

Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey, 2015

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Routine childhood vaccines that are part of provincial and territorial publicly funded vaccination programs are free for all Canadian families. In 2015, most parents (89%) reported that their children's vaccinations were completely up to date.

Vaccine coverage estimates among 2-year-olds remain similar to 2013

According to recommendations from public health authorities, children should receive one dose of measles vaccine and four doses of diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus vaccine by the age of 24 months. Results from the Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey (CNICS) show that, by 2 years of age, 89% of children had received the measles vaccine and 77% had received the recommended 4 doses for diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

Coverage for polio among 2-year-olds was 91% in 2015, while 3 out of 4 (75%) children had been vaccinated against varicella (chickenpox).

In recent years, some provinces and territories have introduced universal infant vaccination programs for rotavirus, a cause of acute gastroenteritis. Among 2-year-olds in provinces and territories with such a program, rotavirus vaccine coverage was 75% in 2015.

Coverage rates of all vaccines among 2-year-olds remained unchanged since 2013.

Most parents believe in the safety of vaccines

The CNICS also gathered information on the attitudes of children's parents or guardians towards vaccination. The vast majority agreed that childhood vaccines are safe (97%), effective (98%) and important for their child's health (98%). Most also agreed that, in general, they understand how vaccines work (97%). These results all increased slightly (about 1%) since 2013.

In 2015, fewer children had parents or guardians who were concerned about potential side effects of vaccines compared to 2013 (66% vs. 70%) and 38% of respondents believed that a vaccine can give a serious case of the same disease it is meant to prevent, down from 40% in 2013.

The survey results also showed that, compared to 2013, fewer children had parents or guardians who reported believing that alternative practices, such as homeopathy or chiropractic care, can eliminate the need for vaccination (15% vs. 19%).





In celebration of the country's 150th birthday, Statistics Canada is presenting snapshots from our rich statistical history.

Childhood vaccines that are part of provincial and territorial publicly funded routine vaccination programs are free to Canadian families. These programs are part of the public health landscape in developed countries. This is a change from 150 years ago, when vaccines did not yet exist.

The first routine vaccination program was implemented in 1930, with the introduction of the vaccine against diphtheria. Over the past 80 years, many vaccines have been added to publicly funded routine vaccination programs. As a result, Canada has seen the reduction and elimination of vaccine-preventable diseases which at one time resulted in widespread serious illnesses and several deaths among children.

The number of measles, mumps and rubella cases is much lower today

In Canada, routine infant immunization programs have helped to eliminate the transmission of rubella infection and to decrease the number of reported cases of measles and mumps.

Before a measles vaccine was authorized for use in Canada in 1963, an average of 53,800 cases per year was reported during the period from 1951 to 1955. In contrast, there were only 195 cases of measles reported in Canada in 2015.

Prior to the introduction of vaccines for mumps and rubella in 1969, annual averages of 32,800 cases of mumps and 11,500 cases of rubella were reported during the same period (1951-1955) in Canada. In 2015, the number of reported cases of mumps was reduced to 59 and official data indicated that rubella has been considered eliminated from Canada since 2005. No cases were reported in 2015.

Sources:

Public Health Agency of Canada, Notifiable Disease On-line, <https://diseases.canada.ca/notifiable/>, accessed in June 2017. (The reference period of 1951-1955 was the last five consecutive years for which data were available for all 10 provinces before the introduction of the vaccine, with the following exceptions: New Brunswick did not report on rubella in 1951, nor did Prince Edward Island in 1954.)

Note to readers

The data come from the 2015 cycle of the Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey (CNICS), which has been conducted by Statistics Canada every two years since 2011 and is sponsored by the Public Health Agency of Canada. The purpose of the survey is to determine whether children at ages 2, 7 and 17 are immunized in accordance with recommended vaccination schedules for publicly-funded vaccines. In addition, the CNICS collected data on the immunization coverage for human papilloma virus for girls at ages 13, 14 and 17. Questions also assessed parents' or guardians' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about vaccines.

In addition, for approximately 40% of the children, immunization records were also obtained from the child's health care provider. When both sources (parent and health care provider data) were available, they were combined to provide the immunization information for that child.

Table 1
Immunization coverage¹ by antigen for children at 24 months, Canada, 2013 and 2015

	2015	2013
	%	
Diphtheria	76.9	76.6
Pertussis (whooping cough)	77.0	76.4
Tetanus	76.7	76.4
Polio (IPV)	91.2	90.9
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	71.9	71.9
Measles	89.2	89.7
Mumps	88.9	89.4
Rubella	88.9	89.4
Varicella (chicken pox)	74.8	73.2
Meningococcal type C conjugate	87.9	88.7
Pneumococcal conjugate	80.3	79.2
Rotavirus ²	75.4	--

1. Based on combined parent and health care provider records.

2. In provinces and territories that provide publicly funded rotavirus vaccine - PE, QC, ON, SK, BC and YT. No comparable coverage for 2013.

Source(s): Childhood National Immunization Coverage Survey (5185).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5185.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).

For more information about the survey, you can contact the Public Health Agency of Canada client services at 613-957-2983.