



Your Weekly Briefing

COVID-19

U.S. Survey Results

WEBINAR 2

Knowledge and Understanding



RTI International is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. We combine scientific rigor and technical expertise in social and laboratory sciences, engineering, and international development to deliver solutions to the critical needs of clients worldwide.



WEBINAR 1



WEBINAR 2



WEBINAR 3



WEBINAR 4

May 6

May 13

May 20

May 27

Face Coverings and
Social Distancing

Knowledge and
Understanding

Perceived Risk
and Threat

Vaccination

The survey collected information about knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors related to COVID-19

Survey Topics

- Perceived severity and risk
- Transmission
- Personal protective practices
- Community mitigation strategies
- Vaccination
- Misinformation/myths
- Testing
- Stigma

Open-ended Questions

- What is your single most urgent question about the coronavirus?
- What is the biggest challenge you are facing when trying to follow the strategies in your community to try to slow down transmission of the coronavirus?
- What is your main motivation to follow the strategies in your state or community to try to slow down transmission of the coronavirus?



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- What does the general public know and understand about COVID-19?
- How confident are they in the ability to protect themselves?
- Has knowledge changed over time?
- How is knowledge linked with COVID-19 related behaviors?





- Probability-based, web-based panel designed to be representative of U.S. households
- Wave 1 fielded Feb. 28–March 2, 2020 (n = 1,021)
- Wave 2 fielded April 10–13 and 17–20, 2020 (n = 2,279)
- Weighted to represent the U.S. population

Respondent Characteristics for Wave 2 (n = 2,279)



Male 48%
Female 52%



White 78%
Black 12%
Other 10%



Hispanic 16%
Not Hispanic 84%



Northeast 18%
Midwest 21%
South 38%
West 24%



<\$50,000 32%
\$50,000-\$99,999 31%
\$100,000-\$149,999 17%
≥ \$150,000 21%



Excellent/Very Good 50%
Good 35%
Fair/Poor 15%



Employed 65%
Not Employed 35%



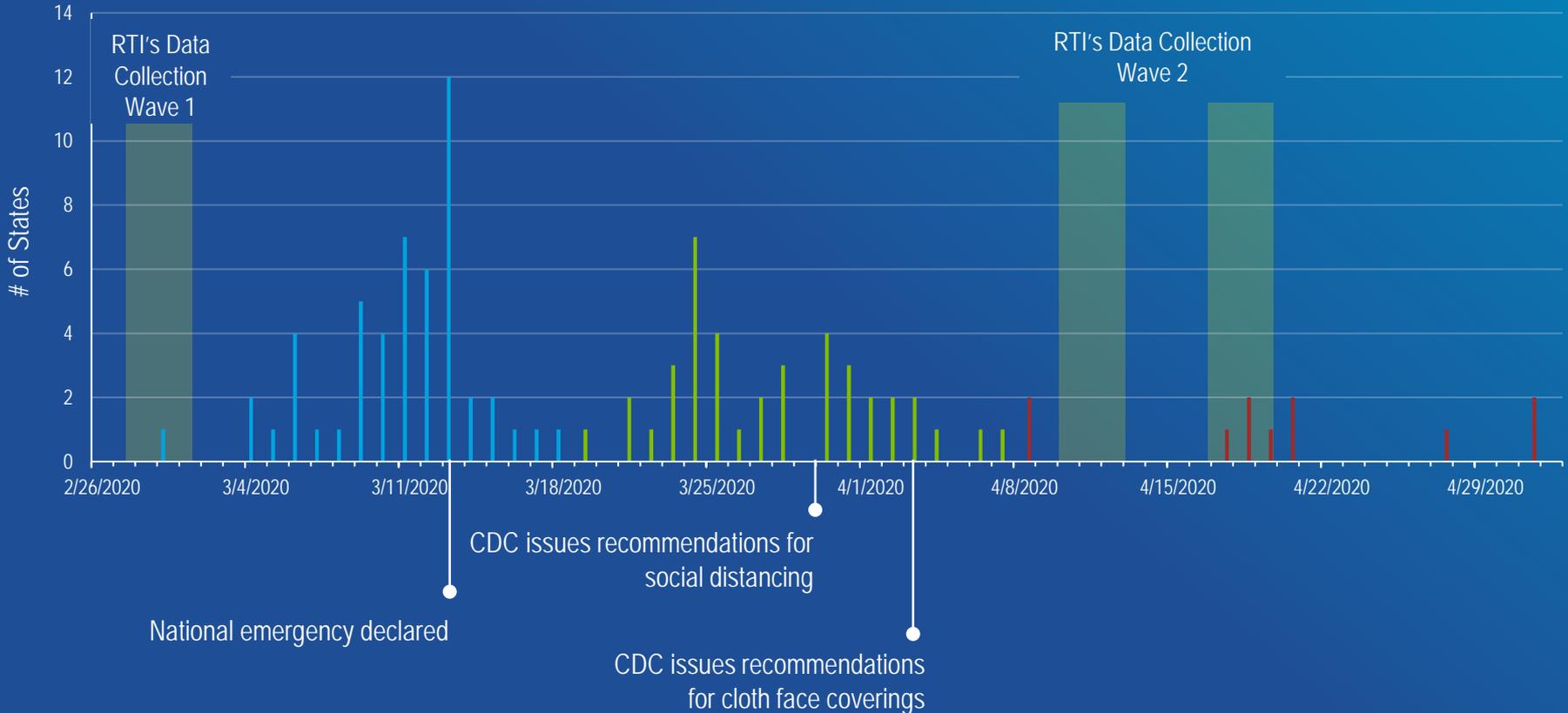
18-24 10%
25-34 18%
35-49 24%
50-64 26%
65+ 22%



