

Viewpoint: Tribalism and COVID — Many progressives rejecting science on lockdowns and becoming major hindrance to return to near-normalcy

The spring of 2021 is different from the spring of 2020... Scientists know a lot more about how COVID-19 spreads—and how it doesn't. Public-health advice is shifting. But some progressives have not updated their behavior based on the new information. And in their eagerness to protect themselves and others, they may be underestimating other costs.

Being extra careful about COVID-19 is (mostly) harmless when it's limited to wiping down your groceries with Lysol wipes... But vigilance can have unintended consequences when it imposes on other people's lives.

Even as scientific knowledge of COVID-19 has increased, some progressives have continued to embrace policies and behaviors that aren't supported by evidence, such as [banning access](#) to playgrounds, [closing beaches](#), and [refusing to reopen](#) schools for in-person learning.

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"Those who are vaccinated on the left seem to think overcaution now is the way to go, which is making people on the right question the effectiveness of the vaccines," [professor of medicine Monica] Gandhi told me.

Public figures and policy makers who try to dictate others' behavior without any scientific justification for doing so erode trust in public health and make people less willing to take useful precautions. The marginal gains of staying shut down might not justify the potential backlash.

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