

# Study: COVID-19 vaccine willingness among Canadian population groups

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Millions of Canadians will be rolling up their sleeve this year to get the COVID-19 vaccine. From September to December 2020, just over three-quarters of Canadians told us that they were somewhat or very willing to get the vaccine, with marked differences observed in willingness by age, province and population subgroup. These findings are presented in a new study released today called "[COVID-19 vaccine willingness among Canadian population groups](#)," which is based on responses from the Canadian Community Health Survey.

## Willingness to get the COVID-19 vaccine rises, mental health declines in November 2020

Following a summer respite, COVID-19 cases began rising again in the fall during the second wave of the pandemic. Then in December came promising news about the development and approval of COVID-19 vaccines.

Widespread acceptance of the vaccine is important to help control the spread of COVID-19. Vaccine hesitancy is a complex issue defined by the World Health Organization as a "delay in acceptance, or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccine services." From November to mid-December, 80.4% of Canadians reported they were somewhat or very likely to get the COVID-19 vaccine. This represents an increase from September, when 75.5% of Canadians reported a willingness to receive the vaccine.

Moreover, an increase was observed in the proportion of Canadians who said they took certain precautions during this time, with over four-fifths reporting that they avoided leaving the house for non-essential reasons from November to mid-December (80.8%), up from two-thirds in September (67.0%). Also during this time, over one-third of Canadians told us their mental health had worsened since before the pandemic (37.2%), up from 29.7% in September.

## Vaccine willingness was higher in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and British Columbia

Willingness to get the vaccine was not uniform across the country. From September to mid-December, a higher proportion of residents of Prince Edward Island (89.2%), Nova Scotia (81.5%) and British Columbia (81.4%) reported a willingness to get the vaccine, compared with the Canadian average. The differences between Canada and all other provinces were not statistically significant.

## Willingness to get the COVID-19 vaccine varies markedly for diverse groups of Canadians

Statistics Canada has previously [reported](#) that, for a number of reasons, population groups designated as visible minorities are at an increased risk of contracting or dying from COVID-19. Many of these population groups have higher poverty rates, are overrepresented in socioeconomically disadvantaged neighbourhoods, or live in overcrowded housing conditions. Additionally some visible minority groups are overrepresented in employment sectors where there is a greater risk of exposure to COVID-19, such as Black and Filipino employees in the health care and social assistance industry. Among groups designated as visible minorities, willingness to get the COVID-19 vaccine ranged from 56.4% among the Black population to 82.5% among the South Asian population.

At the time of the survey last fall, landed immigrants and non-permanent residents (74.6%) were less likely than Canadian-born individuals (77.8%) to report that they were somewhat or very willing to get the vaccine. No statistically significant differences were observed between recent and established immigrants.

## 72% of Indigenous people reported a willingness to receive the vaccine

Nearly three-quarters of First Nations people living off reserve (74.4%) and Inuit (73.2%<sup>E</sup>) living outside Inuit Nunangat told us they were somewhat or very willing to get the vaccine, compared with just over two-thirds of Métis (67.8%).



By way of comparison, just over three-quarters of respondents who were non-Indigenous (77.1%) were somewhat or very willing to get the vaccine.

Recent crowdsourced data from Statistics Canada found that Indigenous participants have also been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, especially with regard to their mental health and socioeconomic conditions.

## LGBTQ2+ Canadians are more likely to get the vaccine than non-LGBTQ2+ Canadians

Based on multiple socioeconomic factors, including their higher representation in low-income groups and housing insecurity, LGBTQ2+ Canadians may be more vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 than other Canadians. Among LGBTQ2+ Canadians aged 15 and older, 83.3% reported last fall that they were somewhat or very willing to get the vaccine, compared with 76.9% of non-LGBTQ2+ Canadians.

## Older Canadians are more willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine

Seniors are the group most vulnerable to experiencing more severe outcomes of COVID-19, which is why they have higher priority for getting the vaccine.

Perhaps it is not surprising then that last fall, more than four-fifths of Canadians aged 65 and older (82.5%) living in households said that they were somewhat or very willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine, compared with three-quarters of Canadians aged 12 to 64 (75.5%). Black respondents aged 65 and older (78.1%) were much more likely than those aged 12 to 64 (54.8%) to say they were somewhat or very willing to get the COVID-19 vaccine. There were no statistical differences in vaccine willingness by age group among LGBTQ2+ Canadians and Indigenous peoples.

### Note to readers

*The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) is an annual survey that was adjusted during the pandemic to produce more timely estimates related to COVID-19. This analysis is based on CCHS data collected from September to mid-December 2020. The sample of more than 20,000 is representative of the Canadian population 12 years and older living in the provinces. Sampling and collection for the time period used in this analysis do not have adequate coverage to represent the entire population of the territories.*

*Respondents were included in the analysis of the Indigenous population based on their self-reported answer to "Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations, Métis or Inuk (Inuit)? First Nations includes Status and Non-Status Indians." The CCHS does not collect data on reserves. Consequently, the results presented for First Nations people exclude those living on reserves, as well as Indigenous people in the territories or in remote northern regions of the provinces that include Inuit Nunangat.*

*LGBTQ2+ Canadians include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or two-Spirit or persons reporting another non-binary gender or minority sexual identity.*

*While members of these communities differ in the types of challenges and discrimination that they face depending on where they fall on the spectrum of sexual orientation and gender, this article groups them together due to the small sample size.*

*Respondents were included in the LGBTQ2+ population based on self-reported sexual orientation, sex at birth and gender identity (transgender, including respondents with non-binary identities like genderqueer, gender fluid or agender).*

*At this time, the COVID-19 vaccines that have been approved in Canada have not been tested on children and are only available to those aged 16 and older. The CCHS includes respondents aged 12 and older, and the analysis in this article includes the entire population, since information on the willingness of Canadians aged 12 to 16 will be valuable once the vaccine becomes available for this age group.*

*For more information on survey definitions and methods, refer to the Statistics Canada survey page: [Canadian Community Health Survey](#).*

*The symbol <sup>E</sup> next to an estimate indicates that the coefficient of variation for this estimate is between 15.1% and 35.0% and the quality is marginal. Users should interpret these results with caution.*

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3226](#).**

**Available tables: table [13-10-0806-01](#).**

To help identify trends in COVID-19 indicators by age group and gender and by province and region, the interactive visual tool "[Canadians' Health and COVID-19: Interactive Dashboard](#)" has been updated with November estimates.

The study "[COVID-19 vaccine willingness among Canadian population groups](#)" is now available as part of the series *StatCan COVID-19: Data to Insights for a Better Canada* ([45280001](#)).

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](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).