Less than High School 11%
High School 28%
Some College 28%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher 33%

Timeline

■ Declared State of Emergency
 ■ Stay-at-Home Mandates
 ■ Face Covering Requirement





Knowledge and Understanding

- Susceptibility
- Severity and mortality
- Transmission
- Protection/mitigation
- Misinformation/myths





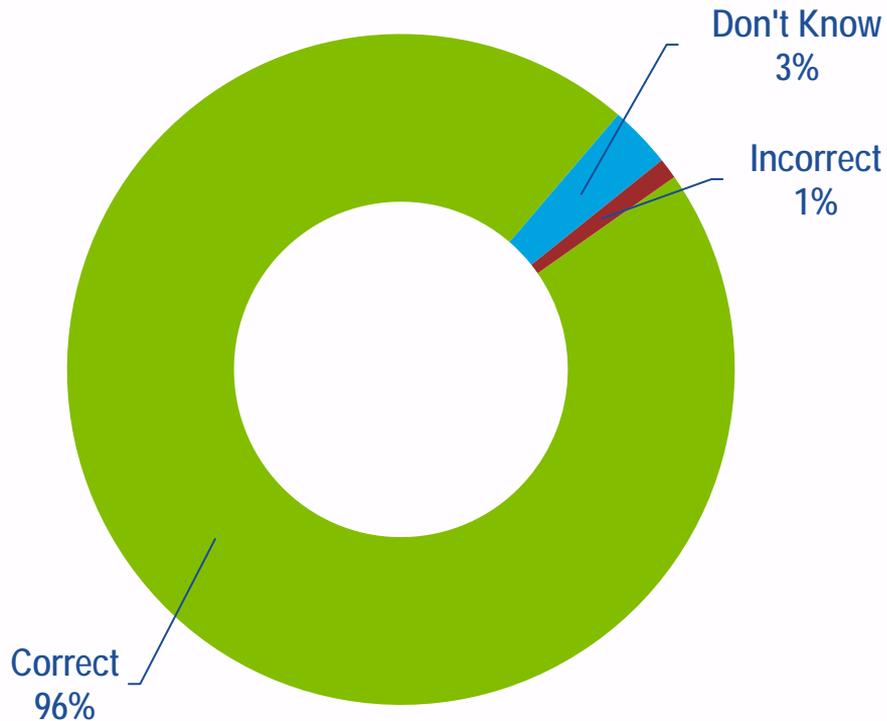
Self-reported Knowledge

25%

say they **DO NOT** have all the information they need to protect themselves and their families

96%

understand that people
of all ages, races, and
ethnic groups are at risk



Some misunderstanding and uncertainty exists around disease severity

Most people who are infected with the Coronavirus only have mild symptoms.
True



Most people who are infected with the Coronavirus recover from it.
True



Most people who are infected with the Coronavirus die from it.
False



■ Correct ■ Don't Know ■ Incorrect



“How does it compare to the seasonal influenza outbreak in terms of number who get it and the fatalities from it?”



“Once you have it, are you immune from getting it a second time?”

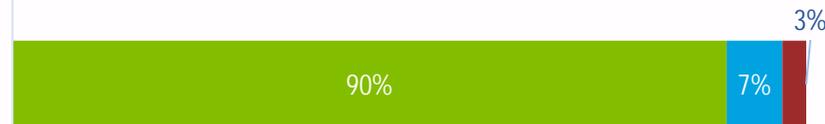


“Why does it kill or make some severely ill and not others?”

The Coronavirus is very contagious.
True



The Coronavirus is spread through coughing and sneezing.
True



It is possible for someone to become infected with the Coronavirus by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or eyes.
True



People infected with the Coronavirus cannot transmit it to others unless they have symptoms.
False



If you have been in close contact with someone who has the Coronavirus and you do not have symptoms within 5 days, it is safe to assume you have not been infected.
False



■ Correct ■ Don't Know ■ Incorrect



“Are people who already survive COVID-19 in danger of continuing to spread it?”



“Is the corona virus actually airborne?”

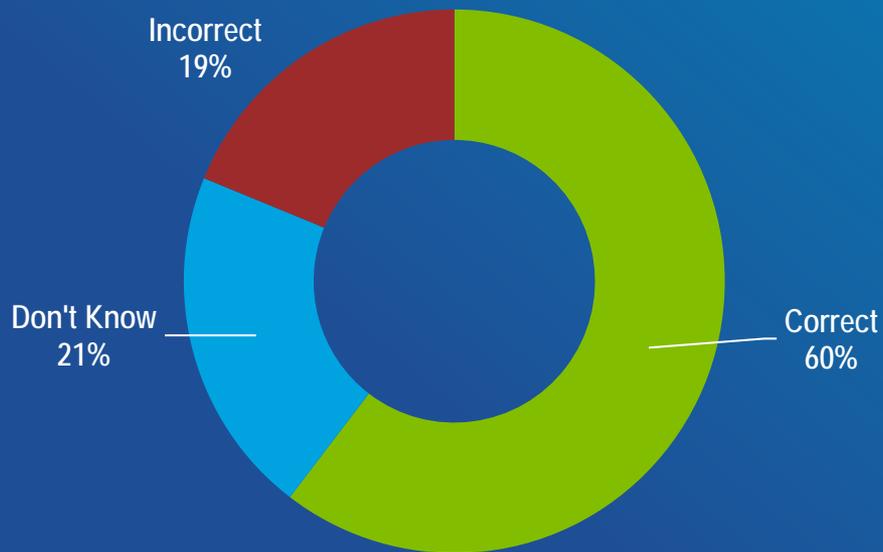


“Can it be spread from pets?”

