

Survey: Most Americans say they'll continue health precautions after COVID-19

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Mike Nicholson livestreams his hip-hop fitness classes and has had limited in-person attendance for months. He's looking forward to welcoming more people back to class. But to get there, everyone will have to keep following COVID-19 safety protocols. Credit: The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

A new national survey of more than 2,000 Americans by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center finds most plan to continue many of the pandemic precautions in the name of public health, even when the pandemic is over.

As more people get vaccinated against COVID-19, there's growing optimism for a happier and healthier future. But experts warn that life will not return to normal right away, and people should expect many health precautions and restrictions implemented during the pandemic to stick around for the foreseeable future.

"While the progress we're making toward recovery is exciting, it's critical that we don't ease up on the precautions that we know have worked thus far," said Dr. Iahn Gonsenhauser, chief quality and patient safety officer at The Ohio State Wexner Medical Center. "Masks and physical distancing are still our best weapons for limiting spread and, now that we have a vaccine, will make those

precautions even more effective and will drive new cases way down if we stay the course."

The survey found that nearly three-quarters (72%) of Americans plan to continue to wear masks in public, four out of five (80%) will still avoid crowds and 90% plan to keep up frequent handwashing and sanitizer use after COVID-19. Gonsenhauser says it's encouraging that people are willing to continue these practices and that this year's [flu season](#) is proof of their effectiveness.

"Flu cases and hospitalizations are way down compared to recent years. A lot of that is likely because precautions like masking, physical distancing and [hand hygiene](#) are working to prevent the flu," Gonsenhauser said. "I think a lot of people realize what we've learned from COVID-19 can be applied more generally to keep our population healthy."

After nearly a year of living in a world drastically changed by the pandemic, continuing these practices may ease the anxiety of returning to public spaces. Wearing a mask, for example, can provide a sense of control and comfort to those with lingering pandemic fears.

Experts also predict that there are some aspects of society that will never return to pre-[pandemic](#) standards, and that's not all bad. Work from [home options](#) will likely stick around in many industries and the convenience of seeing your doctor virtually through a telehealth visit is likely to remain and even expand in the future.

Provided by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center

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