

## 6 in 10 likely to still play it safe after pandemic: Study

Expert commends practice of good hygiene and habits as they will also reduce risks of other infections

✓ SHERLYN SIM

Wearing masks outdoors, using hand sanitisers, avoiding large gatherings and observing safe distancing are practices that many Singaporeans will maintain even after Covid-19, based on a nationwide online study by Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

More than six in 10 respondents said they are likely to take these precautionary measures and practise good hygiene and habits after the pandemic is under control.

The study of 1,606 people was commissioned by the university's Centre for Information Integrity and the Internet (IN-cube).

The average age of the respondents was 40, and about half of them were male.

The poll, carried out last month, was part of a larger survey tracking residents during the Covid-19 outbreak to understand the pandemic's long-term effects on their social behaviour, said Associate Professor Edson Tandoc Jr, the director of IN-cube, yesterday.

IN-cube is a new research

centre at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information that was set up to promote integrity in online spaces.

Nearly seven in 10 in the study said they will continue to engage in social distancing and avoid places with large gatherings, and only three in 10 said they are likely to attend mass events like concerts.

About 64 per cent said they will continue to wear masks when outdoors, two-thirds said they will consistently use hand sanitisers, while more than 60 per cent said they will still use videoconferencing tools for work or study after the pandemic.

Commenting on the survey findings, Dr Leong Hoe Nam, an infectious diseases specialist from Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital, commended Singaporeans' willingness to adopt good hygiene habits even after Singapore emerges from the pandemic.

This will reduce the risks of catching influenza and common cold viruses, he said.

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- Infectious diseases expert, Dr Leong Hoe Nam, on the survey findings

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"I'm glad to see these habits often practised in the hospital taken into the community," he said.

"If you feel unwell or cannot afford to fall sick due to work or an exam even after Covid-19, wearing a mask is the best way to look after yourself."

NTU student A. Aravind, 24, said he has been looking forward to the end of Covid-19,

but he will still willingly wear a face mask after that.

"I think all the good hygiene habits I have been practising will follow me after Covid-19, especially when I feel sick," he said.

"During the pandemic, I realised using hand sanitiser is quite a manageable way to ensure good hygiene."

Research administration trainee Wong Jing Hui from NTU's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine told The Straits Times she will continue to wear a mask when unwell and use hand sanitisers frequently after the pandemic.

"One of the things the pandemic has made known to us is how infectious a cough or sneeze can be.

"We're also all aware of how many germs there can be on common touch points," she said.

"Knowing this, it will be hard to go back to just walking around without a mask if I am sick, because now I am aware of how quickly I can pass my flu to someone else."

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