

Majority of Canadians are willing to get a COVID-19 booster dose

Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time in *The Daily*, Tuesday, March 15, 2022

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, and with the Omicron variant circulating through the population, according to health professionals, widespread vaccination remains one of the most important tools to protect Canadians and ensure the healthcare system is not overburdened.

Canadians have been strongly encouraged to get vaccinated against COVID-19, including getting an additional dose (that is, third dose or booster dose) to stimulate their immune system and help prevent serious illness and death from the virus. This release uses data collected from September to mid-November 2021 from the Canadian Community Health Survey and covers Canadians aged 12 and older living in the provinces. Data were collected before the first cases of the Omicron variant in Canada were confirmed at the end of November 2021.

From September to mid-November 2021, 92% of Canadians aged 12 and older reported being fully vaccinated. In September 2021, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommended an additional COVID-19 dose for certain immunocompromised individuals, and in November, Health Canada authorized the use of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines as booster doses for those 18 years of age and older. Results from the survey show that in the fall of 2021, 86% of Canadians aged 12 and older reported that they were very or somewhat likely to get a COVID-19 booster dose. Reported intentions may not always translate into actual booster dose uptake across Canada, where according to the Public Health Agency of Canada, as of March 6, 2022, 56% of Canadians aged 18 and older were fully vaccinated and had a booster dose.

Willingness to get a COVID-19 booster dose varies across several population groups

Differences exist across various population groups, in terms of the willingness to receive a COVID-19 booster dose. From September to mid-November 2021, women were slightly more likely than men to report being willing to get a booster dose (87% vs. 85%). Among youth aged 12 to 17, 84% reported a willingness to get a booster, which was similar to adults aged 18 to 49 (83%). Older Canadians aged 50 and older reported higher booster dose willingness (89%) compared with the younger age groups.

Across Canada, the willingness to get a booster varied by region. Canadians aged 12 and older living in the Prairie provinces (83%) and Quebec (81%) reported lower booster dose willingness compared with the national average (86%), whereas willingness was higher among individuals living in the Atlantic provinces (90%) and Ontario (88%).

Differences were also observed among some groups designated as visible minorities. In the fall of 2021, 86% reported being willing to receive a booster dose, which was the same as the non-visible minority population. Compared with the non-visible minority population, when looking at specific visible minority groups, willingness was lower among the Black population (73%) and higher among the Latin American (94%), Southeast Asian (97%) and Japanese (96%) populations.

Over the same period, 85% of immigrants and non-permanent residents reported being willing to receive a booster dose, which was similar to the Canadian-born population (86%). Recent immigrants (81%) who were admitted into Canada less than 10 years ago were less likely than established immigrants (87%) to report a willingness to get a booster.

Among the Indigenous population living in the provinces, 78% reported booster dose willingness, which was lower than the non-Indigenous population (86%). Specifically, 76% of First Nations people living off-reserve and 79% of Métis reported being willing to get a COVID-19 booster. Reliable estimates for the Inuit population could not be produced, due to an insufficient sample size.

The LGBTQ2+ population (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, Two-Spirit, or persons reporting another diverse gender or sexual orientation identity) reported higher levels of booster dose willingness, compared with the non-LGBTQ2+ population (91% vs. 86%). Among LGB+ people (lesbian, gay, bisexual, or those with another sexual orientation that is not heterosexual), 91% reported a willingness to get the booster shot. More

specifically, 87% of the lesbian or gay population and 95% of those who are bisexual reported being willing to receive a booster dose. Among their heterosexual counterparts, 86% reported the same. For transgender or non-binary persons, 89% reported such a willingness, which was similar to cisgender people (86%).

Those with underlying health conditions are at greater risk of suffering from serious illness or death from the virus. Among those with at least one underlying health condition, 88% reported this willingness to get a booster shot, which was a higher proportion than those without underlying health conditions (84%).

One in four unvaccinated Canadians report a lack of confidence in the vaccine as the main reason they have not been vaccinated

From September to mid-November 2021, although the majority of Canadians reported that they were willing to get a COVID-19 booster dose, 6% of Canadians reported that they had not received a COVID-19 vaccine. There are certain reasons why some Canadians chose to not receive any vaccine doses: one in four (25%) unvaccinated Canadians aged 12 and older reported that the main reason they have not been vaccinated at all against COVID-19 was that they did not have confidence in the vaccine that was offered to them.

Canadians who were not fully vaccinated are less likely to adhere to public health measures, compared with fully vaccinated Canadians

Data collected in the fall of 2021 show differences in the profiles between the fully vaccinated population (that is, those with at least 1 dose of a 1-dose vaccine, or at least 2 doses of a 2-dose vaccine) and those who were not fully vaccinated (that is, unvaccinated or partially vaccinated). From September to mid-November 2021, 8% of Canadians reported not being fully vaccinated. In terms of health behaviours, Canadians aged 18 and older who were not fully vaccinated were less likely to report being regular alcohol drinkers (50%) compared with the fully vaccinated population (64%). Regarding smoking habits, 17% of Canadian adults who were not fully vaccinated reported smoking cigarettes on a daily basis, which was around double the proportion of daily smokers among the fully vaccinated population (8%).

