

Canadian Perspectives Survey Series 1: Impacts of COVID-19

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The novel coronavirus (also known as COVID-19) is having a profound effect on the health, behaviour and social activities of Canadians. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have recently introduced a series of measures to limit the spread of the virus, including physical distancing.

To get timely information about how Canadians are coping with COVID-19, Statistics Canada developed a new web panel survey. More than 4,600 people in the 10 provinces responded to this survey between March 29 and April 3.

The collected information will be used by government organizations, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada, to inform the Government of Canada's response to COVID-19.

This release focuses on the most pressing concerns expressed by Canadians regarding the crisis, the precautions they took to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19, and how they changed their weekly habits as a result of the crisis. It also briefly discusses the main sources of information about COVID-19 used by Canadians.

A summary of the results is presented in the infographic, "[How are Canadians coping with the COVID-19 situation?](#)"

Many Canadians are anxious about their health, but more are concerned about the health of others

Canadians were asked how concerned they were about different situations related to COVID-19.

Results show that over one-third of Canadians (36%) were very or extremely concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their own health. However, they were even more concerned about the impact on the health of others.

For example, over one-half of Canadians reported that they were very or extremely concerned about the health of someone in their household, and 79% were very or extremely concerned about the health of vulnerable people. Furthermore, 84% reported that they were very concerned that COVID-19 would overload the health care system.

One in 10 women is very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in the home

The stress and anxiety resulting from physical distancing measures were also a top concern for many Canadians. One-third of Canadians reported that they were very or extremely concerned about family stress from confinement.

In addition, 8% of Canadians reported that they were very or extremely concerned about the possibility of violence in the home. This percentage was higher for women (10%) than men (6%).

A number of Canadians also expressed concerns about societal changes in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. For instance, 4 in 10 Canadians were very or extremely concerned about the possibility of civil disorder.

Most Canadians are following physical distancing guidelines

The survey also asked Canadians about the types of precautions they have taken as a result of the crisis.

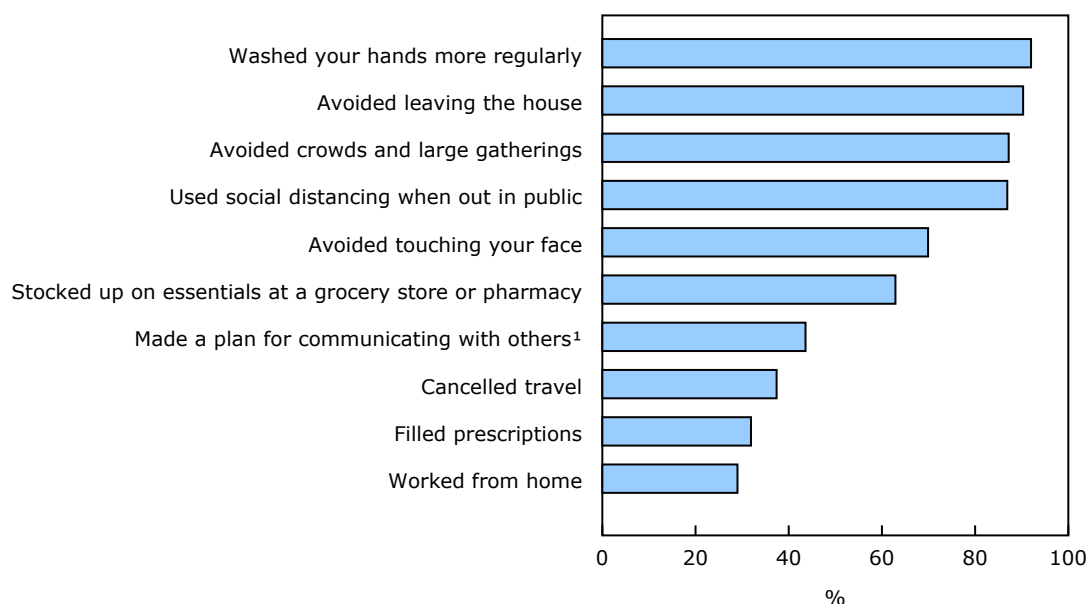
The vast majority of Canadians (about 9 in 10) reported that they were following physical distancing guidelines, such as avoiding leaving the house, using social distancing when out in public, and avoiding crowds and large gatherings. Similar results were found for both men and women, and across age groups.

Other measures taken by the vast majority of Canadians include washing their hands more regularly (92%), avoiding touching their face (70%) and stocking up on essentials at a grocery store or pharmacy (63%).



Chart 1

Main precautions taken by Canadians as a result of COVID-19, March and April 2020



1. Others include family, friends and neighbours.

Source(s): Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (5311).

Canadians spend more time on the Internet and watching television

The COVID-19 situation is having a profound effect on the daily lives of Canadians, especially now that they are spending more time at home. However, the extent to which Canadians have changed their weekly habits to cope with the crisis varied across age groups.

Among Canadians aged 50 and older, close to 60% reported that they were spending more time watching television or on the Internet.

Canadians aged 15 to 49 were even more likely than their older counterparts to report that they were spending more time watching television (66%) or on the Internet (75%).

Younger Canadians were also more likely than older Canadians to report spending more time playing video games or board games, and they were more likely than older Canadians to report having increased their consumption of junk food and alcohol.

Most Canadians are using traditional news outlets to access information, but many are obtaining information from public health authorities

In the context of the current crisis, public authorities need to communicate on a daily basis with Canadians. What sources did Canadians use to get information about COVID-19?

More than one-half of Canadians used news outlets as a main source of information about COVID-19. This proportion was higher among Canadians aged 50 and older (56%) than among those younger than 50 (47%).

