COVID-19 in Lebanon: Perceptions and Behaviors

The perceptions and practices of the respondents towards COVID-19 are not influenced only by demographic factors. Behaviors are also strongly linked to political and economic considerations that respondents believe have a direct impact on their daily life. Research has showed major differences in COVID-19 behaviors across different governorates and age groups.

What do people think about COVID-19?

81% believe COVID-19 is a serious disease.

"At the beginning, I used to check WHO. I look for evidence, because I am a scientific person. Once I got info on COVID I got to know what it is. Now, I am not checking anymore."

74% believe COVID-19 will not influence their daily activities.

"Before, when I used to hear the word Corona, I felt a lot of fear and concern. Now it is becoming more of a style of living, and it is becoming normal. When it first started, I used to disinfect my hands, the money, and the door handle everytime I used the van (mini-bus). Now, it is normal, I just wear a mask, and when I leave the van, I put on a sanitizer."

55% believe COVID-19 is just another type of cold or flu.

"I know that COVID-19 is here and I know it will always stay. Maybe I got used to the fact that it exists or maybe my priorities are different. Now the fear that used to prevent me from seeing my parents is no longer there. So, now I am going out, I am working from the office, and I am going to see my parents."

57% believe COVID-19 is a hoax or conspiracy intended to control people.

59% believe they are likely to be infected with COVID-19 in the next 3 months.

"People have been living in a conspiracy mindset for a very long time and have mixed the political issues with economic and health issues."

What do people know about COVID-19?

COVID-19 symptoms

Fever	Dry cough	Difficulty in breathing	Loss of smell and taste	Body aches	Sneezing
72%	60%	54%	42%	27%	20%

How COVID-19 spreads

Droplets of infected person	Surfaces touched by affected person	Close contact with people	Bad hygiene	Touching coins and banknotes	Goods imported from China
73%	70%	58%	38%	34%	5%

COVID-19 prevention methods

Masks	Handwashing	Physical distance (2m)	Avoid touching face	Antibiotics	Eating garlic
81%	75%	74%	39%	8%	2%

How does COVID-19 influence social behavior and social engagement?

Social behavior by gender

Women
- More likely to trust medical practitioners for COVID issues.
- More likely to find masks easy to get used to.
- More likely to refuse social invitations.

Men
- More likely to trust politicians and understand government plan.
- Less likely to find masks easy to get used to.
- More likely to believe that COVID will not affect their daily lives.

Social behavior by age

23 – 29 years old
- Less likely to social distance.
- More likely to accept social invitations.
- More worried about the financial, economic, or political situation.
- More likely to have a negative reaction to politicians, celebrities, or religious leaders recommending wearing masks.

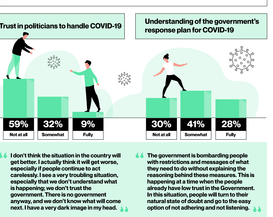
30 – 44 years old
- Less likely to accept social invitations.
- More likely to wear masks if they see family, friends, or strangers wearing them in public.
- More likely to wear masks if they see a celebrity or a recommending wearing masks.
- More likely to be influenced by the media and the instructions of the Ministry of Public Health.

45 – 60+ years old
- More worried about COVID.
- Believe their actions make a major difference to family, friends and strangers.
- More likely to reject social invitations.
- More likely to be influenced by politicians and community leaders.

Adherence to COVID-19 prevention measures across Lebanon

	Akkar	Baalbek - Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	Mount Lebanon	Nabatieh	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Avoid shaking hands	30%	55%	53%	59%	70%	55%	45%	63%
Washing hands with soap	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Washing hands with sanitizer	66%	41%	43%	37%	26%	41%	51%	33%
Wearing a mask	26%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Avoid shaking hands	64%	36%	43%	41%	30%	45%	48%	37%
Washing hands with soap	79%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Washing hands with sanitizer	21%	60%	53%	55%	66%	55%	48%	59%
Wearing a mask	81%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Avoid shaking hands	59%	55%	53%	55%	55%	55%	55%	55%
Washing hands with soap	48%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%
Washing hands with sanitizer	52%	41%	43%	41%	41%	41%	41%	41%
Wearing a mask	80%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%

How does COVID-19 impact the attendance of social events across Lebanon?



61% of people always reject invitations to social events

4% of people always accept invitations to social events

Rejection of social events across Lebanon (Always / Sometimes / Never)

	Akkar	Baalbek - Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	Mount Lebanon	Nabatieh	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Somber events	76%	59%	53%	50%	75%	63%	55%	84%
	24%	9%	13%	45%	22%	4%	44%	8%
Governorates	32%	32%	34%	45%	22%	33%	44%	8%
Joyful events	57%	50%	63%	48%	71%	62%	51%	40%
	43%	46%	29%	50%	27%	15%	49%	52%
	9%	5%	8%					8%

How are people managing COVID-19 among an already rocky economic and political situation?

COVID-19 or the economic situation?

42% Economic situation
5% COVID-19
53% Both

COVID-19 or the political situation?

39% Political situation
10% COVID-19
52% Both

Ability to afford masks

Akkar	19%
Baalbek - Hermel	55%
Beirut	89%
Bekaa	59%
Mount Lebanon	70%
Nabatieh	55%
North Lebanon	45%
South Lebanon	63%

Ability to afford staying at home

Akkar	29%
Baalbek - Hermel	18%
Beirut	47%
Bekaa	27%
Mount Lebanon	53%
Nabatieh	55%
North Lebanon	8%
South Lebanon	42%

"I prefer to die from COVID-19 and not let my family die from hunger."

"Lockdown doesn't work alone. It needs to be followed-up and supported by other interventions to ensure that people will comply."

Do people trust the Lebanese government to handle COVID-19?

Trust in politicians to handle COVID-19

Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
59%	32%	9%

"I don't think the situation in the country will get better. I actually think it will get worse, especially if people continue to act carelessly. I see a very troubling situation, especially that we don't understand what is happening; we don't trust the government. There is no government anyway, and we don't know what will come next. I have a very dark image in my head."

Understanding of the government's response plan for COVID-19

Not at all	Somewhat	Fully
30%	41%	28%

"The government is bombarding people with restrictions and messages of what they need to do without explaining the reasoning behind these measures. This is happening at a time when the people already have low trust in the Government. In this situation, people will turn to their natural state of doubt and go to the easy option of not adhering and not listening."

Lack of trust in the government across Lebanese Governorates

Governorates	Akkar	Baalbek - Hermel	Beirut	Bekaa	Mount Lebanon	Nabatieh	North Lebanon	South Lebanon
Lack of trust in politicians	95%	32%	84%	50%	64%	82%	21%	73%
Lack of understanding of the government's strategy for dealing with the COVID-19 crisis	73%	14%	13%	23%	38%	82%	10%	33%

accelerator
DFID

The data presented in this infographic is derived from a mixed-methods research conducted by the UNDP Accelerator Lab in Lebanon between April and June 2020. The research was conducted in Arabic and published here, where a total of 380 questionnaires were collected from a random sample of Lebanese citizens, and 30 key informant interviews were conducted with local stakeholders.