

Masking: May 2021



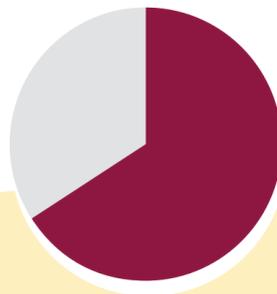
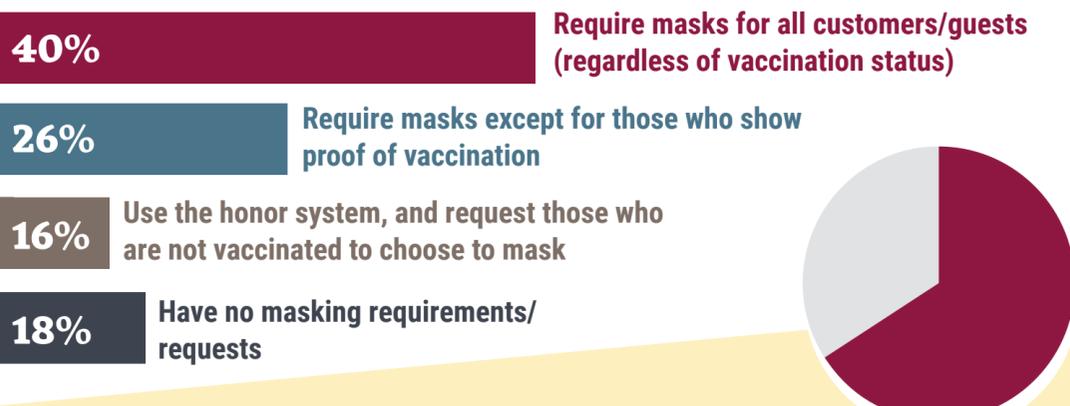
As masking requirements lift across states and communities, and the CDC shared that it no longer recommends masking for the vaccinated, many museums have been left with a quandary: do we continue to require masks ... or not?



It's not an easy question to answer. But to help museums understand what audiences would like them to do, this May we fielded two questions to the broader population (which includes frequent museum-goers, casual visitors, and non-visitors to museums).

? Question 1

The CDC has said that masks are no longer required for vaccinated adults. Which of the following best describes what you would like indoor businesses (like stores, malls, museums, and movie theaters) to do?



These results suggest that 2/3 of respondents are not comfortable being in indoor spaces with unmasked, unvaccinated people, and that masking **should continue**. Additionally, less than 1 in 5 thought there should be no masking requirements.

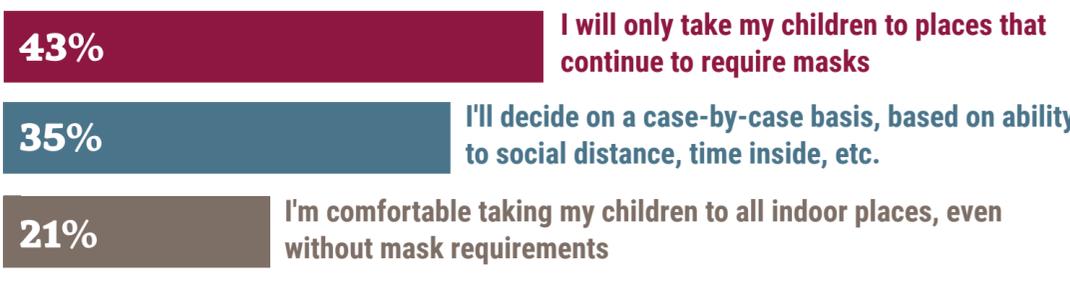


(Frequent museum-goers are even more risk-averse: 3/4 of them want masking to continue.)

? Question 2

There is also a significant segment of our population who cannot get vaccinated: children 11 and younger. As family-friendly destinations, museums need to prioritize keeping unvaccinated children safe. We asked families how they are grappling with fewer masking regulations.

As a parent or guardian to unvaccinated children, which of the following best describes your thoughts on visiting indoor places with your unvaccinated children (including stores, malls, museums, movie theaters, etc.)?



The lifting of masking requirements is a concern for most parents. Only 1 in 5 are comfortable taking their unvaccinated children to indoor places without mask requirements.

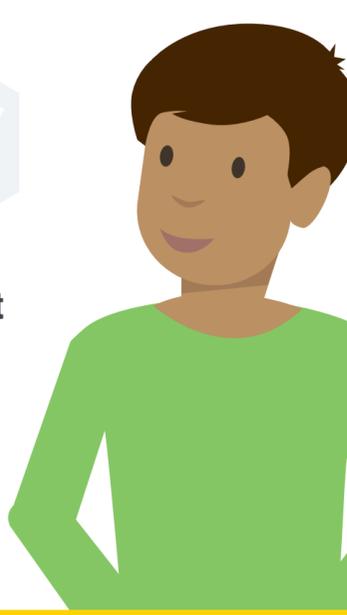
Instead, the majority are taking precautions, with the largest segment of parents saying they will only take their children to places that require masks.



(And, once again, frequent museum-goers are slightly more risk-averse: the majority of these parents will only take their children to places that require masks.)



Decisions about masking should be based primarily on science and what health departments recommend. This research, however, can help you take into consideration visitor concerns. It also provides visitor-based rationale for the policy you decide upon at your museum ... rationale that may help you with visitor compliance.



Finally, throughout this pandemic, things have changed quickly. That includes the science and public opinion. It is fair to expect that masking policies (and opinions about them) will continue to shift in the coming weeks and months.

Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums. This Data Story was sourced by:

• May 2021 Broader Population Sample, n = 2,146 US adults, including 739 parents or guardians of children 11 and younger

*Data Stories share research about both museum-goers (who visit multiple museums each year) and the broader population (including casual and non-visitors to museums).

The entire series of Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories can be found at wilkeningconsulting.com/data-stories.

Thank you to George Mason's Gunston Hall, which allowed us to insert these questions into their already-scheduled broader population survey.