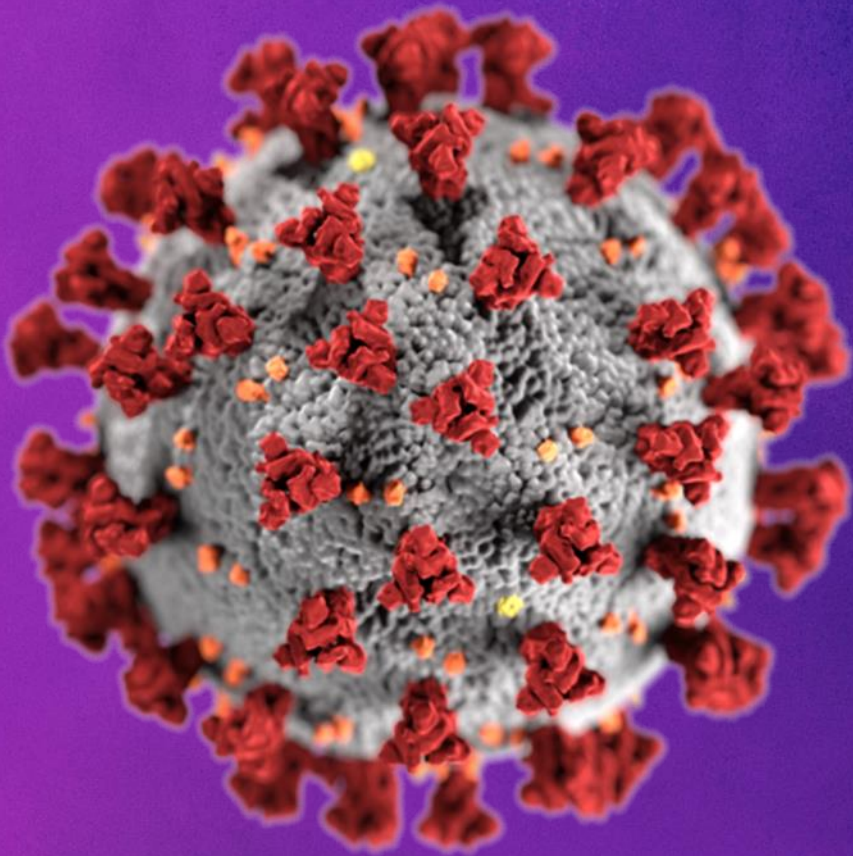


COVID-19

report 35: LEARNING AS WE GO

10.02.20





As the COVID-19 pandemic lingers on, scientists and health professionals learn more about the virus every day. Unfortunately, that often means what was thought to be safe one day, may not be the next. In some of the latest findings published by the CDC, new learnings suggest that eating at a restaurant or drinking at a bar could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19 more than other social activities. While about half of diners were aware of these latest findings, most won't radically change their dining out habits. Instead, many will proceed with caution. They'll do their due diligence to make sure restaurants they frequent are strictly enforcing safety precautions and be sure to wear masks when not eating or drinking. Some will eat out less frequently or go back to relying on carry-out.

How has the latest CDC study impacted consumer interest in restaurant meals, and what can operators do to ease their concerns?

Here are highlights from Datassential's latest wave of coronavirus research, fielded September 24 with 1,500 US consumers.

RECENT KEY EVENTS

September 26

US reports highest new case total for a single day since mid-August
Experts are warning of a coming surge of COVID-19 cases in US
Any “hanky panky” around US vaccine approval is unlikely, Fauci says

September 27

Pelosi expresses optimism for renewed coronavirus stimulus talks

September 28

Virus has killed 1 million people worldwide, and experts fear the toll may double before vaccine is ready
Chicago will ease COVID-19 restrictions on restaurants, bars, and gyms, mayor says
New York will deploy rapid-testing machines to focus on new COVID-19 clusters

September 29

CDC will post new guidance on cruise ships after agency's director loses fight with White House
Moderna coronavirus vaccine shows “acceptable safety” and immune response in older adults

