

Survey: Feelings about others' vaccination status run hot and cold

August 9 2021, by Peter Ramjug



Vaccinated people felt more warmly toward others who also received their shots than those who had not, according to a study by researchers at Northeastern and several partner institutions. Credit: Matthew Modoono/Northeastern University

The vaccinated are giving the cold shoulder to the unvaccinated.

A new U.S. [study](#) that uses a research tool to gauge feelings found that people who received COVID-19 shots felt warmest toward others who were also vaccinated, but coldest toward those who were not.

On a thermometer scale from 0 to 100 degrees, the average feeling toward vaccinated people was 78 degrees compared to 45 degrees for the unvaccinated, researchers from Northeastern, Harvard, Northwestern, and Rutgers found.

The [national survey](#) taken between early June and early July suggests that people's own vaccination status predicts how they are likely to feel about others. And, it reflects a sentiment that the public is beginning to draw a line between people who have received their shots and people who have not.

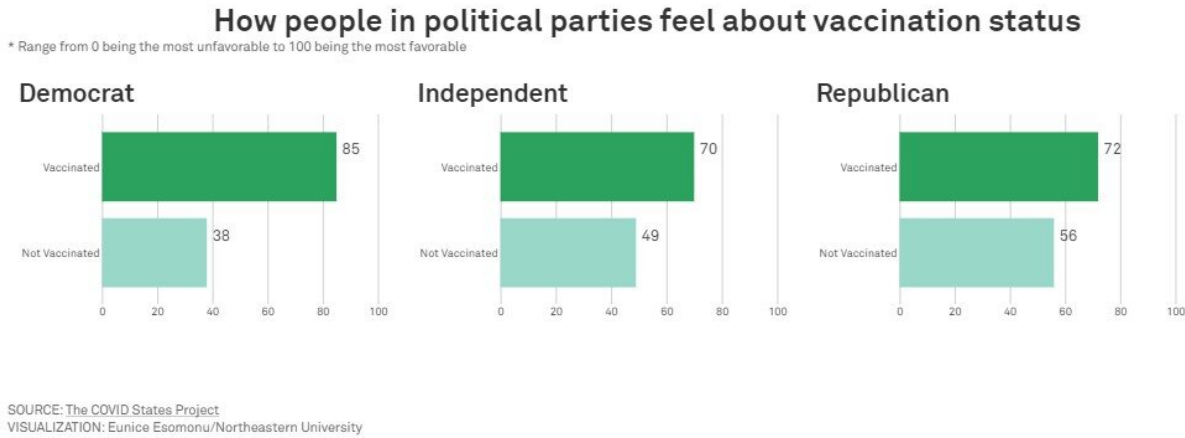
"There will likely be increasing social pressure for people to get vaccinated themselves and expect those around them to do the same," researchers wrote.

Using a feeling thermometer, commonly used to measure how individuals feel about a group or an issue, researchers asked nearly 21,000 U.S. residents how they felt about others' vaccination status.

Response options ranged from zero to 100 degrees. Ratings between 0 and 49 degrees meant respondents felt unfavorable and cold, while ratings between 51 and 100 degrees reflected favorable and warm feelings.

Democrats were more favorable toward the vaccinated than Republicans, giving an average rating of 85 degrees compared to 72 degrees, respectively. Temperatures flipped when asked about the non-vaccinated. Democrats had colder feelings (38 degrees) than Republicans (56 degrees). Political independents had neutral attitudes

(49 degrees).



Credit: Source: The COVID States Project. Visualization: Eunice Esomonu/Northeastern University

Researchers found similar patterns among respondents based on education. The gap between feelings toward vaccinated versus unvaccinated is largest among people who are more educated than those who are not as educated.

The study found that those with at least a [college degree](#) or higher tend to feel the warmest toward the vaccinated (81 degrees). The difference is statistically significant when comparing those with college degrees to those with only some college or less. Those with only some college came in at 79 degrees while those with a [high school diploma](#) or no high school were at 74 degrees or lower.

The early summer poll comes as the Delta variant drives a nationwide increase in COVID-19 infections and is fueled by a large number of

unvaccinated individuals. As a result, the role of unvaccinated people is receiving more attention by politicians on both sides of the political divide, researchers wrote.

"Virtually all hospitalizations and deaths are among the unvaccinated," President Biden said on July 29 at the White House. The Republican governor of Alabama, Kay Ivey, added: "It's the unvaccinated folks that are letting us down." Her state has one of the lowest vaccination rates in the country.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows that 50 percent of the U.S. population has been fully vaccinated as of August 5, and there are "about 90 million Americans who are eligible to get the shot but haven't gotten it yet," said Biden.

His administration has ruled out making shots mandatory even as public enthusiasm for requiring them has steadily grown since the spring, with more people supporting mandatory shots to get on a plane or go back to school. Yet deep pockets of vaccine resistance hold firm across the country, even as the highly contagious Delta variant has some areas reinstating mask mandates.

The Northeastern survey found enormous differences in sentiment toward the vaccinated and unvaccinated based on respondents' own vaccination status. Those who are vaccinated felt warmly (86 degrees) toward others who have gotten the vaccine, but felt coldly (35 degrees) against those who have not been inoculated.

For people who did not receive the vaccine themselves, their feelings toward those who did and did not get vaccinated are quite similar (64 degrees for both).

"This suggests that, on average, people who are not vaccinated

themselves do not feel differently about others based on their COVID-19 vaccination status, which contrasts sharply with people who are vaccinated themselves," researchers wrote.

Provided by Northeastern University

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