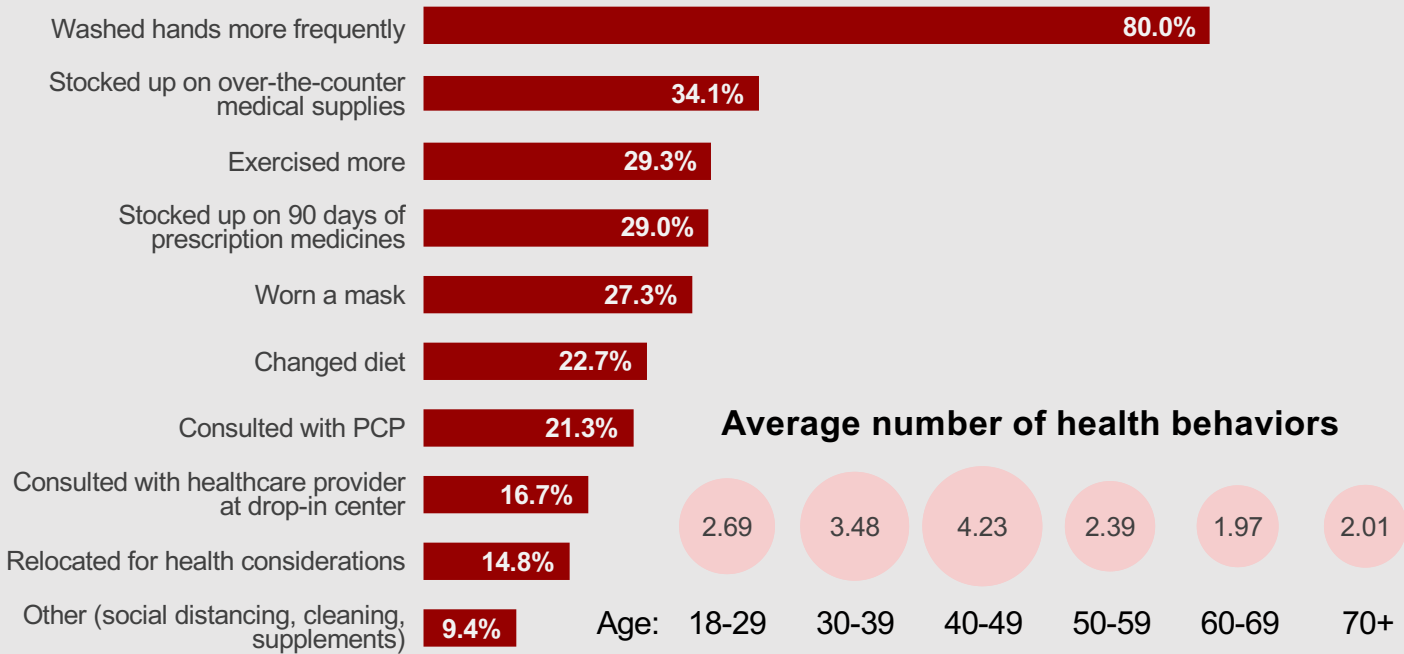


# Impacts of COVID-19: Preventive Health Behaviors

People around the world have been encouraged to engage in preventive health behaviors to limit the spread of COVID-19. The MIT AgeLab surveyed people across age groups to understand their health behaviors before and during this pandemic, and how these relate to their worries, risk perception, and perceived preparedness.

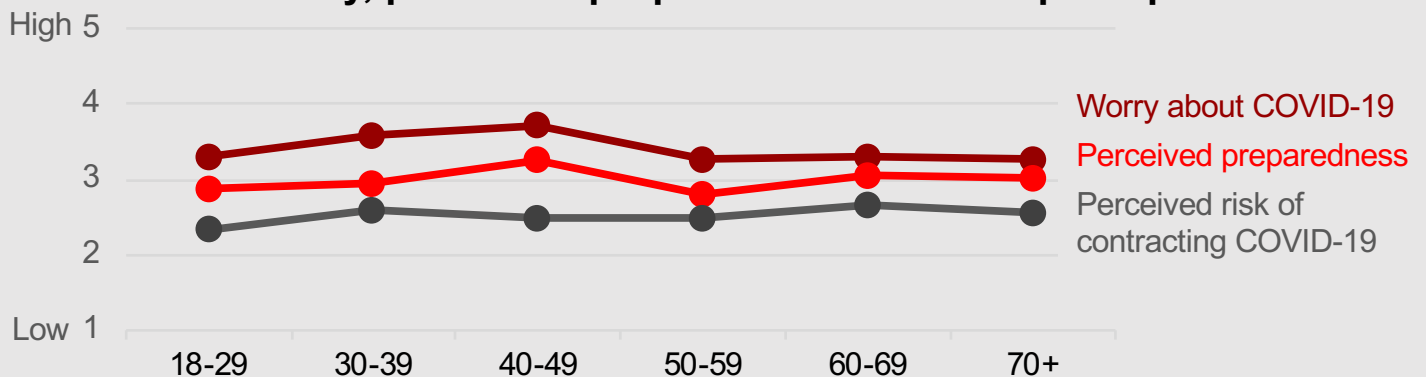
## Change in health behaviors within the past month due to COVID-19



Most participants increased handwashing and many stocked up on medical supplies. Participants in their 40s had adopted the most new health behaviors on average. Those 60 and older, who are at higher risk for serious complications from COVID-19, had adopted fewer health behaviors than other age groups.