September 30

16 pharmaceutical companies and Gates Foundation to scale up manufacturing of COVID vaccines
New York City restaurants begin indoor dining at 25% capacity

October 1

Another 837,000 Americans filed for unemployment claims last week
US records at least 42,000 coronavirus cases in 24 hours
Majority of American families with children under 18 report serious financial impact from pandemic

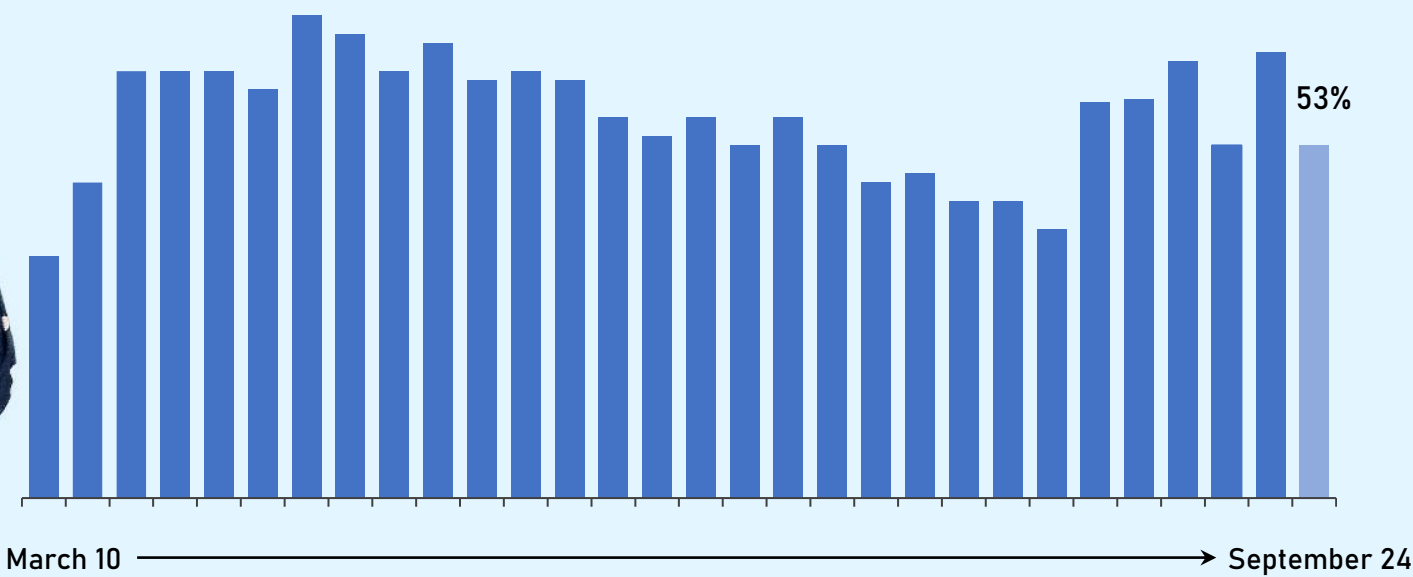
October 2

President Trump tests positive for COVID-19
Several administration officials and congressional leaders also test positive
Presidential challenger Joe Biden and running mate Kamala Harris test negative for COVID-19

