Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review

Report June, 2020

Prepared for the World Health Organization by the Big Data and Analytical Unit (BDAU) of Imperial College London’s Institute of Global Health Innovation
Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review

YouGov has teamed up with public health experts at the Institute of Global Health Innovation (IGHI) at Imperial College London to help health professionals across the world limit the impact of the disease. The ongoing survey runs in nearly 30 countries and provides insights on behaviours in different populations as a result of Covid-19.

This report looks at behaviours and perceptions around the use of face masks. It uses the latest available survey responses for each country **between May 14th and June 4th, 2020** (exact survey dates for each country included are available in page 8). All responses have been aggregated to offer a global view of key insights related to Covid-19 and face mask use. To explore the data further, please visit www.coviddatahub.com.

ACCEPTABILITY

Most people are willing to wear masks, especially if it were required by law

3 in 4 would be willing to wear face masks if an international organization advised it (74%). They would be more willing if it were advised by government (77%) or if it were the law (82%)

Nordic countries are the least willing to wear a face mask following international organizations’ advice

Vietnam is the country most willing to follow international organizations’ advice to wear face masks, closely followed by the Philippines (91% and 90%, respectively). Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland are the least likely, ranging from 50% (Norway) to 35% (Finland)

Surveys conducted between May 14 and June 4. *China is representative of the online population. **India is representative of the urban online population.
Report created by Imperial College London’s Big Data and Analytical Unit. Full text of questions available at www.coviddatahub.com. YouGov is making the anonymised respondent level data freely available to researchers around the world through Github.
Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review
May 14th to June 4th 2020

ACCEPTABILITY

Feelings of safety and responsibility are associated with wearing masks. This was consistent when people were asked how they thought they might feel, as well as how they actually felt. Self-consciousness, embarrassment and fear are the least prevalent feelings.

Surveys conducted between May 14 and June 4. *China is representative of the online population. **India is representative of the urban online population. Report created by Imperial College London’s Big Data and Analytical Unit. Full text of questions available at www.coviddatahub.com. YouGov is making the anonymised respondent level data freely available to researchers around the world through Github.
ACCESSIBILITY

Nearly equal shares of the population are willing and not willing to make their own face masks, with only a third of respondents stating that they would be able to make their own masks at home.

There is large variation across countries in their ability to make face masks at home.

4 in 5 in China state they are not able to make face masks at home (81%), followed by Denmark (71%) and Malaysia (70%).

In Mexico only a third state they are not able to make face masks at home (32%).
ACCESSIBILITY

Although medical masks were the most commonly used by respondents, their availability varied greatly across countries.

Survey response (%)

Which type(s) of face mask did you wear? %

- Medical mask that you bought
- Cloth mask that you had bought
- Cloth mask that you or someone at home made for free
- Scarf or similar
- Other
- Not sure

How easy or difficult has it been to find medical masks to buy? Respondents who answered very or quite difficult (%)

Country

Difficulty in accessing medical masks was highest in Thailand, Sweden and the USA.

China, UAE and India reported the lowest difficulty in accessing medical masks.

Surveys conducted between May 14 and June 4. *China is representative of the online population. **India is representative of the urban online population. Report created by Imperial College London’s Big Data and Analytical Unit. Full text of questions available at www.coviddatahub.com. YouGov is making the anonymised respondent level data freely available to researchers around the world through Github.
Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review
May 14th to June 4th 2020

RATIONALE FOR USING HOMEMADE MASKS

Respondents used homemade masks because they were easier to wash, cheap and more comfortable. Ease to wash was the most popular reason across countries.

In most countries the most popular reason for using a homemade mask is that it is easier to wash.

Sweden is the only country where the most popular reason is that they could not find masks to buy.

Surveys conducted between May 14 and June 4. *China is representative of the online population. **India is representative of the urban online population.
Report created by Imperial College London’s Big Data and Analytical Unit. Full text of questions available at www.coviddatahub.com. YouGov is making the anonymised respondent level data freely available to researchers around the world through Github.
Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review
May 14th to June 4th 2020

BARRIERS

Feeling too hot and difficulty breathing is associated with wearing facemasks. This was consistent when people were asked what they thought they might experience, as well as what they actually experienced.

In most countries the most popular negative experience associated with using face masks is feeling too hot.

Only two countries, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia, had “no issues” as the most popular response.
SELF-REPORTED ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOURS

Only one in 4 reported not wearing a facemask at all when they left the house. The Nordic countries were the most likely to not wear a facemask at all.

Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland reported wearing a facemask the least, with 88% or more respondents stating they wore a facemask 0 times when they left the house.