Red bars represent percentages across age group; participants could select more than one option.

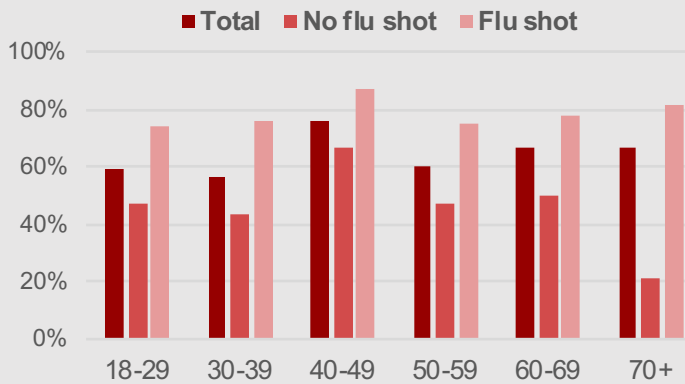
## Worry, perceived preparedness and risk perception



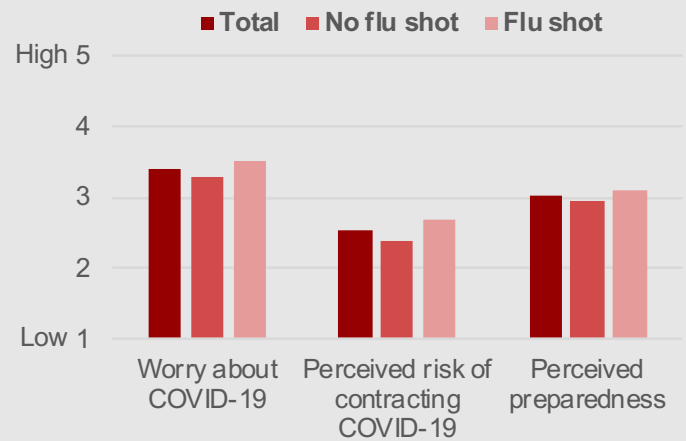
Participants in their 40s felt most prepared, but also worried significantly more than most other age groups. Those 60 and older worried less than younger age groups about COVID-19, and felt equally prepared. Age groups did not differ significantly in their perceived risk of contracting COVID-19.

## Flu vaccination and COVID-19

### Participants who would get a COVID-19 vaccine if one were available

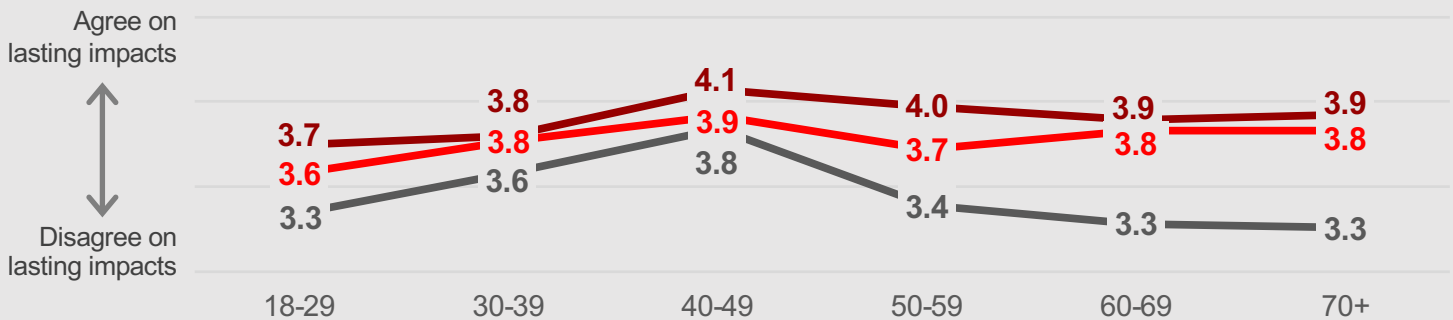


### Thoughts and perceptions about COVID-19



**Almost half of respondents (46%) did not get a flu shot during the 2019-2020 flu season.** People who got the flu shot were more likely to report they would get a COVID-19 vaccine if one were available; they also worried significantly more about COVID-19, perceived more risk, and felt better prepared compared to those who did not get the flu shot.

### Lasting impacts on behaviors after COVID-19 has subsided



- Social distancing will have a lasting impact on how people interact with each other.
- Health precautions (such as handwashing, not touching one's face, etc.) will have a lasting impact on people's ongoing health/hygiene practices.
- The COVID-19 crisis will have a lasting impact on people's willingness to get regular vaccinations for things like the flu.

Answer options ranged from 1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree

Participants in their 40s were more likely than those in their 20s to agree that these measures will have a lasting impact on people's behavior. They were also more likely to agree that social distancing measures will have a lasting impact on people's behavior than those aged 50 and older.

These results represent a snapshot of perceptions in the time window in which data were collected: March 17-19. Sample collected from Qualtrics Panels. Of 1200 participants, age groups were distributed as follows: 256 (18-29), 208 (30-39), 208 (40-49), 191 (50-59), 218 (60-69), 119 (70+).

For more information about COVID-19 visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



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