40%
incorrectly believed
or were unsure that
anyone in the U.S.
who needed a test
could get one

Anyone in the U.S. who needs a coronavirus
test can get one.

False





“When will ‘everyone’ be tested?”



“When will we have enough testing capacity to reopen our country?”



“Where [can I] go to get tested if I feel like I’m infected?”
– Spanish translation

Many, but not all, understand the purpose of wearing a face covering

If someone wears a cloth face covering out in public, they do not have to worry about practicing social distancing.

False

Wearing a cloth face covering may prevent you from spreading the Coronavirus to someone else.

True



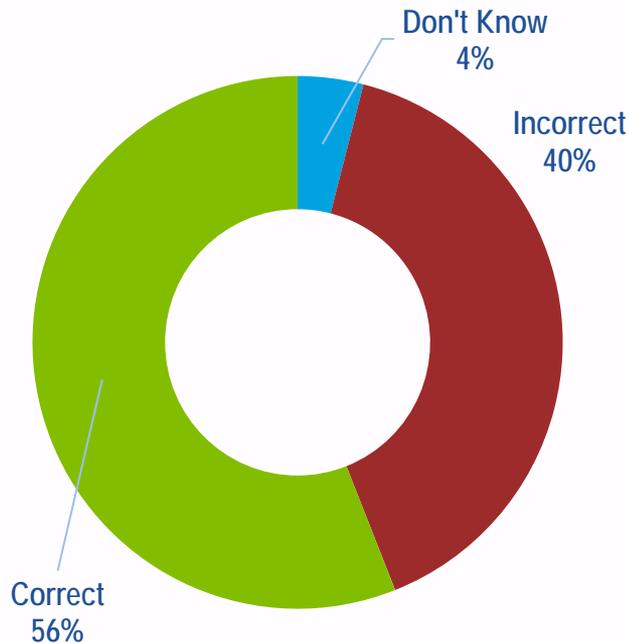
■ Correct
 ■ Don't Know
 ■ Incorrect

44% of respondents lack understanding about effective handwashing



For handwashing to be effective at killing the coronavirus, you should wash your hands with soap and water for at least 10 seconds.

False



■ Correct
 ■ Don't Know
 ■ Incorrect

A vaccine is now available to prevent infection from the Coronavirus.

False



Antibiotics can be used to treat the Coronavirus.

False



Antibiotics can be used to prevent infection from the Coronavirus.

False





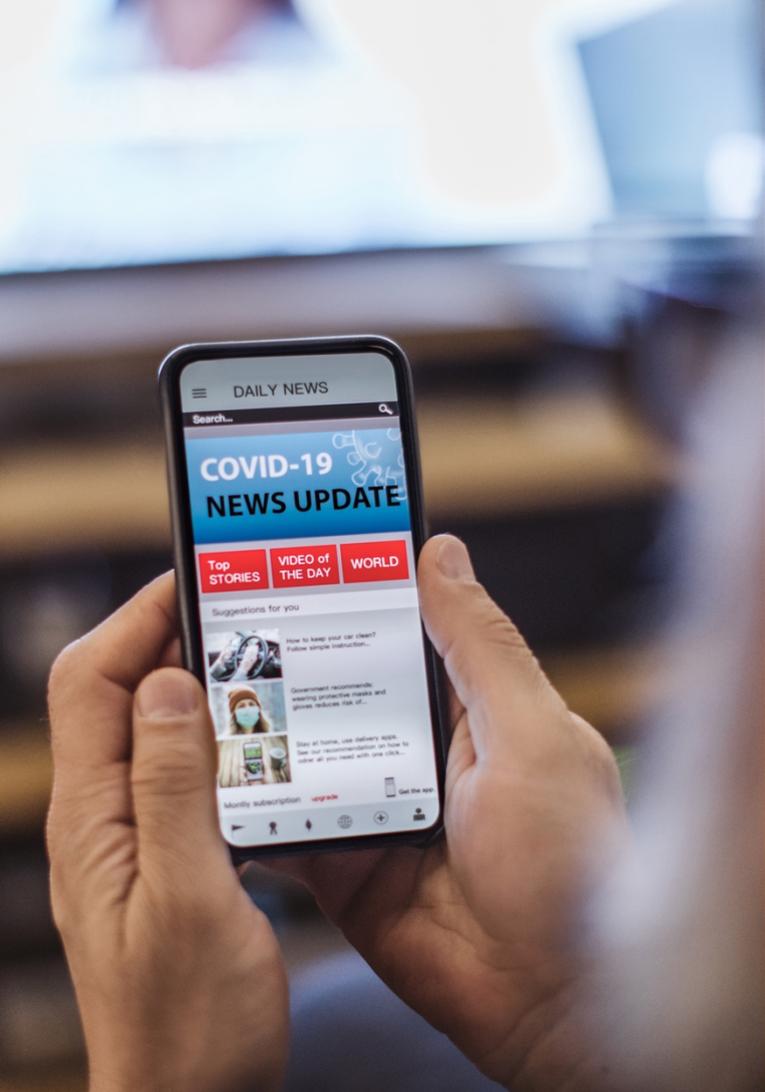
“[There’s a] variety of conflicting information about treatment/transmission, what is acceptable to do/not to do from government on all levels (county, state, federal).”



