

Poll: Americans worried about contracting COVID, missing family and procuring and affording gifts

December 3 2021



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According to a new poll, Americans are five times more likely to say their level of stress increases rather than decreases (41% to 7%) during the holidays. This year, top areas of concern are contracting COVID-19 during gatherings (38%), and finding (40%) and affording (46%) gifts. The unvaccinated are less worried than the vaccinated about contracting

COVID-19 (28% to 43%). Additionally, nearly half of adults (47%) are anxious about missing family members around the holidays.

The poll, conducted by Morning Consult on behalf of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) was fielded between November 17–21, 2021, among a nationally representative sample of 2,119 adults.

"This [holiday](#) season, as many are returning to pre-COVID traditions like seeing family and shopping, it's normal to feel a mixture of emotions," said APA President Vivian Pender, M.D. "It's important to take joy in the moments we can, and to know that it's okay not to feel okay. Check in with yourself and if you're feeling overwhelmed or anxious, talk to friends or family, and know that help is available." Among the poll's top findings:

- Two in five [healthcare workers](#) (40%) are worried about working long hours in the [holiday season](#). 54% of them say their [stress](#) increases during holidays generally, with 33% anticipating higher stress levels than in 2020.
- Parents are particularly worried about the holidays, with nearly half concerned about contracting (48%) or spreading (47%) COVID at gatherings. Moms are more likely than dads to worry about affording gifts (61% vs. 47%) and are 14% more likely than dads to say the level of stress in their life increases during the holidays (53% vs. 39%).
- Younger adults are consistently more likely than [older adults](#) to say they are anxious about the holidays, particularly about social and [family](#) dynamics.
- Hispanic adults are more likely than those of other racial and [ethnic groups](#) to say they anticipate feeling more stress compared to last year.

Despite their worries, on an open-ended question, many expressed an

overall rosy outlook on the holidays.

"While we are pleased to be rejoining our families and friends, depending on who you are or where you work, stress may be a bigger factor," said APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A. "It's particularly important, in this season of celebrating, to remember how hard our health care workforce continues to labor to ensure the rest of us can be safe, and that this work has an emotional toll. Remember to protect yourselves and those around you by following health guidelines in these COVID times."

The [full results are available here](#). The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of adults based on gender, educational attainment, age, race, and region. Results have a margin of error of plus or minus two percentage points.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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