

The Weekly Digest

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

September 9, 2021

This week, the US reached a critical milestone in its fight against COVID-19, with 75% of the adult population now having received at least one dose of the vaccine. While the milestone took longer to reach than initially hoped, the rate of vaccinations has picked up in recent weeks as concern over the highly contagious Delta variant continues to grow (see Chart of the Day: Delta Variant Concern Rising). Despite the overall uptick in vaccination rates, the gap in concern between unvaccinated and vaccinated populations continues to worry medical experts.

However, officials are encouraged that recent variant-driven increases in vaccination mandates could help to further boost overall vaccination efforts. Iconic national brands like Walmart and McDonald's have recently implemented vaccine requirements for corporate employees but have stopped short of requiring frontline employees or customers to be vaccinated. While a push towards universal vaccination appears to be the most likely solution to getting the pandemic under control, it poses a new set of COVID-related challenges that businesses and brands must quickly learn to navigate (see Spotlight On: The State of Vaccine Mandates).

Number of Daily New Diagnoses in the U.S.

148,538

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

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

40,567,387

As of 9/8/21
Source: [Johns Hopkins](#)

7 day average of newly vaccinated people in US

811k/day

As of 9/8/21
Source: [NYT](#)

percentage of total US population vaccinated

Given at least one shot:

63%

As of 9/8/21
Source: [NYT](#)

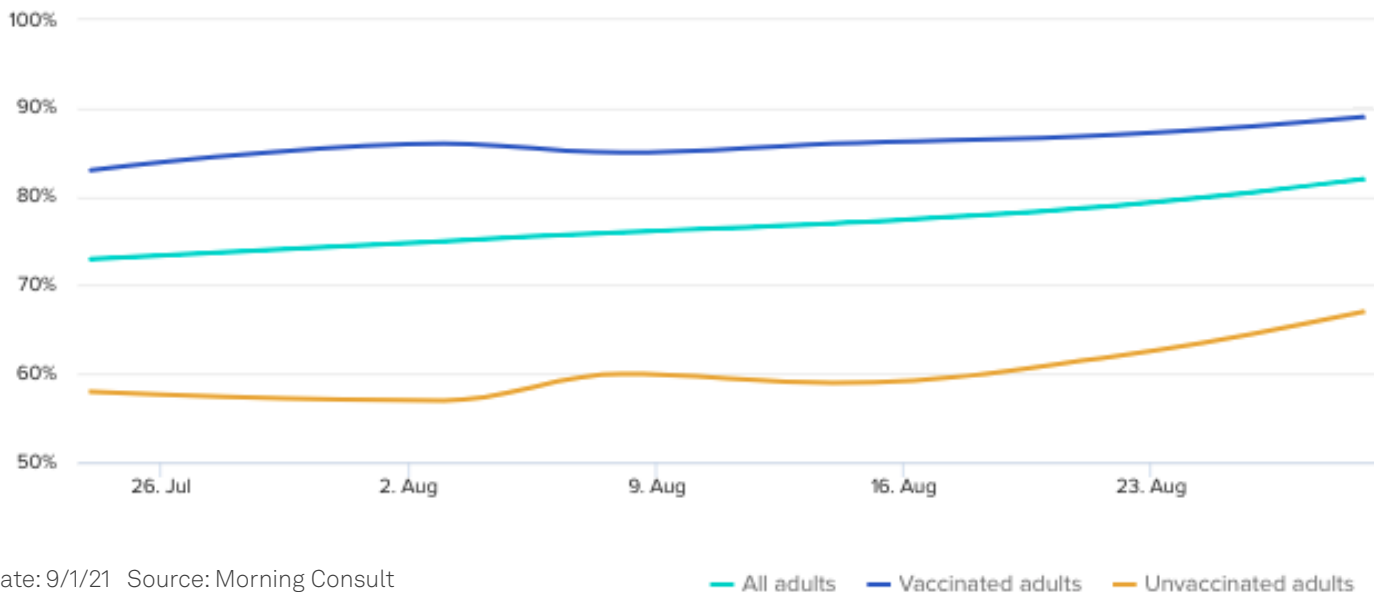
Fully vaccinated:

