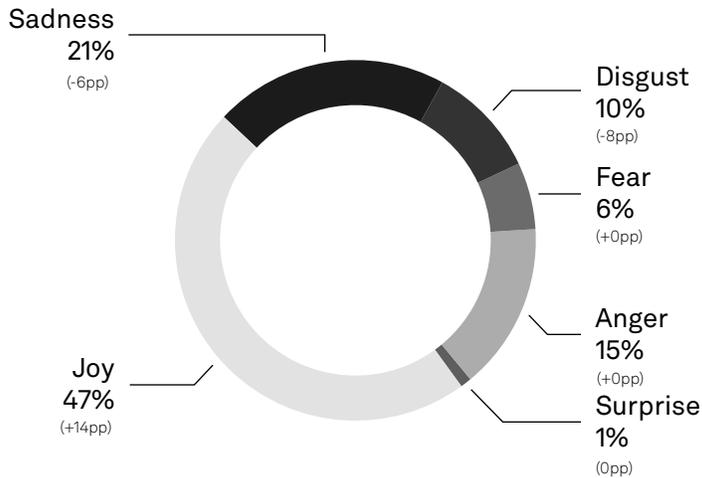
## Adults who have not been vaccinated for COVID-19 more likely than vaccinated adults to express comfort towards a variety of public activities

Share of **vaccinated\*** and **unvaccinated** U.S. adults who said they would be more comfortable doing each of the following activities right now given the state of the coronavirus pandemic:



Date 5/12/21 – Source: [Morning Consult](#)

## Emotional sentiment



Date: 5/5/21-5/11/21 – Source: Brandwatch

Note: Change in emotional sentiment is reflective of changes since 6/10/20, when we shifted how social listening is being pulled to be reflective of all social conversations, rather than COVID-19-specific conversations.

## COVID-Related Resources

- Plan your life again, but keep it simple (5/4/21) [NYT](#)
- How to help teens struggling with mental health amid COVID pandemic (5/7/21) [ABC7](#)
- Nurse jobs have been tough on mental health during COVID-19 (5/6/21) [The Today Show](#)
- What's behind the vaccine slowdown? (5/11/21) [The Atlantic](#)

## Racial-Justice-Related Resources

- 10 books to read during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (5/5/21) [BU Today](#)
- Who is making Asian American Pacific Islander History in 2021: The GMA inspiration list (5/10/21) [ABC News](#)
- Celebrate Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2021 with PBS – What to Watch [PBS](#)
- 'I feel so drained and angry': AAPI influencers on fighting anti-Asian hate and prioritizing mental health (5/10/21) [Yahoo!Life](#)

For a regularly updated blog tracking brands' responses to racial injustice, visit AdAge [here](#)

### Joy

 **MrT Achilles (Trevor "Trev" McKee Achilles)** @MrT Achilles 23h  
RT @Jessicam6946 Getting your covid vaccine will make an excellent mothers day gift!! Also, drive mom or grandma to get theirs!

 **SarahOSheaMD (Sarah O'Shea, MD, MS)** @SarahOSheaMD 7 May  
Thank you for the post, @The\_BMC! It is incredibly important that patients with Parkinson's disease receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

### Anger

 **PatriciaDeBow1 (Patricia DeBow)** @PatriciaDeBow1 9 May  
RT @rscook the US has more vaccine than people willing to get vaccinated, send all the surplus vaccine to India immediately and make more vaccine to vaccinate the whole world 🌍 @POTUS @VP

 **Brennan\_Huff\_OH (Court)** @Brennan\_Huff\_OH 7 May  
@RBRReich Only way to prevent new strains emerging is addressing this on a global scale. India, Chile, Philippines and so many other countries are struggling but don't even have the infrastructure to support distribution.

### Fear

 **cuzzinneenee (you got a picasso in yo house!)** @cuzzinneenee 6 May  
Y'all can "Post Covid" me to death, IDC. I'm still moving with caution. Aint no club or indoor party with large amounts of ppl seeing me for another 2 years

 **JamieBroussard9 (Jamie Broussard)** @JamieBroussard9 4h  
RT @VincentRK India has more confirmed COVID cases per day than ALL other countries in the world combined.

### Sadness

 **papiwhathappen (Jenzo DuQue 🇵🇸)** @papiwhathappen 5 May  
RT @kentdwolf Latin America accounts for 25% of COVID deaths this week, and Colombians, in particular, are being subjected to rights abuses on top of a pandemic that has pushed 3.6 million into poverty. After researching charities, I've elected to donate to @save\_children. Join me!

