

Study: Canadian consumers prepare for COVID-19

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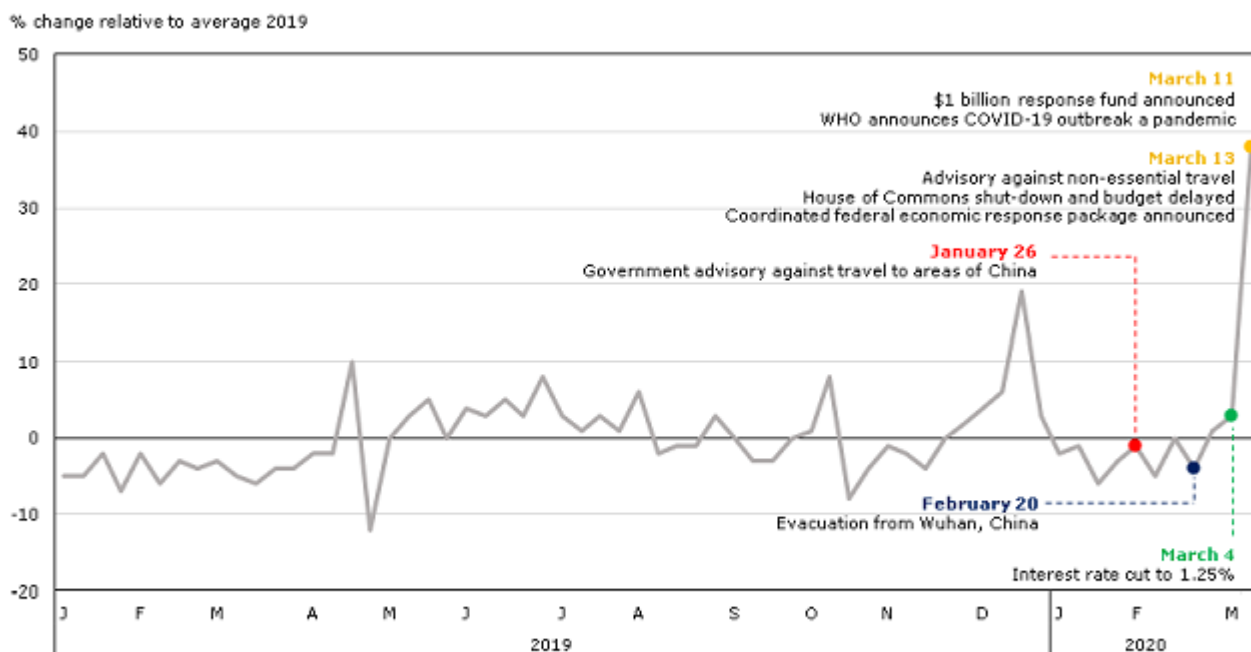
The features of the Canadian consumer environment are shifting rapidly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, shaped by a variety of interconnected and evolving factors. Restrictions on the activities of citizens and businesses and increased pressure on adapting supply chains are influencing the what, where, when and how of Canadian consumption.

As news media provides daily coverage of shortages of non-durable goods across the country, Statistics Canada can help to shed light on the impact of the novel coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) on consumer purchasing patterns.

The study, "[Canadian Consumers Prepare for COVID-19](#)," highlights trends in consumer demand and sales using transaction data for grocery products up to the week ending March 14, 2020.

Grocery store purchases on the rise

Infographic 1 – Weekly percent change in sales for select grocery retailers, relative to 2019 average

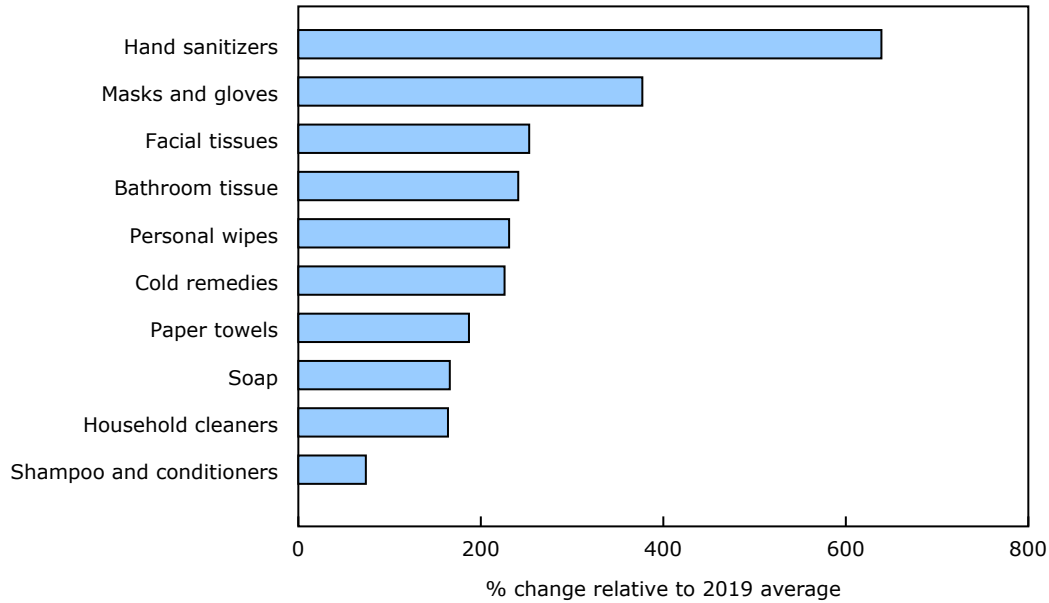


Note: Data are experimental and are subject to revision.
Source: Consumer Prices program, special tabulation.

On March 11, 2020, the federal government announced its COVID-19 response fund alongside a coordinated economic relief package. By the end of that same week, grocery sales had increased 38% compared with their average sales in 2019, and 16% compared with the week leading up to the December holiday, the busiest shopping week of the year.

Chart 1

Personal care and household cleaning products, percentage change in sales for the week ending March 14 relative to 2019 average



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Source(s): Consumer Prices program, special tabulation.

Early indications of shifting consumer behaviour were apparent in sales of hand sanitizer, and masks and gloves. Receipts for bathroom tissues were up 241% relative to the 2019 average in the week leading up to March 14.

Note to readers

The data used in this study are experimental and are subject to revision.

For more information about the Consumer Prices program and the possible impacts of COVID-19 on Canada's Consumer Price Index, please visit the [Consumer Price Index Portal](#).

COVID-19: A data perspective

As the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 are being felt, Statistics Canada remains committed to providing an accurate picture of what is happening in Canada, empowering governments, businesses and Canadians alike with the information they need to respond to, and recover from, this pandemic.

A [portal](#) has been developed to centralize the work Statistics Canada is doing to assess the impacts of COVID-19 in Canada. Visit the [portal](#) regularly to obtain the latest information that helps to shed light on key economic trends and social challenges that arise as the current situation evolves.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [2301](#).

The analytical article "[Canadian Consumers Prepare for COVID-19](#)" is now available in the *Prices Analytical Series* ([62F0014M](#)).

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).