“I have heard many conflicting expert opinions about the risk of exposure to the virus on surfaces...I would like definitive answers.”



“We don’t know what’s really true. There’s a lot of corrupt information regarding coronavirus. ”
– Spanish translation



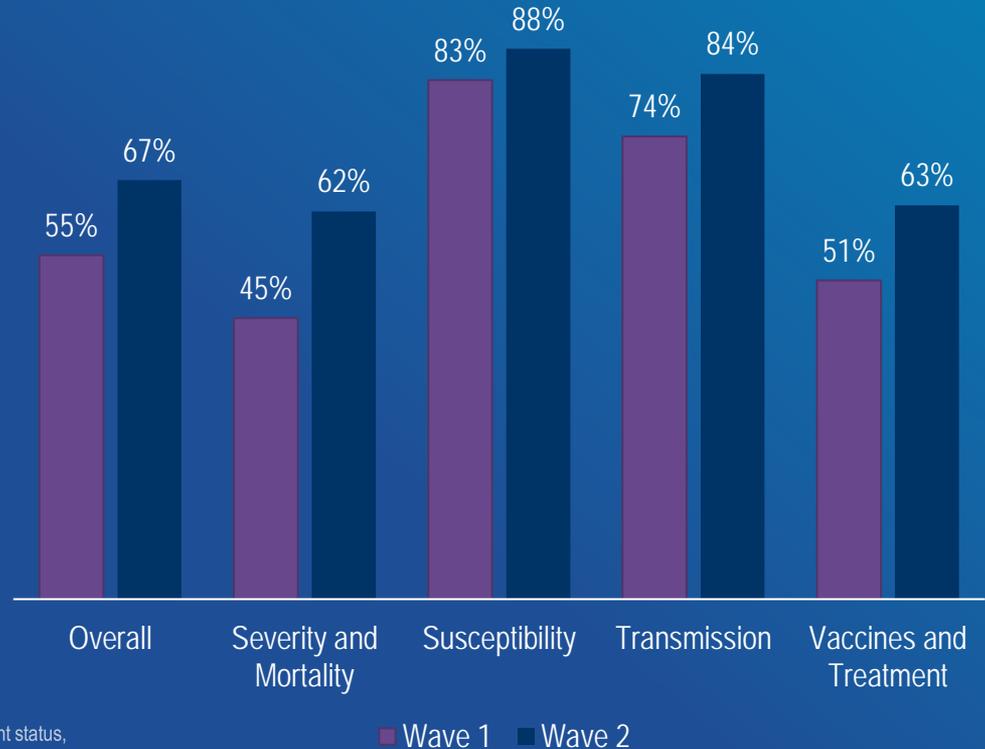
Knowledge Over Time

12-item "Knowledge Index" for Waves 1 and 2

Susceptibility	People of all ages can become infected with the coronavirus.
	People of all racial and ethnic groups can become infected with the coronavirus.
Severity and Mortality	Most people who are infected with the coronavirus die from it.
	Most people who are infected with the coronavirus recover from it.
	Most people who are infected with the coronavirus only have mild symptoms.
Transmission	The coronavirus is very contagious.
	The coronavirus is spread through coughing and sneezing.
Vaccines and Treatment (Antibiotics)	A vaccine is now available to prevent infection from the coronavirus.
	Antibiotics can be used to prevent infection from the coronavirus.
	Antibiotics can be used to treat the coronavirus.
Protection/Mitigation	If you are infected with the coronavirus, wearing a surgical face mask, like an N95 respirator, will help prevent you from spreading it to others.
	Wearing a cloth face covering may prevent you from spreading the coronavirus to someone else.

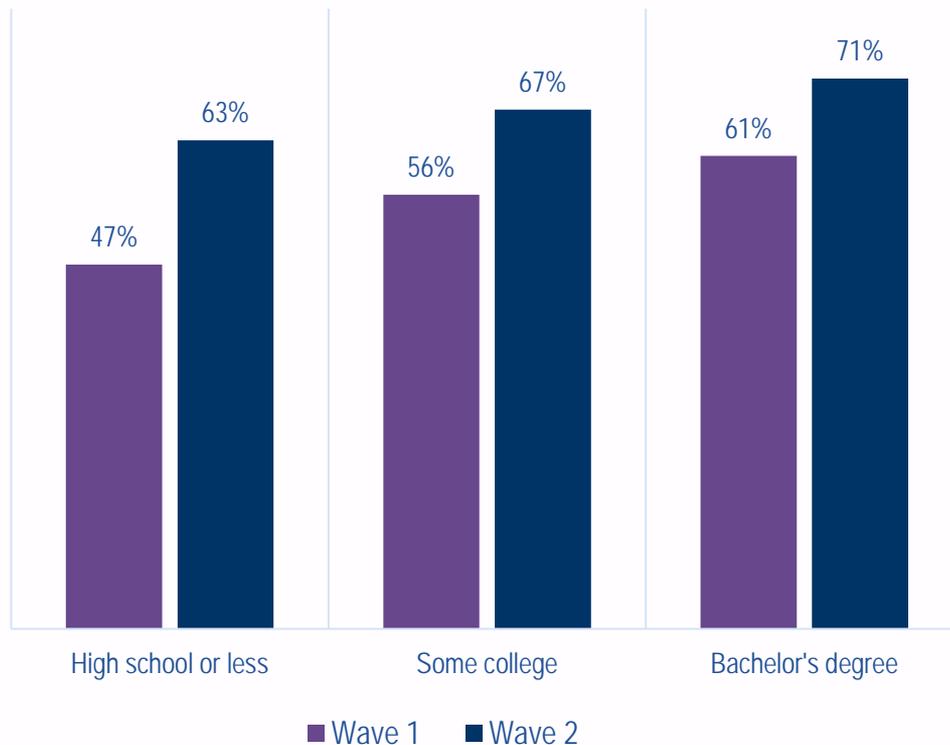
Knowledge increased in all domains over the last couple months.

