

Poll: US trust in COVID-19 information down

October 20 2020, by Seth Borenstein and Hannah Fingerhut



In this Oct. 10, 2020 photo, President Donald Trump speaks from the Blue Room Balcony of the White House to a crowd of supporters in Washington. A new poll finds Americans' trust in the people and institutions giving them information about the coronavirus has fallen across the board. The poll by USAFacts and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research on where America gets its COVID-19 facts shows trust of many people and groups is down significantly from what it was in April. Nearly two-thirds of Americans say they don't trust President Donald Trump much or at all for

accurate coronavirus information. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

Americans have lost trust across the board in the people and institutions informing them about the coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and promoting an anti-malaria drug unproven on COVID-19, had a press conference on the pandemic that day, calling his response to the virus "really spectacular."

The family doctor ranks highest when it comes to whom Americans trust for information about the coronavirus, with 53% saying they trust their [health provider](#) a great deal or quite a bit. After their doctors, 36% said they have high trust in [federal health officials](#) at agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration, 26% in state or local governments, 18% in [news media](#), 17% in family and friends, 16% in Trump, 12% in search engines and just 6% in social media.

Experts in health, science and [political communication](#) said they see three reasons for the drop in trust: fear, politics and the public watching science messily forming in real time.

"The fact that trust dropped in all categories, including health care providers and family and friends, speaks to a really worried society that doesn't feel safe," said the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine to treat the virus, even as reputable scientists, mainstream media and studies call it unproven.

"The public now has multiple cues that say, 'Gee, the science seems to be really confusing at this end. I'm not sure who to trust here,'" Jamieson said. Because of what she perceives as [political pressure](#), she changed

from trusting agencies like the CDC to trusting individual scientists, such as top federal infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci.

While Democrats worry that pressure on science agencies makes them less trustworthy, Republicans distrust them, saying they're trying to make Trump look bad, said say something else. He trusts Fauci, not Trump, saying the president lies frequently.

The poll found that 37% of Republicans and 87% of Democrats say they trust the president only a little or not at all on the pandemic.

Spencer said it's harder to find information on whether his grandchild should return to school or if a vaccine is safe than whether to wear masks. Overall, just 35% of Americans said it was very or somewhat easy to find the information they need on vaccine safety and 39% on safety of reopening school, the poll showed.

More information: AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>.

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