53%

Trajectory of New Diagnoses: **Decreasing**

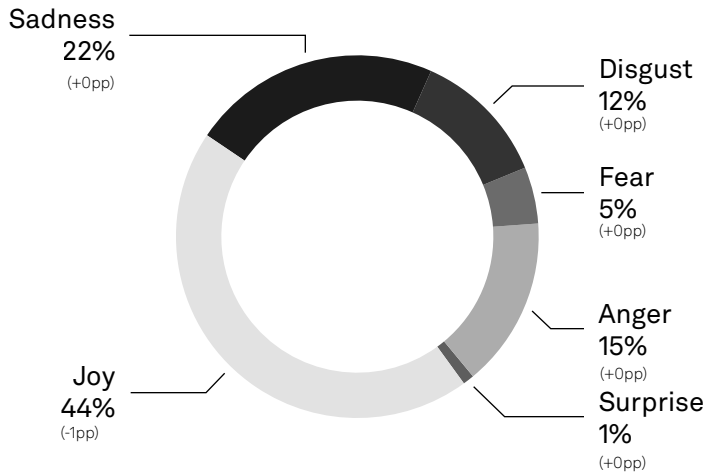
Concern over Delta Variant ticking up

Share of U.S. adults who said they were "very" or "somewhat" concerned about the delta variant of the Coronavirus



Date: 9/1/21 Source: Morning Consult

Emotional sentiment



Date: 9/1/21-9/7/21 – 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


- The COVID-19 risk for vaccinated people is roughly equal to 'riding in a vehicle,' recent data suggest (9/7/21) [Yahoo! News](#)
- It's time for a flu shot. Here's what you need to know (9/7/21) [NPR](#)
- The covid endgame: Is the pandemic over already? Or are there years to go? (9/4/21) [Washington Post](#)


Racial-Justice-Related Resources

- The cannabis industry is booming, but for many Black Americans the price of entry is steep (9/7/21) [The Guardian](#)
- Wendell Pierce, Spike Lee, Ava DuVernay and more pay tribute to beloved actor Michael K. Williams (9/7/21) [The Root](#)
- Michael K. Williams on being typecast (9/7/21) [The Atlantic](#)


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


Joy

 **JudgeCortez (Richard F. Cortez, Hidalgo County Judge)** @JudgeCortez 3 Sep
As students return to campus this year, it is critically important to consider the health and well-being of students and staff, and address issues with COVID-19, mental and physical health. This is their #comebackyear! <https://t.co/3biVBvDNqt>

 **CapriceAssSun (Just Caprice)** @CapriceAssSun 21h
RT @prettydiamondzs If you're reading this I'm wishing you a healthy and wealthy September <https://t.co/fy2WgbkLwa>

Anger

 **ben_park3r (Ben Parker)** @ben_park3r 5 Sep
RT @freudianslipps When universities say they are concerned about COVID but also share pictures of "FULL" stadiums maybe the pictures show where the real priorities are.

 **annemariemavie (Anne Marie Price)** @annemariemavie 4 Sep
RT @sleepsocialist My mom broke down today. There were over 80 patients in the ER last night, understaffed, and today she had to hear family tell her COVID isn't real and that feeling burnt out makes you a terrible nurse. She just kept crying and said there's no help to be seen

Fear

 **hallithbates (Hallie Bateman)** @hallithbates 5 Sep
Since I got breakthrough covid I'm jealous of anyone who feels good enough to move, socialize, travel... but also feel like I'm clutching everyone by the proverbial shirt collar screaming PLEASE BE CAREFUL and CANCEL YOUR TRIP TO HAWAII


 **TaureauMystique (Toro Taureau)** @TaureauMystique 11h
I just don't even know what to do about Covid anymore. We've given up. The gov't has given up. It's a free-for-all at this point.