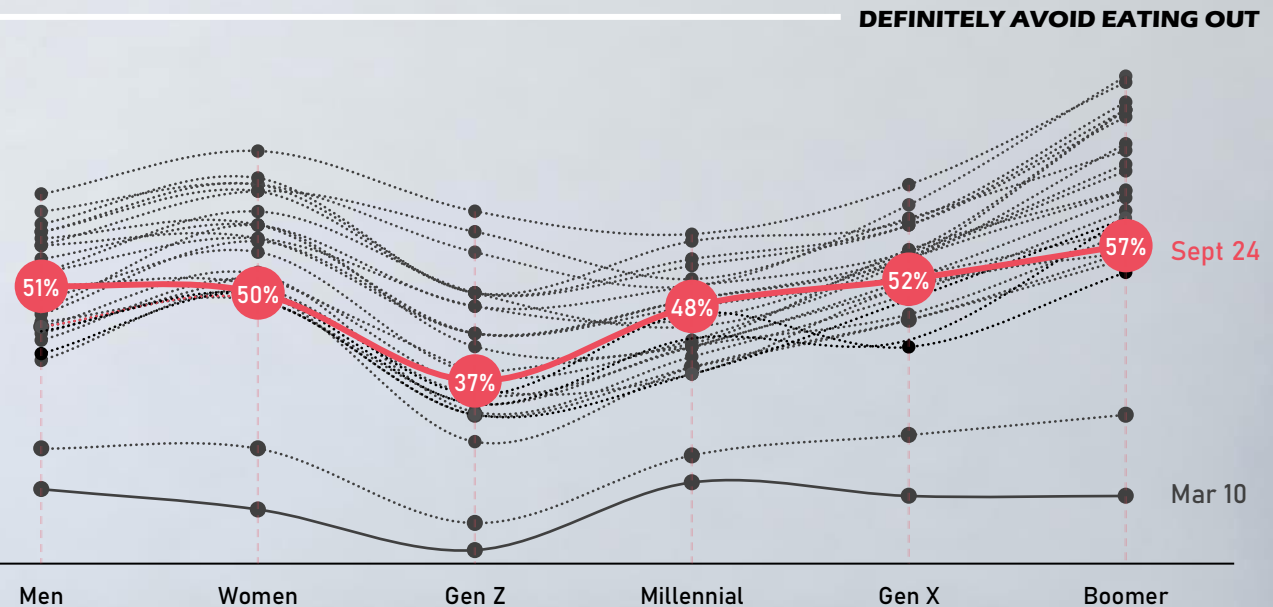
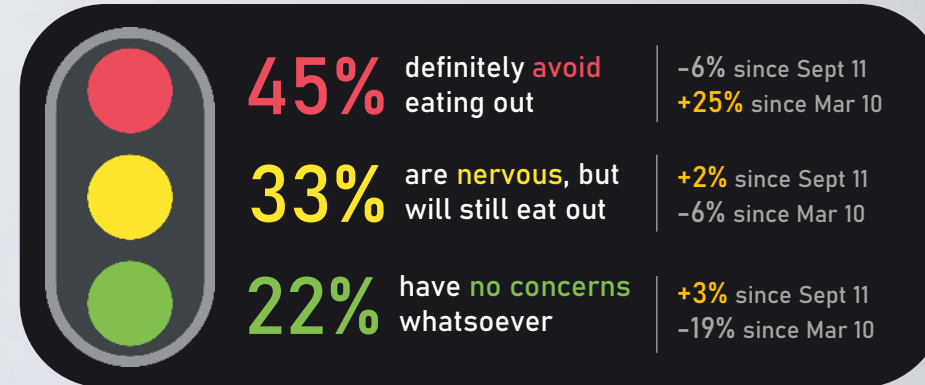


Concern about COVID risk has decreased in the past few weeks, consistent with May levels.

	May				June					July			Aug.		Sept.	
	1	7	14	19	22	1	3	5	9	15	17	23	14	18	11	24
Very concerned	54%	56%	53%	56%	53%	49%	50%	47%	47%	44%	58%	58%	62%	53%	63%	53%
Somewhat concerned	37%	35%	38%	37%	37%	40%	38%	41%	39%	42%	33%	35%	31%	35%	30%	36%
Not concerned	9%	10%	9%	7%	11%	11%	11%	13%	14%	14%	10%	7%	7%	12%	7%	10%

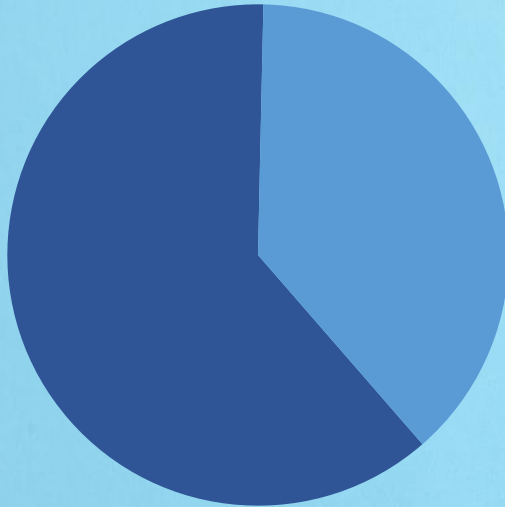


Avoidance of dining in at restaurants has softened in the past few weeks, especially among Millennials, Gen X, and men.