Thailand, Italy and Indonesia had the lowest share of people leaving the house without a facemask, at less than 1%.
Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review
May 14th to June 4th 2020

SELF-REPORTED ASSOCIATED BEHAVIOURS

Over half of people who wore facemasks reported washing their hands more during those days. Half reported touching their face and objects in public less

On the days when you wore a mask, did you do each of the following more, less or about the same? %

On the days when you wore a mask, did you wash your hands more, less or about the same? Respondents who answered "more" %

4 in 5 respondents in Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand reported washing their hands more when they wore a facemask

Less than one in 3 reported doing so in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark

Surveys conducted between May 14 and June 4. *China is representative of the online population. **India is representative of the urban online population. Report created by Imperial College London’s Big Data and Analytical Unit. Full text of questions available at www.coviddatahub.com. YouGov is making the anonymised respondent level data freely available to researchers around the world through Github.
Covid-19: Insights on face mask use
Global review

May 14th to June 4th 2020

Dates of surveys conducted in each country and sample size

Australia: from 2020-05-15 to 2020-05-18 (n = 1008)
China*: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-03 (n = 1007)
Denmark: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-05-31 (n = 1004)
Finland: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-05-31 (n = 1002)
France: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-05-31 (n = 1003)
Germany: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-05-30 (n = 1006)
India**: from 2020-05-15 to 2020-05-21 (n = 1006)
Indonesia: from 2020-05-29 to 2020-05-31 (n = 1009)
Italy: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-05-29 (n = 1000)
Malaysia: from 2020-05-29 to 2020-06-01 (n = 1014)
Mexico: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-03 (n = 1016)
Norway: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-02 (n = 1002)
Philippines: from 2020-05-29 to 2020-05-31 (n = 1002)
Saudi Arabia: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-04 (n = 999)
Singapore: from 2020-05-15 to 2020-05-18 (n = 1007)
Spain: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-05-31 (n = 1000)
Sweden: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-01 (n = 1008)
Thailand: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-01 (n = 1001)
United Arab Emirates: from 2020-05-27 to 2020-06-04 (n = 1000)
United Kingdom: from 2020-05-14 to 2020-05-18 (n = 1068)
United States: from 2020-05-15 to 2020-05-20 (n = 1006)
Vietnam: from 2020-05-29 to 2020-06-01 (n = 1011)
The CovidDataHub.com project is a joint collaboration between the Institute of Global Health Innovation (IGHI) at Imperial College London and YouGov Plc to gather global insights on people’s behaviours, life satisfaction in response to COVID-19. The research covers nearly 30 countries, interviewing up to 30,000 people each week.

This report is designed to provide behavioural analysis on how different populations are responding to the pandemic, helping public health bodies in their efforts to limit the impact of the disease. Anonymised respondent level data is generously made available for all public health and academic institutions globally by YouGov Plc at our GitHub site (https://github.com/YouGov-Data/covid-19-tracker).

The Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial College London is led by:

Professor the Lord Ara Darzi of Denham  
Co-Director

Dr David Nabarro  
Co-Director

The Imperial College London - YouGov survey and dashboard are co-led by Institute of Global Health Innovation principals

Sarah P. Jones  
Faculty of Medicine, Department of Surgery & Cancer Research Postgraduate  
https://www.linkedin.com/in/sarah-jones-mhintelligence

Melanie Leis  
Director - Big Data and Analytical Unit (BDAU)  
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/m.leis

Dr Roberto Fernandez Crespo  
Analytics Fellow, BDAU  
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/roberto.fernandez-crespo13

Dr Manar Shafat  
Contributor, BDAU  
https://www.linkedin.com/in/manar-s-905844157/

Dr Hutan Ashrafian  
Scientific Advisor  
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/h.ashrafian

Gianluca Fontana  
Operations Director and Senior Policy Fellow  
https://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/g.fontana

Our research collaboration includes the great minds at:

Professor John F. Helliwell  
Co-editor, World Happiness Report  
Vancouver School of Economics at the University of British Columbia, Research Associate of the NBER and Distinguished Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research

Professor the Lord Richard Layard  
Co-editor, World Happiness Report  
Founder-Director of the Centre for Economics Performance at the London School of Economics, and co-founder of Action for Happiness

Professor Jeffrey D. Sachs  
Co-editor, World Happiness Report  
Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, and Director of the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network and SDG Advocate under Secretary-General António Guterres

Professor Jan-Emmanuel De Neve  
Co-editor, World Happiness Report  
University of Oxford where he is the director of the Wellbeing Research Centre. De Neve is also a KSI Fellow and Vice-Principal of Harris Manchester College

Contributors to the Imperial College London - YouGov survey include: Professor Helen Ward, Dr Christina J. Atchinson, Dr Benjamin C. Lambert, and Gavin Ellison. The Imperial College London - YouGov team wishes to express their grateful support to Stefan Shakespeare, Marcus Roberts, Alex MacIntosh, Chris Curtis, Eir Nolsoe, Sharon Paculor and the team from Made by Many.

This research is made possible by generous support for the public good from YouGov Plc.

Communication with the research team can be made using this link: https://imperial.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dj03OSFnk9f9hw9

Press enquiries can be directed to Dr Justine Alford, j.alford@imperial.ac.uk

The Imperial College London - YouGov team gratefully acknowledges the kind support of Edelman Intelligence for their global social listening contribution.
For more behavioural data on a global level, visit coviddatahub.com to explore our interactive charts

The CovidDataHub.com project is a joint collaboration between the Institute of Global Health Innovation (IGHI) at Imperial College London and YouGov Plc to gather global insights on people’s behaviours and life satisfaction in response to COVID-19. The research covers almost 30 countries and surveys are conducted on a regular basis since the first week of April.

This report is designed to provide insights on how different populations are responding to the pandemic, helping public health bodies in their efforts to limit the impact of the disease. Anonymised respondent level data is generously made available for all public health and academic institutions globally by YouGov Plc at our GitHub site.