Gaps in knowledge remain especially related to severity and mortality of COVID-19, antibiotics and a vaccine.



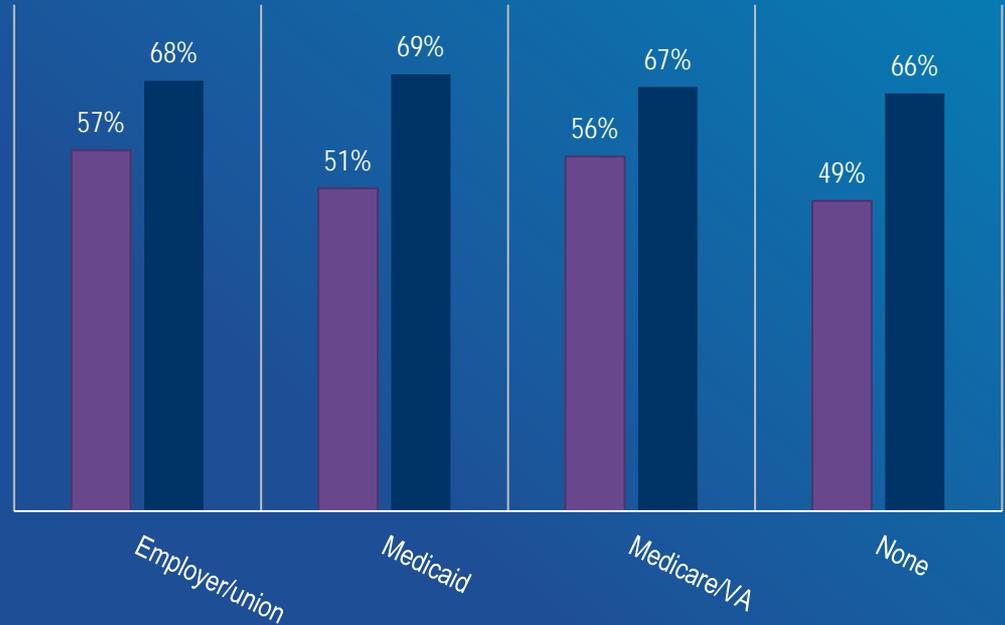
Note: Adjusted means control for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, employment status, health insurance, region, self-reported health status, and confidence can protect self and family from getting infected with the coronavirus. All differences significant ($p < .001$).

Knowledge gaps remain, but some increases over time, especially for those with less education



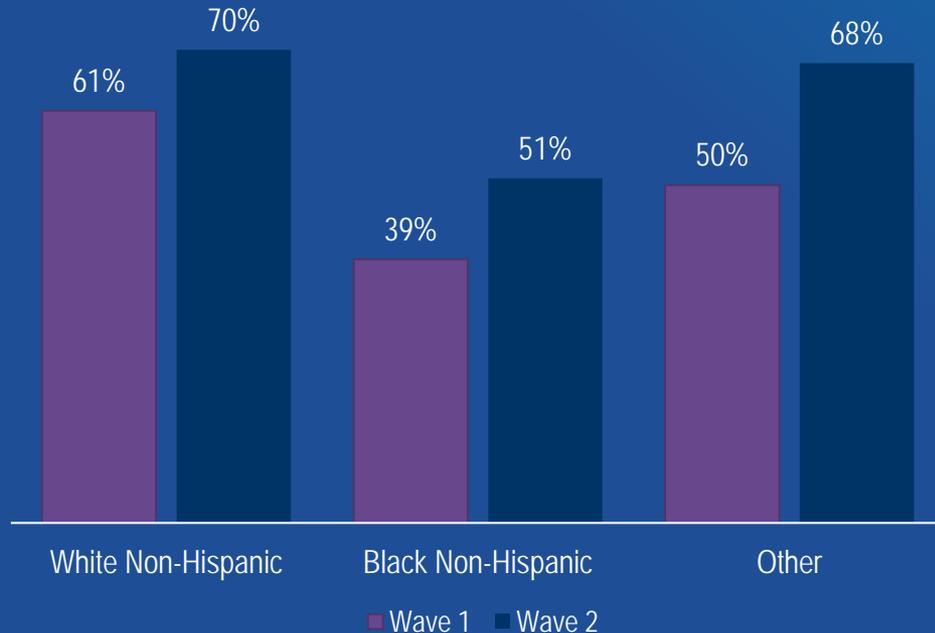
$p = 0.002$. Note: Adjusted means control for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, employment status, health insurance, region, self-reported health status, and confidence can protect self and family from getting infected with the coronavirus.