As cases begin to rise again, health concerns remain top priority.

which are you more concerned about?



62%

PUBLIC-HEALTH CRISIS

+5% since September 11

-1% since April 7

38%

ECONOMIC CRISIS

-5% since September 11

+1% since April 7

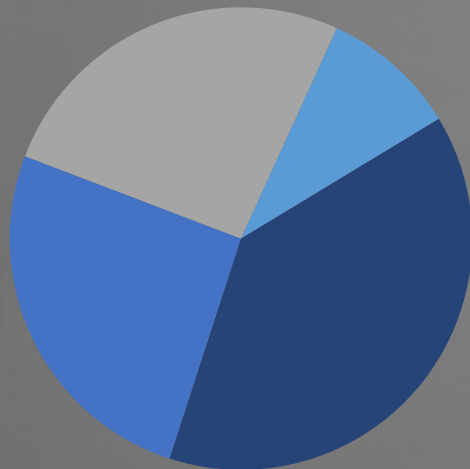


With some schools and offices reopening, just as many people are now remote as are working from home.

which of the following best describes your current situation?

26%
STILL GOING TO
SCHOOL/WORK AS NORMAL

26%
WORKING OR ATTENDING
SCHOOL REMOTELY



10%
LAID OFF /
FURLOUGHED

39%
NOT WORKING
OVERALL



Experience has given us confidence to reset rather than reboot.

With so little knowledge when the pandemic began, our actions were mostly driven by fear. We locked down in the safety of our homes and stayed away from all normal activities that posed even the slightest risk. Time and knowledge have helped us become more confident and resilient. We're able to face new challenges by re-evaluating and resetting, rather than completely shutting down.

Diners won't abandon restaurants, knowing there's more risk, but they will take more precautions. Restaurants that go the extra mile will ensure they stay part of the customer consideration set.





At least half of diners have gotten some form of takeout since the pandemic began.

Millennials are more likely to have used all types of restaurant services.

have you done any of the following since pandemic restrictions have been in place?

	Sept 24	May 19	CHANGE
Got restaurant food from a drive-thru	72%	59%	14%
Got takeout from a restaurant (went inside restaurant)	59%	46%	13%
Got curbside from a restaurant (didn't go inside restaurant)	52%	50%	2%
Got restaurant food for delivery	49%	37%	12%
Dined at restaurant (had meal in main dining room)	37%	17%	19%
Dined at restaurant (had meal at outdoor / patio seating)	34%	-	-
Got non-alcoholic beverages for delivery	26%	-	-
Got adult beverages (beer, wine, spirits) for delivery	19%	17%	2%

today, I feel comfortable and safe...

OFF-PREMISE	
Getting restaurant food from a drive-through	78%
Getting restaurant food for curbside pickup	72%
Getting restaurant food delivered to me	68%
Going inside restaurants to pick up my takeout order	65%

ON-PREMISE	
Dining in the outdoor seating area at restaurants	50%
Getting drinks in the outdoor seating area at bars	45%
Dining inside sit-down restaurants	38%
Dining inside fast-food restaurants	36%
Getting drinks inside at bars	35%

← More likely among
Millennials (46%)

← More likely among
Millennials (45%) and Men (41%)

← More likely among
Millennials (43%) and Men (39%)

Consumers still shy away from dining in, but comfort levels are slowly increasing.

Diners are still most comfortable with restaurant carry-out options or outdoor seating, but compared to when they were asked a similar question in mid-June, they are slowly warming up to the idea of eating inside. Millennials and men are more likely to be comfortable with the idea of dining in, whether at restaurants or bars.



Half were aware of the latest CDC findings that dining out is riskier than other social activities.

were you aware of the new CDC report saying that "dining out raises your risk of contracting COVID-19 more than other activities?"



