



Spring 2021 Update

Spring, with its changeable weather, is also bringing changeable emotions as we pass the one-year mark of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Optimism is increasing as vaccinations expand dramatically.

But worries continue to lurk for many.

"Although I am more optimistic about the future now that the vaccinations are underway, there is still cause for concern."



Concerns have shifted slightly, as our (mostly vaccinated/getting vaccinated) museum-goer panelists are no longer as worried about themselves or their immediate adult family members becoming sick.



But general worries continue, especially around:

- ✕ Vaccine resistance
- 🦠 Virus variants
- 👤 Over-confidence and/or pandemic fatigue



A new concern also emerged: **children.**

As adults increase their rates of vaccination, it is becoming increasingly obvious there is a major segment of our population that **can't get vaccinated yet.**



"We are willing to still wear the mask when we go to places that request that we wear them. We will comply as there are thousands of children who cannot yet be vaccinated."



"I don't feel comfortable having my children inside in public."

But for the adults participating in the Pandemic Panel, vaccinations are giving them more optimism and a greater sense of freedom.



"I am going back to my old routines. I am going to zoos!!!! I am so happy. I can't tell you how happy I am."

"And finally, I'm considering meeting 1-2 friends for lunch in a restaurant. Yeah!"



Many of them, however, continue to still be cautious. Even those who are vaccinated are not necessarily jumping back into their former routines.

"My spouse and I have been vaccinated but we are not in a hurry to return to doing things that involve many people (so eating out, movies, festivals, museums, etc. are still off in the future)."

"Our experience has been that while we are both vaccinated, there is still a reluctance to feel totally comfortable again in public without masks ..."

Overall, however, the mood was more positive than at any other time in the previous year ... thanks to increasing rates of vaccination.



This suggests that museum visitation should increase over the coming months ... but for many museum-goers, that return continues to be conditional upon local infection rates and adherence to safety guidelines.



"I plan to return slowly, depending on whether the number of cases continues to lessen and that people continue to follow safety protocols like masking (even after vaccination) until our public health officials say it is no longer necessary."

If I hear the museum is taking measures to ensure safety (enforcing masks, meeting capacity standards, sanitizing), I feel safe.



Museums and the Pandemic Data Stories are created by Wilkening Consulting on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums.

- Sources include:
- Ongoing Online Panel of Museum-Goers ("Pandemic Panel")
 - Spring 2020 Broader Population Sampling
 - 2020 and 2021 Annual Surveys of Museum-Goers
 - Winter 2021 Broader Population Sampling

*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.