Knowledge levels lower for those with no insurance or on Medicaid, with some improvements



$p = 0.030$. Note: Adjusted means control for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, employment status, health insurance, region, self-reported health status, and confidence can protect self and family from getting infected with the coronavirus.

■ Wave 1 ■ Wave 2



Misinformation about vaccine ability and misunderstanding about the role of antibiotics improved over time, and more so for non-White racial/ethnic groups

$P = 0.048$. Note: Adjusted means control for gender, age, race/ethnicity, education, income, employment status, health insurance, region, self-reported health status, and confidence can protect self and family from getting infected with the coronavirus.



Why Is Knowledge Important?

12-item Behavioral Index

Washing my hands with soap and water more often

Using more disinfectants, such as hand sanitizers and cloth wipes

Wearing a face mask while out in public

Avoiding travel on subways, buses, taxis, Ubers/Lyfts

Wearing a cloth face covering while out in public

Sheltering-in-place / staying home

Not letting people who do not live with me enter my home

Not visiting family and friends in their homes

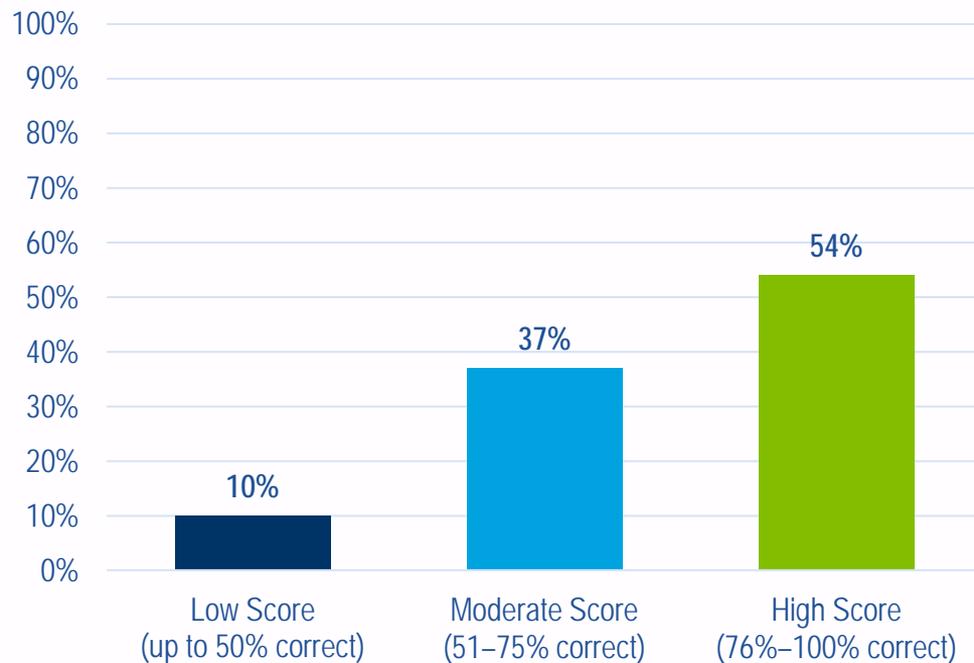
Plan to wear face covering

Practicing social distancing

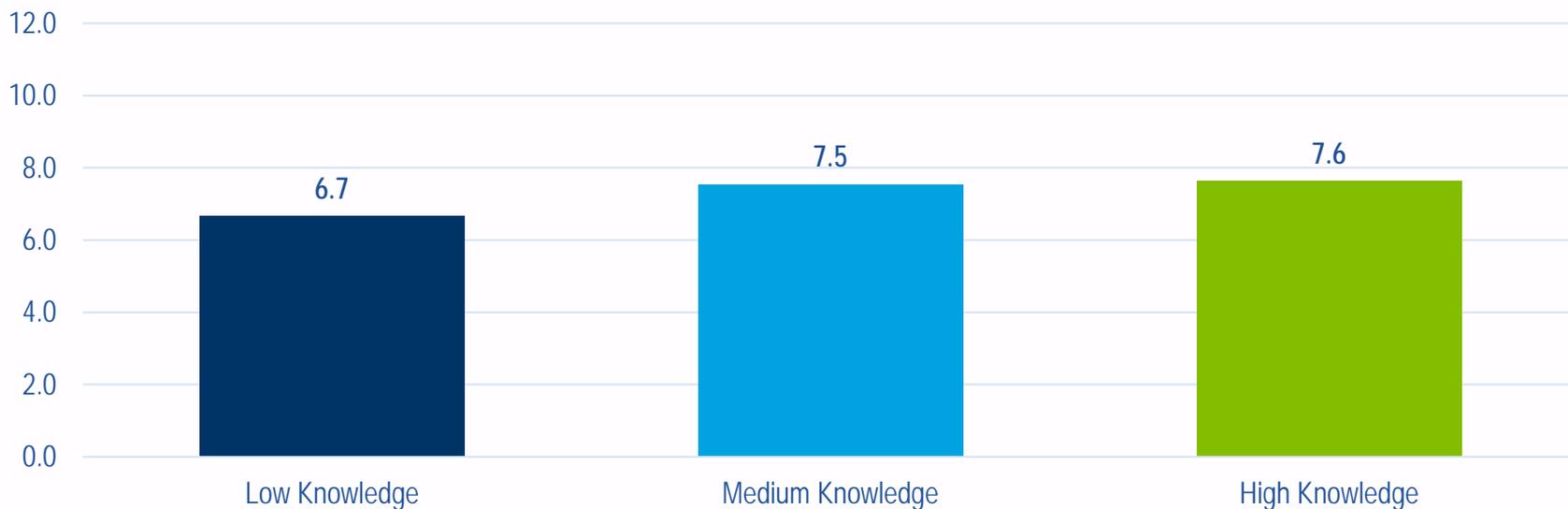
Postponing or cancelling non-essential medical appointments, procedures, or surgeries