55%

YES

More likely among
Men (60%) and
Western region (61%)

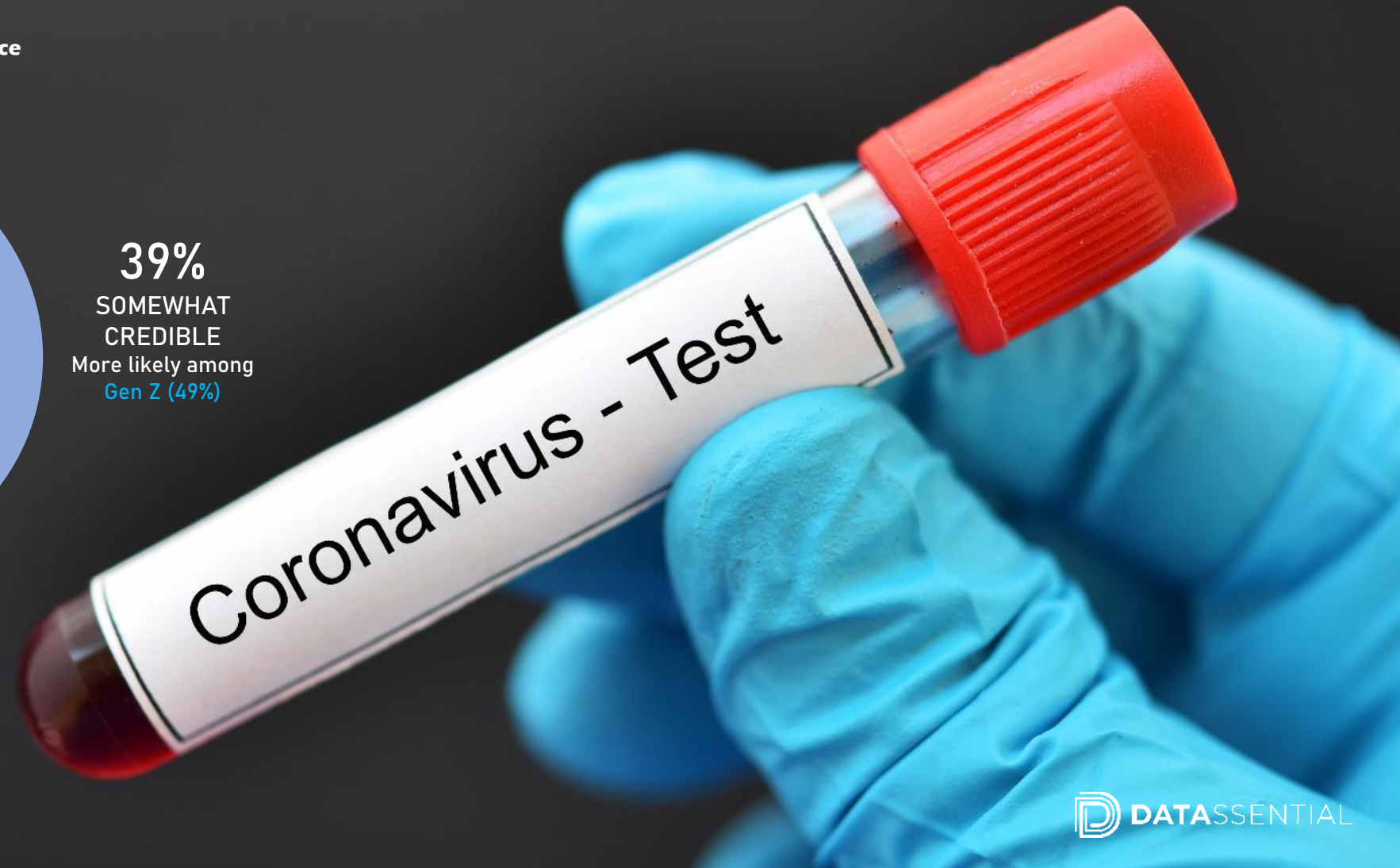
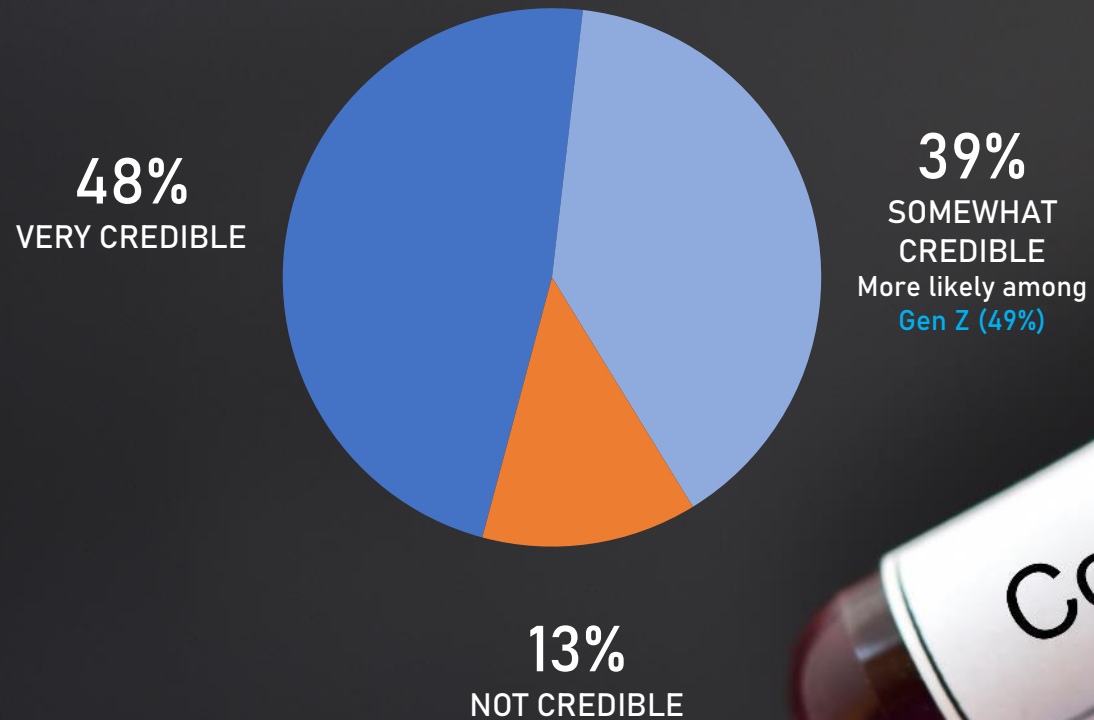
45%