Another behavioural difference observed between the fully vaccinated and not fully vaccinated populations is regarding the precautions taken to protect themselves or others against COVID-19. From September to mid-November 2021, individuals aged 12 and older who were not fully vaccinated were less likely to adhere to public health measures such as washing their hands more frequently, wearing a mask in public places where physical distancing is difficult, keeping a 2-metre distance from others, and avoiding crowds and large gatherings, compared with fully vaccinated people (72% vs. 80%).

Canadians who were not fully vaccinated are less likely to be married or in a common-law relationship, and less likely to live in a dwelling that is owned

Certain sociodemographic differences (for example, marital status and dwelling ownership) between the fully and not fully vaccinated populations aged 12 and older were also noted. From September to mid-November 2021, less than one in two Canadians who were not fully vaccinated (46%) reported being married or in a common-law relationship, compared with six in ten (60%) fully vaccinated Canadians. Furthermore, while 45% of those not fully vaccinated reported being single and never having been married, 29% of the fully vaccinated population reported the same.

Dwelling ownership is another factor which differed between the two populations: among those not fully vaccinated, two-thirds (67%) reported living in a dwelling that is owned by a member of the household, which was less than the fully vaccinated population (77%).

Canadians aged 25 and over, who were not fully vaccinated, are less likely to have a university degree

Education is another sociodemographic characteristic for which a difference was observed between Canadians who reported being fully vaccinated and those who did not. Among adults aged 25 and older, a higher proportion of those not fully vaccinated (14%) reported their highest level of education was less than secondary school, compared with the fully vaccinated population (8%). Similarly, those not fully vaccinated were also more likely to report their highest level of education was a secondary school diploma compared with fully vaccinated people (27% vs. 18%).

Conversely, the proportion of adults who have a post-secondary certificate/diploma or a university degree was higher among the fully vaccinated population compared to those who were not fully vaccinated (74% vs. 59%).

In addition, the employment status of the fully vaccinated and not fully vaccinated populations aged 18 to 64 also differed. In the fall of 2021, a lower proportion of the not fully vaccinated population reported being employed, compared with the fully vaccinated population (65% vs. 77%).

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 provisional CCHS data collected from September 1 to November 14, 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had major impacts on data collection operations for the 2020 and 2021 CCHS. The impossibility of conducting in-person interviews and collection capacity issues resulted in a significant decrease in response rates in 2020 and 2021. As was done for previous CCHS cycles, survey weights were adjusted to minimize any potential bias that could arise from survey non-response; non-response adjustments and calibration using available auxiliary information were applied. Despite these rigorous adjustments and validations, the higher non-response increases the risk of a remaining bias as well as increasing the magnitude with which such a bias could impact estimates produced using the survey data. The sample of just over 12,000 respondents from September to the middle of November 2021 is representative of the Canadian population living in the provinces. Sampling and collection for the time period used in this analysis does not have adequate coverage to represent the entire population of the territories. This analysis includes only non-proxy respondents.

The Canadian Immunization Guide defines booster shots in the context of COVID-19 vaccines as "doses of COVID-19 vaccines after the primary series" with the intent to "restore protection that may have decreased over time to a level that is no longer deemed sufficient in individuals who initially responded adequately to a complete primary vaccine series."

Willingness to get a booster dose includes respondents who reported either having already received a COVID-19 booster dose, or who reported being very likely or somewhat likely to receive an additional dose to stimulate their immune system or to fight against variants.

The fully vaccinated population refers to respondents who reported having received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine that required one dose, or who reported having received at least two doses of a vaccine that required two doses. The not fully vaccinated population refers to respondents who reported not having received any doses of a vaccine, or those who reported having received only one dose of a vaccine that required two doses.

Recent immigrants refers to those who were admitted into Canada less than 10 years ago. Established immigrants refers to those who were admitted into Canada 10 or more years ago. Respondents who are Canadian citizens by naturalization are considered to be immigrants.

Indigenous status is based on the 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 discussed for First Nations people exclude those living on reserve. In addition, people living in the territories, including a large proportion of First Nations people, Métis and Inuit, are excluded, as well as the majority of Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat – the Inuit homeland.

LGBTQ2+ people in Canada include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or Two-Spirit or persons reporting another diverse gender or sexual orientation identity.

Respondents were included in the LGBTQ2+ population based on self-reported information derived from their sexual orientation, sex assigned at birth and current gender. The analysis of LGBTQ2+ individuals excludes respondents under the age of 15.

The LGB+ category is based on sexual orientation and includes people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or those with another sexual orientation that is not heterosexual. The LGB+ category does not disaggregate by gender identity, and the gender identity category does not disaggregate by sexual orientation. Disaggregated data for those who are pansexual, or those with another sexual orientation, were not available.

Underlying health conditions include obesity, high blood pressure, currently having cancer, heart disease, diabetes, dementia among those aged 40 and older, or effects of a stroke. The population with no underlying health conditions is calculated taking into account the non-response categories ("refusal", "don't know", "not applicable" and "not stated").

Regular alcohol drinkers are those who reported drinking alcohol at least once a month in the past 12 months.

The dwelling ownership category includes households where some member of the household owns their dwelling, even if it is still being paid for.

In this release, when two estimates are said to be different, this indicates that the difference was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level (p-value less than 5%).

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

Available tables: [13-10-0806-01](#) and [13-10-0809-01](#).

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

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).