For about 3 in 10 Canadians, the main source of information on COVID-19 was government health agencies or federal and provincial daily announcements by public health and political leaders. This percentage did not vary significantly across age groups or by gender.

Canadians younger than 50 were more likely to use social media (13%) to get information about COVID-19 than Canadians aged 50 and older (6%).

Note to readers

Statistics Canada acknowledges the contribution of colleagues from the Université de Montréal who are supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Canadian 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Rapid Research Funding.

Data in this release are from Statistics Canada's new Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (CPSS), for which a panel of Canadians have agreed to complete a number of short online surveys. The CPSS is a probabilistic panel based on the Labour Force Survey and is therefore representative of the general population. The CPSS enables Statistics Canada to collect important information from Canadians more efficiently, more rapidly and at a lower cost, compared with traditional survey methods. The first iteration of the survey collected data on the current economic and social situation, as well as on people's physical and mental health, to effectively assess the needs of communities and implement suitable support measures during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics Canada would like to thank Canadians who took the time to answer questions for this survey at this time of crisis.

Table 1
Concerns expressed by Canadians about COVID-19 impacts, March and April 2020

	Not at all concerned	Somewhat concerned	Very or extremely concerned	Not stated
	%			
Both sexes				
Health-related concerns				
My own health	13.2	50.3	36.3	F
Member of the household's health	10.9	32.9	54.0	2.2
Vulnerable people's health	4.0	14.9	79.2	2.0
Canadian population's health	2.2	27.6	69.4	F
Overloading the health system	2.0	13.5	83.7	F
Family-related concerns				
Family stress from confinement	27.0	39.7	32.0	1.4
Violence in the home	81.3	9.1	8.0	1.5
Social concerns				
Civil disorder	16.8	40.7	40.6	1.9
Maintaining social ties	22.5	42.9	33.4	1.3
Ability to cooperate and support one another during the crisis	15.7	41.4	41.5	1.4
Women				
Health-related concerns				
My own health	11.0	50.8	37.9	F
Member of the household's health	10.5	33.4	53.2	2.9
Vulnerable people's health	4.0	14.2	79.9	2.0
Canadian population's health	1.7	24.1	73.4	F
Overloading the health system	1.4	12.5	85.2	F
Family-related concerns				
Family stress from confinement	26.3	38.9	33.4	F
Violence in the home	80.9	7.6	9.9	F
Social concerns				
Civil disorder	16.2	40.8	41.0	2.1
Maintaining social ties	21.8	42.0	35.0	F
Ability to cooperate and support one another during the crisis	14.9	39.9	43.9	F
Men				
Health-related concerns				
My own health	15.5	49.7	34.5	F
Member of the household's health	11.3	32.4	54.9	1.4
Vulnerable people's health	4.0	15.6	78.5	F
Canadian population's health	2.7	31.3	65.0	F
Overloading the health system	2.5	14.6	82.1	F
Family-related concerns				
Family stress from confinement	27.8	40.5	30.4	F
Violence in the home	81.9	10.7	6.0	F
Social concerns				
Civil disorder	17.5	40.5	40.2	F
Maintaining social ties	23.2	43.8	31.7	F
Ability to cooperate and support one another during the crisis	16.6	43.0	38.9	F

F too unreliable to be published

Source(s): Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (5311).

Table 2
Change in weekly habits as a result of COVID-19, March and April 2020

	Increased	Decreased	No change	Not stated
	%			
Both age groups				
Consuming alcohol	13.6	9.5	74.1	2.8
Using tobacco products	3.1	3.2	88.0	5.7
Consuming cannabis	6.0	1.5	85.4	7.1
Eating junk food or sweets	26.8	14.7	54.1	4.5
Watching television	63.1	3.1	32.5	1.3
Spending time on the Internet	67.6	1.7	29.4	1.3
Playing video games	22.4	1.7	69.0	6.9
Playing board games	24.5	2.4	66.6	6.6
Aged 15 to 49				
Consuming alcohol	19.5	9.2	70.2	F
Using tobacco products	3.8	3.5	91.0	F
Consuming cannabis	9.6	2.0	86.0	2.4
Eating junk food or sweets	37.1	15.9	46.2	F
Watching television	66.2	3.0	30.3	F
Spending time on the Internet	75.4	1.3	22.8	F
Playing video games	35.3	1.8	61.2	F
Playing board games	35.2	3.0	60.5	F
Aged 50 and older				
Consuming alcohol	6.6	9.7	78.8	4.8
Using tobacco products	2.2	2.8	84.6	10.4
Consuming cannabis	F	F	84.8	12.6
Eating junk food or sweets	14.6	13.2	63.4	8.8
Watching television	59.5	3.2	35.0	F
Spending time on the Internet	58.3	F	37.2	F
Playing video games	7.2	F	78.1	13.2
Playing board games	11.8	F	73.8	12.8

F too unreliable to be published

Source(s): Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (5311).

Table 3
Main source of information about COVID-19, March and April 2020

	Both age groups	Aged 15 to 49	Aged 50 and older
	%		
News outlets including local, national and international sources	51.3	47.1	56.2
Government health agencies ¹	11.2	14.3	7.5
Federal daily announcements by public health and political leaders	6.4	6.4	6.4
Provincial daily announcements by public health and political leaders	12.0	8.7	15.8
Social media	9.8	13.1	5.9
All other sources ²	8.6	9.8	7.2
Does not look for information	F	F	F
Not stated	F	F	F

F too unreliable to be published

1. Includes federal, provincial and municipal health agencies.

2. Includes family, friends and colleagues; health professionals; schools, universities and colleges; places of employment; and "other sources."

Source(s): Canadian Perspectives Survey Series (5311).

The infographic "[How are Canadians coping with the COVID-19 situation?](#)" is now available.

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).