NO



Most consider CDC guidance on COVID to be at least somewhat credible.

do you find COVID-related guidance from the CDC to be credible?

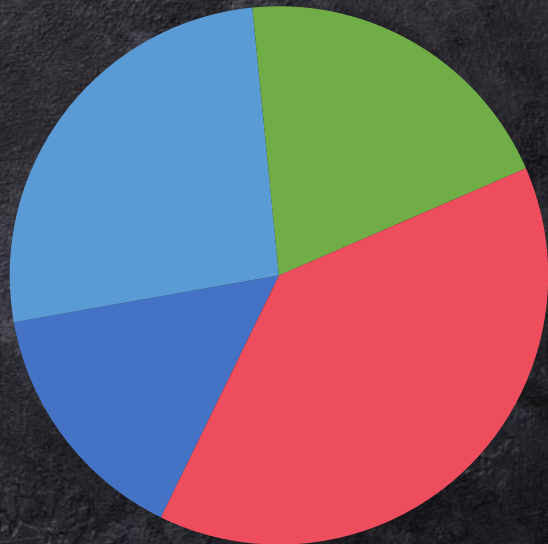


Diners will heed CDC findings, but most will not stop eating out.

Among consumers who have eaten from restaurants throughout the pandemic, about two-thirds will continue to do so, even with new CDC learnings. Millennials will be more likely to wait until it's safe again.

does the new report from the CDC stating that "dining out raises your risk of contracting COVID-19 more than other activities" change how you feel about dining at restaurants / bars?