Sadness

 **ALaSifon (Sifon the Shawol)** @ALaSifon 16h
RT @OpenYourWallet! Hey y'all, please don't just ignore this tweet. My brother died of Covid. My family cannot afford to go to his funeral this Saturday. We need 4 flights, hotel & transportation. Please send what you can, please boost. \$treexhouse Venmo: @mbenz42

 **DinaEllithorpe (Dina Ellithorpe)** @DinaEllithorpe 6 Sep
Florida's funeral homes are overwhelmed by COVID-19 deaths: 'Funerals and funerals and funerals' <https://t.co/wVqdNpXXJ6>

Disgust

 **brightsides (Whit Sides)** @brightsides 21h
I'm so lucky I get to work alongside Dr. Harris on the @CoverAlabama coalition. Nurses in Alabama need help. COVID is treated like a joke and so is the incredibly important work they do when folks don't mask up or get vaccinated.

 **rouge90noir (Rouge_Noir)** @rouge90noir 6 Sep
RT @moneymaya One of my moms coworkers died from covid this week. 2 more of her coworkers tested positive. Her office refuses to close or let them work from home. They're currently holding interviews to fill her coworkers position. These companies truly do not care about employees at all.

Spotlight On:

The state of vaccine mandates

A new poll shows that the majority (53%) of American consumers are more likely to shop with brands that require employee vaccination. This is especially true for Gen Z consumers, with 62% of them saying so. Consumers also want to know if a business is requiring employee vaccines. 76% said that if a company is requiring vaccines, they should put it in their advertising.

However, companies are wary of making employee vaccination mandatory for all for fear of alienating workers amidst a nationwide worker shortage. As a result, some companies are requiring vaccines, but not for frontline workers, exposing further divisions and inequities among America's workforce. For example, Walmart will require all of its corporate and regional staff to be vaccinated unless they have a religious or medical exception but will not require the same of its store associates and warehouse workers. Instead, it is offering them a monetary incentive and paid time off to get vaccinated.

This vaccination debate along with growing concerns about the Delta variant has led many companies to modify their reopening plans. Companies like Apple and Google have pushed back their return to office dates to January 2022. Not only does the continuation of COVID-19 and the emergence of Delta impact how people work, but it also negatively affects the recovery of jobs lost during the pandemic. Companies will have to continue to stay flexible, resilient, and adaptable as they brace for the uncertainty that lies ahead these next few months.

Source: [MarketWatch](#), [Vox](#), [CNBC](#), [Insider](#)

Marketing/Media News Related to Racial Injustice

- It's going to take more than donations to fix Corporate America's systemic racism (9/3/21) [Forbes](#)
- Corporate America's \$50 billion pledge to fight against racial inequality (8/26/21) [Morning Brew](#)
- Race, money and exploitation: why college sport is still the 'new plantation' (9/7/21) [The Guardian](#)
- Purpose at work: Lessons from Dove on joining cultural conversation around Black Lives Matter (9/7/21) [Forbes](#)
- Black Lives Matter changed the way consumers view brands forever (8/30/21) [Adweek](#)
- This year's U.S. Open puts social justice courtside (8/21/21) [Adweek](#)

Marketing/Media News Related to COVID-19

- It's still the coronavirus economy (9/4/21) [The New Yorker](#)
- American Airlines ends coronavirus pandemic leave for unvaccinated employees (9/7/21) [Fox Business](#)
- Buffalo Wild Wings' football campaign puts crowded bars back on the marketing menu (9/1/21) [ADAGE](#)
- Edelman report details how the pandemic has changed what employees look for in a job (9/2/21) [Campaign Live](#)
- How eating out has changed from the menu to the tip (9/7/21) [NYT](#)
- Why Wingstop's corporate shakeup is such a game-changer (9/7/21) [Nation's Restaurant News](#)
- The delta variant may be slowly killing the family movie (9/5/21) [Washington Post](#)
- Office occupancy sputtered in August as Delta variant foiled return-to-work hopes (9/7/21) [WSJ](#)

Economic News

- U.S. hiring slows sharply as latest coronavirus surge slams the brakes on the economy (9/3/21) [NPR](#)
- The work-from-home economy and the urban job outlook (9/3/21) [NYT](#)