 **AASAsianStudies (Association for Asian Studies)** @AASAsianStudies 7 May  
RT @AHASouthAsia I worry about my family and friends in South Asia and yours, too. We've all lost loved ones to COVID and the distance makes my heart ache. I'm holding space. If you want to memorialize your loved one SAADA is collecting and preserving their stories. <https://t.co/X7cwN8wj3D>

### Disgust

 **TThomasLewis1 (T.Thomas Lewis)** @TThomasLewis1 9 May  
RT @iyad\_elbaghdadi I do not want anyone to speak to me about peace. Talk to me about justice. To make peace with oppression, tyranny, racism, and fascism isn't peace, it's a declaration of war against the oppressed, crushed, marginalized, and subjugated. No justice, no peace. <https://t.co/AVLZUcjZ8>

 **enormousjoy (Sherry McCutcheon)** @enormousjoy 8 May  
RT @Mikel\_Jollett When Obama was elected a lot of people were like, "See, racism is over," and here we are twelve years later and they're reinstating Jim Crow voting laws.

## Spotlight On: Brands bringing empathy to Mother's Day

In the past year, the pandemic and the movement for racial justice has pushed brands to act in more empathetic and socially conscious ways. The younger generation has driven this push with 85% of Gen Z believing that “brands should be about something more than profit” and 80% believing “brands should help make people’s lives better.” Most recently, we saw empathy from brands manifest itself this past weekend during Mother’s Day. More than a dozen brands including Etsy, Pandora, Away, Parachute, Milk Bar, and the Democratic National Committee let customers skip Mother’s Day emails in an effort to recognize that the holiday can be difficult for those who have lost parents or children. These companies let people opt-out of these emails while letting them know this wouldn't affect them being updated on other subject matters. This different acknowledgement of the holiday was a way of recognizing customers’ humanity following a grief-filled year. According to Away’s CMO, 4,000 subscribers chose to opt out of Mothers’ Day/Fathers’ Day emails and the company received more than 250 messages of “customer love.”

While some in the grief community say these types of emails are just ways for brands to improve their image, others view the increased empathy beneficial for all as it means companies are more responsive to customers’ needs and realities. Many in the business space see this type of personalization and customization as the future of marketing. A Gartner survey found that meeting individual needs and anticipating customer expectations are shown to increase net promoter scores and customer satisfaction scores. Much of this will come from marketers segmenting audiences based on interests, demographics, and behavior so customers are communicated with in ways that speak best to them. Brands that adopt empathetic practices at every level of the business from marketing all the way to company culture are those that will build a loyal customer base.

Source: [NPR](#) (5/7/21), [Fast Company](#) (5/4/21), [Forbes](#) (4/28/21)

## Marketing/Media News Related to Racial Injustice

- 30 Asian-owned brands are donating 20 percent of sales to fight AAPI hate (5/6/21) [WWD](#)
- Consumers are more likely to use or drop brands based on racial justice response, survey finds (5/7/21) [WSJ](#)
- IPG pledges to spend 5% on Black-owned media by 2023 (5/10/21) [Marketing Dive](#)
- Coca-Cola is at the center of a debate over corporate social justice, with an anti-affirmative-action activist threatening to sue over its supplier diversity program (5/8/21) [Business Insider](#)
- Starbucks considering leaving Facebook over hateful comments (5/9/21) [Fox Business](#)
- National Geographic faced up to its racist past. Did it actually get better? (5/6/21) [Vox](#)
- American Express called out by investors concerned about ‘woke-washing’ (5/8/21) [SFL Times](#)
- Black Pound Day was created to find a sustainable way to support Black-owned businesses after the Black Lives Matter street protests faded (4/30/21) [NYT](#)
- Employee activism is on the rise. What does that mean for companies? (4/19/21) [Entrepreneur](#)
- The state of Asian American and Pacific Islander Segment marketing (4/15/21) [Forbes](#)

## Marketing/Media News Related to COVID-19

- Cruise line threatens to skip Florida ports over proof-of-vaccination ban (5/8/21) [NYT](#)
- Party City’s brand comparable sales rise despite pandemic (5/10/21) [PYMNTS](#)
- Cases of unruly airline passengers are soaring, and so are federal fines (5/10/21) [NYT](#)
- Agencies are redefining what it means to work ‘together’ in a post-pandemic world (5/10/21) [ADAGE](#)
- Unilever offering up free ice cream to combat vaccine hesitancy (5/11/21) [Fox Business](#)
- Diet companies see gains as Americans try to drop pandemic pounds (5/11/21) [NYT](#)
- Marriott CEO: Line between business and leisure travel is blurring — that’s good news for hotels (5/10/21) [CNBC](#)

## Economic News

- The Biden administration will begin disbursing \$350 billion in state and local aid this month (5/10/21) [NYT](#)
- Inflation likely accelerated in April as economy strengthened (5/12/21) [WSJ](#)
- 'It's really frustrating': Worker shortages are putting more money in employees pockets but could slow the economy (5/12/21) [USA Today](#)

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