26%
WILL DINE OUT
WITH MORE
PRECAUTIONS



15%
NOT WORRIED
AND WILL
CONTINUE TO
DINE OUT

20%
WILL STOP
UNTIL IT'S
SAFER

39%
HAVEN'T DINED
OUT DURING
PANDEMIC DUE
TO SAFETY
CONCERNS



Diners are split on where they feel safest in light of the latest findings.

considering the new CDC findings that dining out raises your risk of contracting COVID-19, where do you feel safer eating?

50%
INDEPENDENT /
"MOM AND
POPS"
More likely among
Boomers (56%)



50%
LARGE CHAIN
RESTAURANTS

CDC news leaves diners more discerning about how and where they get their food.

Greater risk will mean decisions on where to eat will be driven by whether restaurants are maintaining a safe environment, both in terms of their actions and what they require of guests. Wearing masks when not eating or drinking will also help to alleviate concerns. African Americans will take more safety precautions versus other groups. Millennials and men are more likely to increase their dining out despite new CDC learnings.

thinking about the CDC findings that dining out raises your risk of COVID-19, please rate the following statements....

	TRUE	
Restaurants should require guests to follow safety guidelines	84%	
I'll check places are strictly enforcing safety precautions before deciding where to eat	80%	
I'll wear a mask at all times, before and after eating while in a restaurant	80%	
I'll expect other diners to wear masks at all times, before and after eating	76%	← More likely among African American (83%) and Boomers (81%)
I will probably only get restaurant food for takeout / delivery	69%	
I will probably eat out less overall (compared to the past few weeks)	68%	
I will probably choose fast food more than sit-down restaurants	68%	
Restaurants shouldn't be allowed to offer dine-in service (inside main dining room)	58%	
I will only eat at restaurants where I can be seated outside / on the patio	48%	
Restaurants shouldn't have to follow specific safety guidelines; guests should act responsibly	35%	← More likely among Males (40%) and Millennials (42%)
I will dine out more anyway; I've been waiting so long for restaurants to reopen	31%	← More likely among Males (37%) and Millennials (41%)

CONSIDERING RECENT CDC FINDINGS THAT DINING OUT RAISES YOUR RISK OF COVID-19, WHAT COULD RESTAURANTS DO TO MAKE YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE?

"Allow me to witness the wiping down of the table and chairs, everyone inside wears masks, all the employees wear gloves, nothing on the table except freshly washed dishes, tables spaced far apart."
- a 69-year old man in Nipomo, CA

"I think they are doing everything they can right now. We need the vaccine."
- a 67-year old woman in Columbia, MD

"I already feel good about eating out as of now."
- a 33-year old man in Reno, NV

"Plastic barriers from other guest would be a good start for me. I see that a lot at New York restaurants."
- a 41-year old man in Columbus, OH

"Making sure the table and chairs you will be dining and sitting on are totally wiped down, including the menu, pen which used to sign the bill, etc."
- a 66-year old woman in Miami, FL

"Because the threat comes from ignorant, selfish customers, I suggest all restaurants temporarily invoke a reservation process to control the traffic better."
- a 54-year old man in Brownsville, TX

"They could sanitize more frequently, space out tables, require customers and staff to wear masks at all times, get rid of menus."
- a 34-year old woman in Needham, MA

