



## FACTUM

### Only One in Four Canadians (28%) Expect Life to Return to Normal This Year; 29% Say Not Until 2023 or Beyond

#### Pessimism Deepens on How Family, Canada Will Fare Post-COVID

**Toronto, ON, March 10, 2021** – As the COVID-19 vaccination drive moves slowly on, and the prospect of a third wave fuelled by variants looms on the horizon, most Canadians aren't under any illusions of being able to regain some semblance of "normal life" any time soon. New Ipsos polling for Global News reveals that only one in four (28%) expect things to start to feel like they've returned to normal by this winter, including just 4% who think a return to normal will start this summer, 8% who expect it in the fall, and 16% who think they will need to wait until winter 2021-2022.

Others expect the uncertainty of the pandemic to last for significantly longer, including 38% who predict a return to normality in 2022 (15% say the spring, 13% the summer, and 10% the fall). Nearly two in ten (17%) think it won't happen until 2023, 5% say not until 2024, and 7% say not until 2025 or later. Nearly one in ten Canadians (7%) are even more pessimistic, saying things will *never* return to normal. This feeling is strongest in Atlantic Canada (15%) and Alberta (15%).

#### *Pessimism on the rise*

Though the vaccination effort may be taking longer than first anticipated, Canadians are already looking to the future. Overall, there is more optimism (61%) than pessimism (39%) that the current pandemic will adequately prepare us for the next one.

However, while six in ten (60%) express optimism that their family will be in a better position that it was prior to COVID-19, this is down 13 points compared to December 2020, when nearly three in four Canadians (73%) said they were optimistic about their family's future.

Roughly six in ten are at least somewhat optimistic that those who have lost jobs due to the pandemic will be able to find similar employment when the economy recovers (58%), and that life will fully return to normal at some point (57%). Canadians aged 18-34 are the most optimistic about being able to get similar jobs once the economy bounces back (67% are optimistic, compared to 58% of those 55+ and 52% of those 35-54).

At the same time, there are clear doubts about the country's ability to emerge from the pandemic unscathed. Canadians are split on whether Canada will come back stronger than it was prior to COVID-19, with 50% saying they're optimistic and 50% taking a more pessimistic view. What's more, pessimism about Canada coming back stronger has increased 6 points since December 2020, when 44% felt pessimistic.

When it comes to the economy, fewer than half (45%) express optimism that the government will be able to get its finances back in order, once the pandemic is over. Canadians aged 18-34 are more likely to be optimistic about government finances (52%) than those aged 35-54 (41%) or 55 and over (43%). The survey also examines results by voter intent, and finds that Liberal Party supporters are more likely to be optimistic about the government getting its finances back in order, post-pandemic –



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63% express optimism in this regard, compared to 52% of NDP supporters, 48% of Green Party voters, 32% of Bloc Québécois supporters, and just 28% of Conservative Party supporters.

### *Looking forward to socializing again*

What are Canadians most looking forward to when normal life does eventually resume? The survey asked respondents to consider a list of 17 things, and to choose up to three that they are most looking forward to. Ditching the facemasks and connecting with people in person again top the list.

One in three say they are most looking forward to being able to socialize with friends and have mix-household gatherings (35%) and being able to gather indoors with family (31%). Nearly one in four (23%) are looking forward to simply being able to hug, kiss, and generally resume physical contact (23%). Being able to date or meet new people is cited by 4%.

A year into the pandemic, people are ready to put the stresses of COVID-19 behind them. One in three (36%) say what they're looking forward to the most is not needing to wear a mask, and 18% say they're looking forward to seeing people's faces without masks again.

Much has been written about the pandemic's impact on mental health: two in ten (20%) say they're looking forward to experiencing less stress and anxiety caused by COVID and its implications. Many are concerned about public healthcare and the people who keep it going, with nearly two in ten (17%) looking forward to reduced strain on the system and frontline healthcare workers.

Next in line is restarting the social activities that many Canadians have had to give up for the past year. One in four say what they're most looking forward to is dining in a restaurant without restrictions (26%) or being able to travel internationally (26%). Others are eagerly awaiting the return of festivals, concerts and events (14%), or attending live sporting events (6%).

On a day-to-day basis, Canadians are most likely to be looking forward to the return of organized leagues, hobbies, activities, clubs, gyms, community centres, or libraries (10%), being able to shop in person without curbside pick-up or capacity restrictions (7%), and going back into the office or place of work on a regular basis (3%). More than one in ten parents (12%), or 5% of Canadians overall, say that getting the kids back in school without restrictions is the aspect of post-pandemic life they're looking forward to the most.

<b>What are you most looking forward to once things return closer to normal? Please choose up to your top 3.</b>	
Not wearing a mask	36%
Being able to socialize with friends and have mixed-household gatherings	35%
Being able to gather indoors with my family	31%
Dining in a restaurant without restrictions	26%
Travelling internationally	26%
Being able to physically touch others (i.e. hug, kiss, etc.)	23%
Less stress and anxiety caused by COVID and its implications	20%
Seeing people's faces again (without a mask)	18%
Reduced strain on the healthcare system and frontline workers	17%
Attending festivals, concerts and events	14%

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The return of organized leagues, hobbies, activities, clubs, gyms, community centres, libraries, etc.	10%
Being able to shop in person without curbside pick-up, capacity restrictions, etc.	7%
Attending live sporting events	6%
Getting kids back in school without restrictions	5%
Being able to date, meet new people, etc.	4%
Going back into the office or place of work on a regular basis	3%
Some other thing	4%

Some interesting differences emerge by gender and age, suggesting that not all Canadians are looking forward to the same thing. For example:

- Those aged 55 and over are the most likely to be looking forward to **being able to physically touch others** (31%, vs. 20% of those 35-54 and 17% of those 18-34)
- Those 55+ are also more likely to want to **gather indoors with family** (39%, v. 16% of 18-34s);
- Those aged 18-34 are most likely to look forward to **being able to date** and meet new people (9%, vs. 3% of those 35-54 and 1% of those 55+)
- Younger Canadians are more eager to be rid of COVID **stress and anxiety** (27% 18-34, 21% 35-54, 13% 55+)
- Women are more likely than men to be looking forward to socializing with friends (41% vs. 28%) and travelling internationally (31% vs. 22%)



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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between March 2-3, 2021, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 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  $\pm 3.5$  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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