

Americans Avoiding Public Spaces, but Many Putting Health at Risk by Wearing Dirty Face Masks, New Survey Finds

- Nearly 7 in 10 Americans say they reuse single-use disposable masks
- Almost half of Americans (46%) feel their current face mask **does not** provide enough protection from COVID-19
- Even if they wear a face mask, about 1 in 4 Americans feel a “heightened sense of alert” when shopping for groceries

MADISON, Wisconsin, October 21, 2020 – COVID-19 has disrupted Americans’ lives, rewritten the future and put face mask-hygiene routines under the microscope, according to a new study from hygiene-technology company [Livinguard](#). Of the 1,006 adults surveyed, nearly half (49%) prefer to wear reusable-cloth face masks, but about 8 of 10 (79%) said they **do not** wash their masks after each use, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Furthermore, 43% wash their reusable-cloth masks weekly and almost 1 in 10 (8%) admitted they **do not** wash their reusable-cloth masks.

The survey was conducted by Atomik Research on behalf of Livinguard from October 2-5. Similar to the findings for those who wear reusable-cloth face masks, the data found people who prefer single-use disposable masks also exhibit questionable hygiene routines, with 68% reusing single-use masks on *multiple* occasions.

“This should be a notice to public health officials, business owners and people in general because wearing unsanitary masks increases the likelihood of spreading COVID-19 through cross contamination,” said Markus Hutnak, Livinguard’s U.S. country manager. “Our study found 55% of Americans fail to follow health expert and/or mask-manufacturer guidelines. This is a significant problem because independent [research](#) has shown detectable levels of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can remain active on surgical masks for up to 7 days *after* initial exposure.”

Additional statistics uncovered from the Livinguard survey designed to gauge behaviors and attitudes toward COVID-19 and personal hygiene include:

- Compared to previous years, about two-thirds of Americans (63%) are more concerned about the upcoming flu season
- More than 1 in 2 Americans (52%) will likely continue wearing a face mask even after the COVID-19 pandemic is over
- Nearly three-quarters of Americans (74%) would want to wear a mask if it was made of special material able to kill the virus that causes COVID-19

Many Americans Plan to Avoid Public Places for the Foreseeable Future

For the vast majority of Americans, grabbing a bite to eat at a restaurant or going to a movie theater was considered “routine” prior to the pandemic, but many respondents said they’ll avoid public places such as these entirely until the pandemic is under control. In fact, about half of Americans said going to the movies (48%) or attending concerts (47%) were out of the question, followed by a third of people who said they would avoid going to church or other places of worship (32%) or to restaurants (31%).

To get a sense for consumers’ comfort levels when they do venture out into public, the Livinguard study asked how respondents feel when shopping for groceries while wearing a mask. Approximately

a quarter of Americans (24%) indicated they “feel a heightened sense of alert,” 20% felt “a little anxious,” and 10% of people said they were “too scared to shop (for groceries) in-person.” Additionally, about 1 of 3 respondents (37%) said they “feel ok” when grocery shopping, while just 6% said they “don’t wear a mask and feel fine” taking a trip to the grocery store.

Upcoming Holiday Season Will Be Memorable – For What Many Do Differently

As businesses and the public prepare for the upcoming holiday season, the Livinguard survey found that while 1 in 5 Americans (22%) plan to celebrate this year’s holiday season “just as they always have,” a sizeable percentage will scrap or modify their annual holiday plans.

To paint a picture of how the 2020 holiday season will look and feel, researchers asked respondents to identify specific ways their celebrations and rituals will be different because of COVID-19. The most common modification will be to limit all celebrations to immediate family (36%), and 22% of respondents said they would not host or attend any in-person holiday events or celebrations. Fewer than 1 in 5 people (17%) planned to attend in-person holiday events or celebrations where hosts and attendees wore face masks.

The study also highlighted the ways holiday shopping will evolve in 2020. While a quarter of Americans (24%) said they plan to conduct “most or all” of their holiday shopping online, one of the most surprising findings was the fact more than half of shoppers (56%) plan to consider purchasing a face mask as a gift for a friend or loved one.

Tools and Technology to Keep the Public Safe

According to the CDC, face masks are critical for helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. The Livinguard survey found most Americans prefer to wear either reusable cloth (49%) or single-use disposable masks (24%). However, infectious microbes can adhere to these masks, meaning a person who touches a contaminated mask risks infecting themselves and others.

To help curb the spread of COVID-19, Livinguard has developed a reusable face mask made of a durable and [independently tested](#) antiviral and antimicrobial technology that deactivates SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19) along with other common viruses and bacteria. Independent laboratory [studies](#) conclude 99.9% of bacteria that contact a surface treated with the Livinguard Technology are deactivated. The technology is currently under regulatory review with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed (74%) said they would wear a ‘mask made from special materials that can kill the virus that causes COVID-19,’ and it’s vitally important for the public, business owners and government leaders to know that, thanks to Livinguard, this product already exists.” said Hutnak. “Furthermore, researchers estimate that each month the global population is using approximately [194 billion](#) pieces of disposable PPE (personal protective equipment). This waste often ends up in landfills, waterways or as litter in public places. Along with being washable and reusable, each Livinguard mask helps flatten the disposable-PPE curve by saving approximately 210 disposable masks from landfills.”

More information about the Livinguard Technology can be found at Livinguard.com. In addition, approved images and b-roll for media use can be [accessed here](#).

About the survey

Livinguard commissioned unbiased, third-party vendor, Atomik Research to run an online survey of 1,006 adults in the United States. Data were collected from October 2-5, 2020. The margin of error

for the overall sample (N=1,006) fell within +/- 3% points with a confidence interval of 95%. Additional survey findings can be found by visiting <https://livinguard.com/2020-consumer-survey-mask-sentiment/>.

Details on Livinguard Antiviral Technology

The principle underlying the Livinguard Technology is to apply a positive charge at the molecular level to textile surfaces. When microbes come into contact with these positive charges, the microbial cell, which is negatively charged, is destroyed, leading to permanent destruction of the microorganism. Moreover, Livinguard Technology destroys continuously and allows users to reuse masks up to 210 times with no compromise on safety or efficacy. Details on the technology can be found [here](#).

About Livinguard AG

Livinguard is an innovative and environmentally friendly hygiene-technology platform based in Zug, Switzerland. As the first company in the world to empower textiles and other materials with self-disinfecting properties, it licenses its patented technologies to companies from various industries to improve the health and well-being of consumers. Livinguard AG operates in Switzerland, Germany, USA, Singapore, Japan, India, and South Africa.

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