Wearing protective gloves while out in public

47%
had either
moderate or low
knowledge

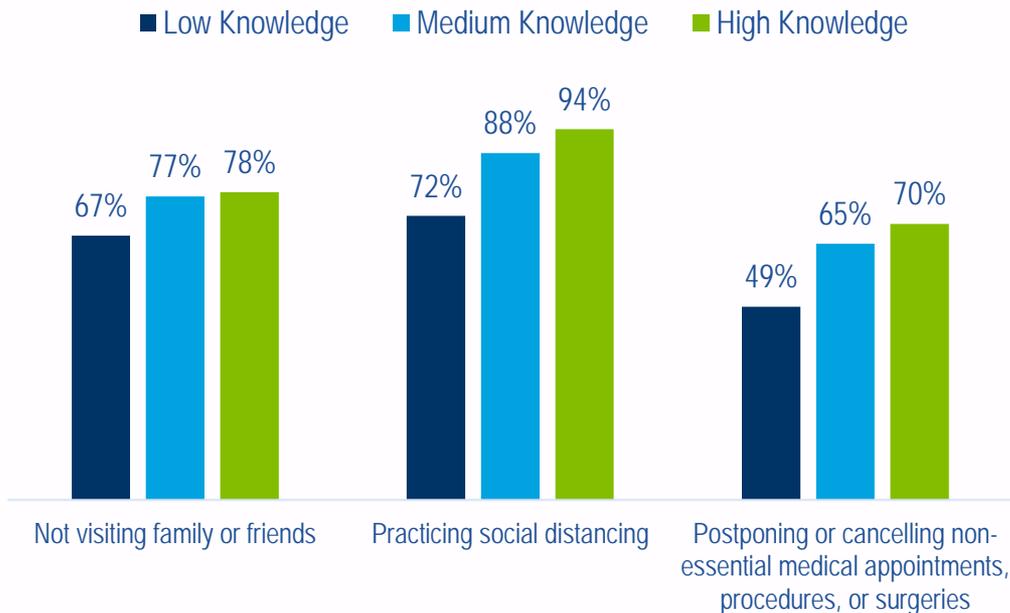


More Knowledge = More Behaviors



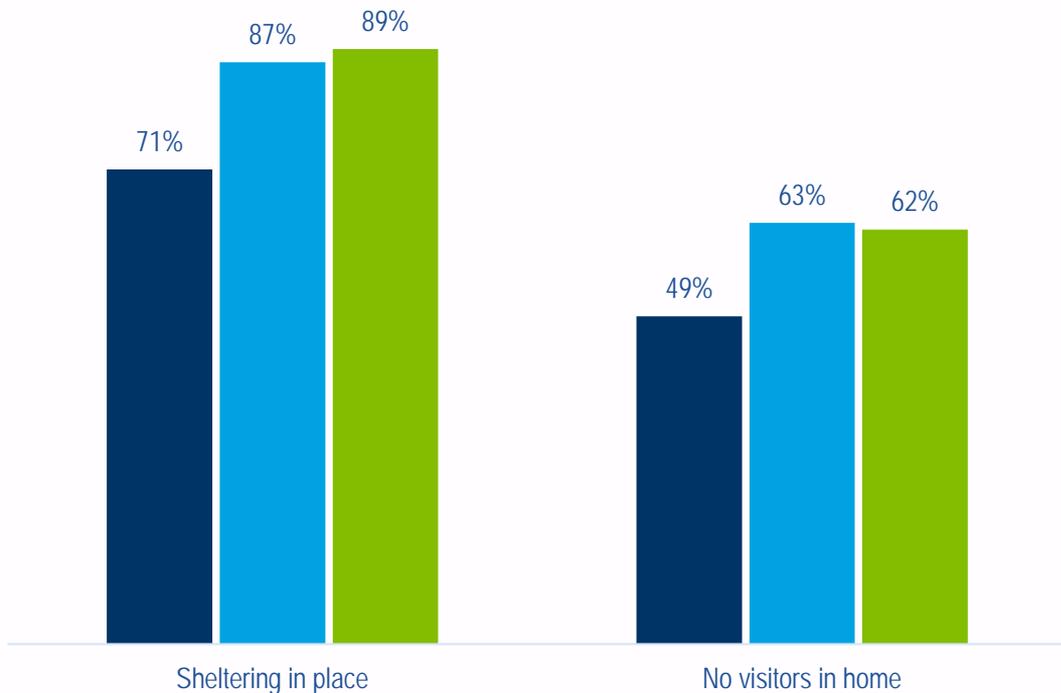
Mean number of behaviors was significantly different between High vs. Low ($p = .003$) and Medium vs. Low ($p = .001$).
High vs. Medium was not significant.

