As vaccinations roll out across the United States, individual comfort levels for visiting museums and other public indoor spaces are changing. These shifts have been furthered by changes in federal guidelines, recent research, and individual attitudes. We asked museum-goers in our Pandemic Panel about their comfort levels. We also surveyed a broader population sample of US residents.

Responses varied widely.

**Vaccinations and Reentry**

As vaccinations roll out across the United States, individual comfort levels for visiting museums will continue to shift and change. Indeed, we saw these shifts even over the past several weeks in our research. We asked museum-goers in our Pandemic Panel about their comfort levels. We also surveyed a broader population sample of US residents.

**Why are these results so different?**

There is no reason to believe that museums are less risk-averse than non-museums. The shift over the past few weeks towards “when I am vaccinated” (and away from “herd immunity”) reflects a growing feeling that receiving a vaccine is enough to make indoor spaces safe enough for people.

**Consequences**

Because museums have taken enormous steps to make indoor spaces safe, it is reasonable to assume that a return to normal visitation will be a lengthy process, with museum audiences gradually increasing their in-person visits throughout 2021.

**Notes**

26% of museum-goers took vaccines and brought up concerns that this type of proof might be discriminatory:

> “I already feel safe visiting places like museums feel safe … and herd immunity will only be the threshold for some.”

Nevertheless, a return to normal visitation is still going to be a lengthy process, with museum audiences gradually increasing their in-person visits throughout 2021.

**Keep that in mind.**

There are a spectrum of attitudes around feeling safe. Most people, however, fell into three categories:

- **‘I will be at museums with ‘bells on’ once I am vaccinated’**
- **‘I will be at museums when I am vaccinated’**
- **‘I already feel safe visiting museums’**

“Consequently, the conversation this question engendered was eerily reminiscent of the mask debate of spring 2020, with opposing sides taking very firm positions. The level of confidence expressed by people in their beliefs about public health, civil liberties and other policy considerations is striking. It is reminiscent of the mask debate in the spring of 2020, with these discussions reflecting a worldview that we had not anticipated seeing this soon. Right now, the conversation we are having in the United States is about who should have mask mandates.”

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