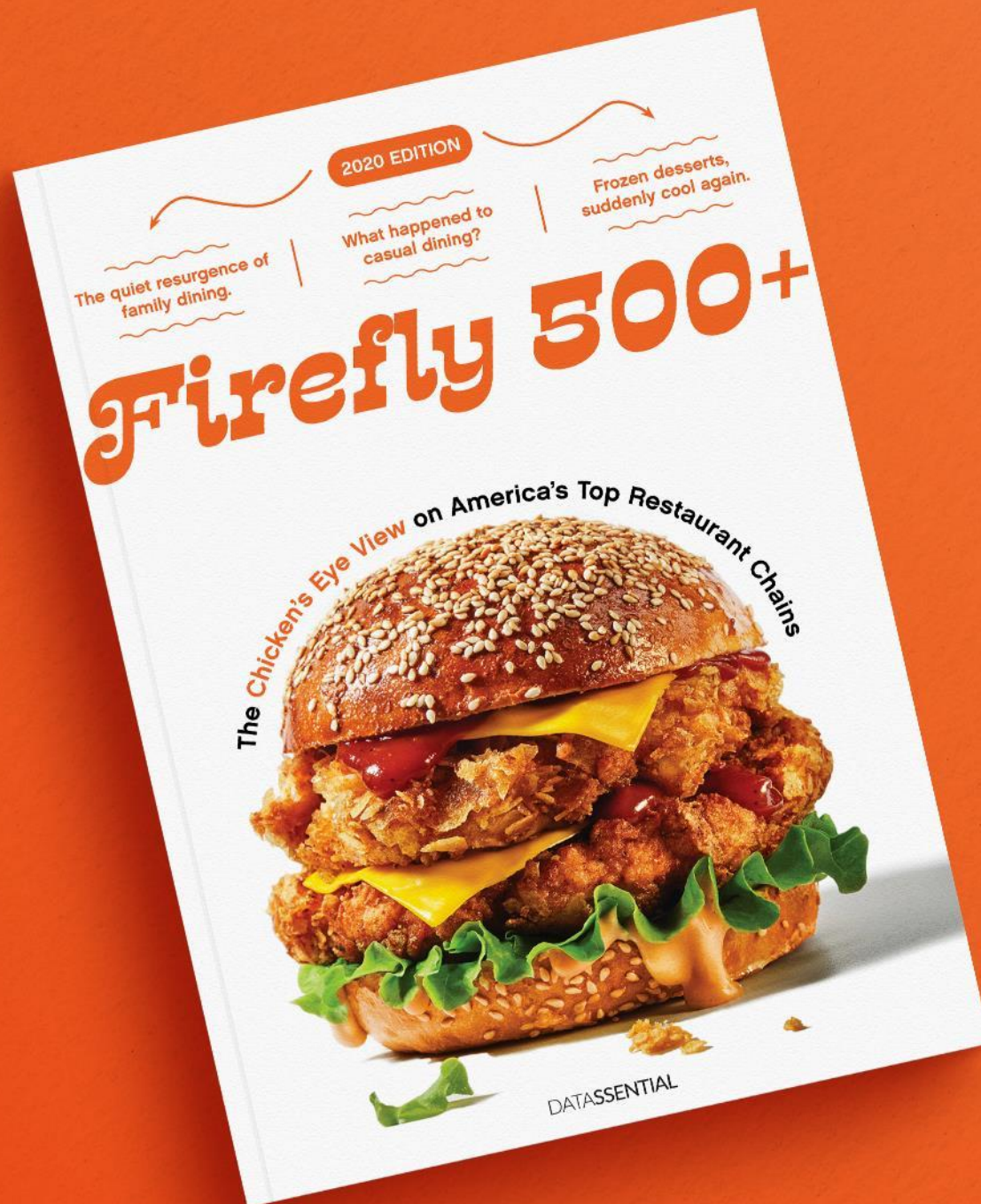




HOTSHOT REPORT

Visit Datassential's Coronavirus Resource Library at datassential.com/Coronavirus, your one-stop shop for all COVID-19 research reports, video interviews, restaurant closure maps, and Traffic Briefings, all updated daily as new data come out of the field.





America's chain restaurant landscape, reframed in the age of COVID-19.

Datassential's recently-released Firefly 500+ Report dives deep into the metrics of chain restaurant success: annual sales, unit counts, and AUVs; year-over-year growth numbers; and consumer insights from SCORES and BrandFingerprints. This year, the report also includes custom research about COVID-19's impact on the chain restaurant landscape, compiled from March to early May.

Help us help you.

As the Coronavirus situation continues to evolve rapidly, just tell us what you want to know. If it's something that benefits the food industry, we'll do our best to incorporate it into an upcoming report and provide the results to everyone for free.

And if you have a need that's specific to your company or brand, we would love to design a custom research solution for you.

[click me](#)