

FACTUM

Despite Increase in COVID-19 Cases this Fall, Canadians Continue to Pull Away From Idea of Mandatory Vaccination

Most Agree that Front-Line Healthcare Workers (62%) and First Responders (52%) Should Receive First Available Doses

Toronto, ON, November 27, 2020 – As we are well into the second wave of COVID-19 and flu season is upon us, vaccines have been on the minds of many Canadians. In recent weeks, news about vaccine development has thrust this conversation even further to the forefront as public health officials, doctors, and citizens alike have speculated on when a coronavirus vaccine will be available to the public – and how it should be distributed. A new Ipsos poll for Global News finds that despite the encouraging news coming in from around the world, support for mandatory vaccination continues to fall within Canada: six in ten (59%) agree COVID-19 vaccines should be mandatory for all once developed, a 13-point decline from polling in July.

Canadians Nervous About Taking Vaccines Created and Approved So Quickly

With three new COVID-19 vaccines being developed simultaneously this fall, one might think that public sentiment would settle, that citizens and consumers would feel confident that vaccination will be available to them soon and that rigorous testing will mean a vaccine will be safe. However, the data shows no such confidence. A majority of Canadians indicate that the rapidity of their development is unsettling: seven in ten (71%) say that taking a vaccine that was created and approved so quickly makes them nervous. What's more, seven in ten (69%) say that potential long-term effects are a concern for them, further demonstrating Canadians' anxieties about a COVID-19 vaccine.

Despite the nerves, just over half (52%) would personally take a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they could without hesitation, while a majority (59%) agree that they support vaccinations against COVID-19 being mandatory. While this may seem like strong support for mandatory vaccination, it is important to note that support has actually dropped 13 points in the past five months, reflecting increasing hesitancy on the part of Canadians with regard to the vaccine.

While enthusiasm for mandatory vaccination has waned, there is an understanding that a vaccine will be necessary to bring the pandemic under control. A majority agree that once a vaccine is approved, it will be completely safe (57%). More to the point, only three in ten (31%, -9 pts from October) think we can beat COVID-19 without a vaccine. Furthermore, concerns about vaccine efficacy have eased slightly – compared to a month ago, fewer Canadians feel the need to wait for reports about effectiveness or side-effects before taking a vaccine (77%, -5 pts), likely encouraged by the recent news of successful Phase III clinical trials.

Uncertainty Rises When Faced with Specifics

Canadians are even less certain about taking a COVID-19 vaccine when asked to decide on specific conditions. Although half (52%) of respondents indicated earlier in the survey they would take a vaccine without hesitation, when provided with more detailed options (including waiting for to see if there are side effects, or determining whether provincial insurance would cover the cost of the vaccine) only 19% agree they would take a COVID-19 vaccine without hesitation once approved.

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Many feel that waiting is the right thing to do: approximately a third feel that waiting a period of time to see if the vaccine is effective (28%) or if there are adverse side effects (36%) would make them most comfortable.

Some Canadians say that a recommendation by a family doctor (21%), or simply seeing friends and family receive the shot (10%) would make them willing to take a coronavirus vaccine.

Others would want some kind of reassurance from government first, including one in three (32%) who would want assurances from Canadian public health officials that the vaccine is safe, one in four (25%) who would want to be sure it is covered by their provincial health insurance plan, or a mandate from the government making the vaccine mandatory (18%).

While few (13%) say they would not take a COVID-19 vaccine under *any* circumstances, it is notable that the remainder of the population is divided on what would incentivize them to get the jab, signalling a challenge for public health officials in the future.

Under what conditions would you be willing to take a COVID-19 vaccine:	
Waiting a period of time (i.e. six months) to see if there are adverse side-effects that develop in those who have received the vaccine	36%
Assurance from Canadian public health officials that it is safe	32%
Waiting a period of time (i.e. six months) to see if it is effective in those who have received the vaccine	28%
If it is covered by my provincial health insurance plan	25%
A recommendation by my family doctor	21%
I will take it without hesitation once approved	19%
If it was made mandatory by the government	18%
Under no circumstances would I take a COVID-19 vaccine	13%
Seeing my friends or family get the vaccine	10%

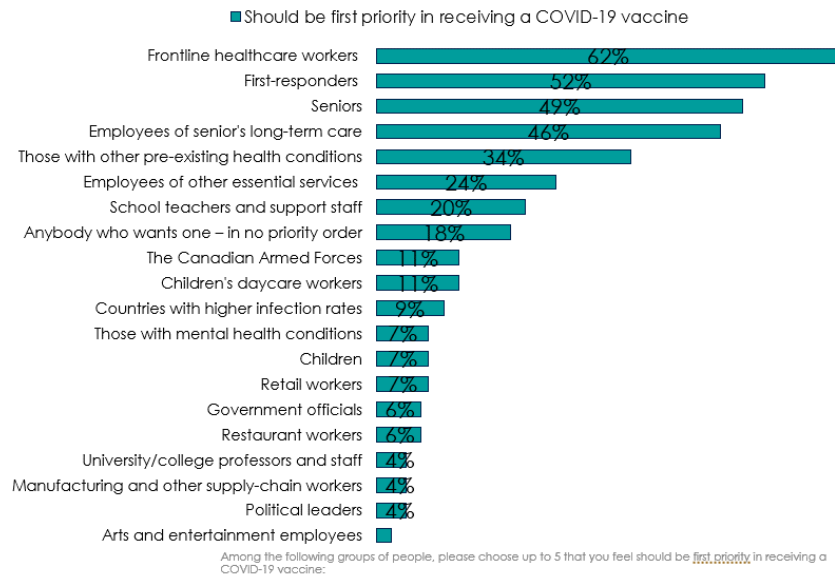
Frontline Healthcare Workers, First-Responders Top List of Vaccine Recipients

If we learn anything from flu season this year, it is that there are not enough shots for everyone: supply is limited while demand is high. So, if a vaccine is rolled out in the near future, who should get it first? From among a list of 20 potential recipients, respondents were asked to choose their top 5 who should be first priority to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

A majority across all demographics agree that frontline healthcare workers (62%) and first-responders (52%) should be first in line. Outside these target groups, Canadians are divided on who should be a priority, with seniors (49%), employees of seniors' long-term care and retirement facilities (46%), those with pre-existing health conditions (34%) and other essential service employees (24%) all seeing support for vaccination priority, but none being deemed as such by a majority.

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Who Should Receive a Vaccine First?



Canadians are often more likely to prioritize those who are similar to them for early vaccination, whether it be those who are of a similar age, a similar background, or work in a similar field. For example, parents are significantly more likely to indicate that children (13% vs. 6% of non-parents) and daycare workers (18% vs. 9%) should be prioritized for vaccination. Understandably, those who have children want to ensure that they are as safe as possible, which includes vaccinating them *and* those around them.

This phenomenon of prioritizing people similar to themselves for vaccination is seen elsewhere in the data. Boomers highlight seniors (64% vs. 51% Gen X, 34% Millennial, 26% Gen Z) as well as those with pre-existing conditions (42% vs. 32% Gen X, 31% Millennial, 21% Gen Z) for vaccination. Similarly, university graduates emphasize the need for schoolteachers and support staff to receive inoculation (29% vs. 20% post-secondary, 16% high school, 12% less than high school).

In short, while Canadians agree that first responders and front-line workers should top the list for a vaccine, most hope to see themselves or others like them next in line. Despite fears of side effects and some overall hesitation, when the vaccine is finally available to the public, there will likely be some jostling for position as to who will get it first.



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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between November 20-23, 2020, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,001 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within ± 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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