Greater knowledge about COVID was associated with practicing mitigation behaviors outside the home...



Note: Not visiting $p = 0.028$ for High vs. Low and $p = 0.009$ for Low vs. Medium. Social distancing: $p < 0.001$ between all groups. Postponing: $p < 0.001$ for High vs. Low and $p = 0.002$ for Low vs. Moderate.

■ Low Knowledge ■ Medium Knowledge ■ High Knowledge



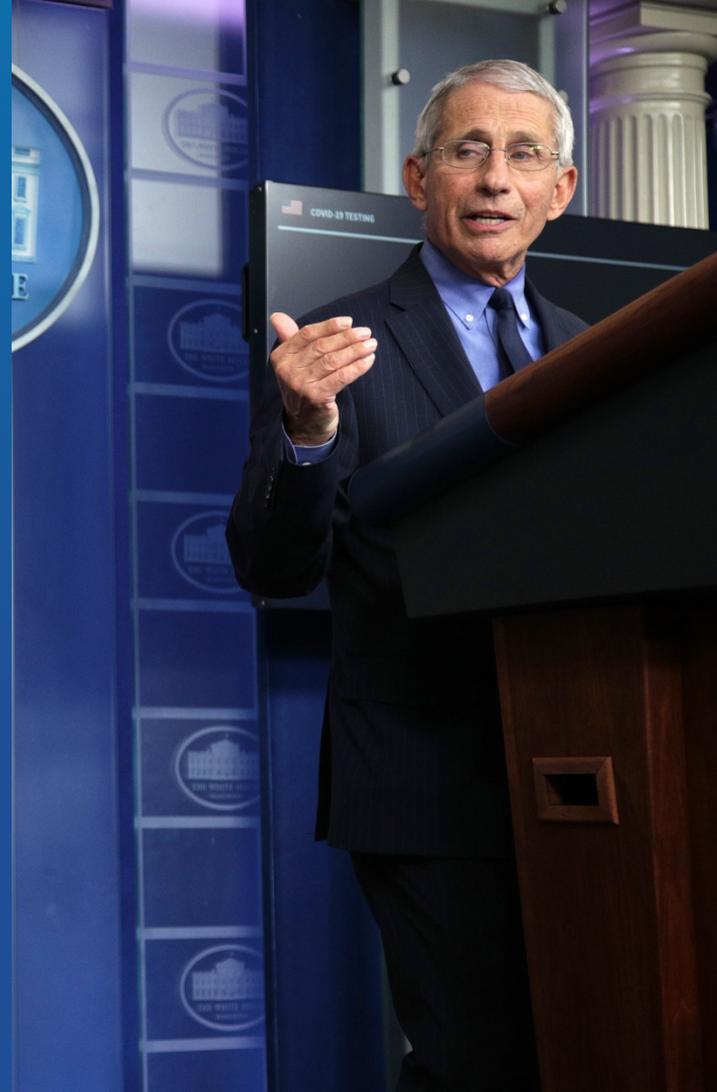
...and inside
the home.

Note: Sheltering: $p < 0.001$ for High vs. Low and High vs. Moderate. No visitors: $p = 0.004$ for High vs. Low and $p = 0.008$ for High vs. Moderate.



Fauci says people should 'just forget about shaking hands' even after the coronavirus threat is over

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said later in the same briefing: "We will have coronavirus in the fall. I am convinced of that."



Emotions and worry

Perceptions of personal risk

Work/family status

Health status

Confidence



25%

say they are **NOT** confident
they can prevent
themselves and their
families from being infected



“

Learning about a new disease on the fly, with more than 78,000 U.S. deaths attributed to the pandemic, they have little solid research to guide them. The World Health Organization’s database already lists more than 14,600 papers on covid-19. Even the world’s premier public health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have constantly altered **their advice** to keep pace with new developments.

“Things change in science all the time. Theories are made and thrown out. Hypotheses are tweaked. It doesn’t mean we don’t know what we are doing. It means we are learning,” said Deepak Bhatt, executive director of interventional cardiology at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/05/10/coronavirus-attacks-body-symptoms/?arc404=true>

”

- Understand your audience
- Clearly state what is known and unknown and cite data sources
- Provide numeric information and explain its context
- Include “calls to action” in messages



- Focus on groups at greatest risk and identify specific knowledge gaps
- Deliver information through multiple channels and trusted sources
- Evaluate the impact of the campaign and adjust over time



Knowledge is important, but it's not a sufficient catalyst for behavior change

- Knowledge was strong in some areas, deficient in others
- Misinformation about vaccine ability and the role of antibiotics was prevalent
- Knowledge improved for some vulnerable subgroups as more information about COVID-19 was disseminated
- Confusion persists for some



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To combat the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, **RTI offers broad and deep experience to address a variety of public health threats**—including Ebola, Zika, tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV.

RTI offers a deep bench of cross-functional experts:

- Epidemiologists
- Data scientists
- Public health workers
- Educators and trainers
- Physicians
- Survey methodologists
- Evaluation specialists
- Innovation experts



**Learn more about RTI's rapid
response to COVID-19**

rti.org/emerging-issue/covid-19-research