



FACTUM

Protecting Others Matters to Canadians, but Prevention Gaps Remain Ahead of Respiratory Illness Season.

Nearly half of Canadians report receiving none of the surveyed respiratory vaccines in the past year.

Montréal, QC, August 13, 2026 — A recent study conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Merck Canada reveals that while Canadians recognize the importance of protecting vulnerable individuals and family members from respiratory illness, many may be missing opportunities to take proactive steps ahead of the upcoming respiratory illness season. Helping protect vulnerable individuals in the community (54%) and helping protect older family members (48%) were among the leading reasons Canadians cited for receiving respiratory vaccines. Yet, nearly half (48%) of Canadians reported receiving none of the surveyed respiratory vaccines for influenza, COVID-19, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) or pneumococcal disease (PD) in the last 12 months, while almost two-thirds (64%) were unsure or unlikely to proactively discuss respiratory illnesses and prevention strategies with a healthcare professional in the next six months.

Awareness of respiratory illnesses remains uneven

While awareness of influenza and COVID-19 is nearly universal among Canadians (98% and 99%, respectively), familiarity is lower for RSV (71%) and pneumococcal disease (66%). These findings suggest there may be opportunities to improve understanding of lesser-known respiratory illnesses and available prevention options.

Respiratory illness can disrupt Canadians' personal and professional lives

Respiratory illnesses continue to affect Canadians' everyday lives. More than one-quarter of respondents (28%) reported experiencing disruptions to personal or professional plans due to respiratory illness in the past year. Among those affected, missing gatherings with friends and/or family (43%) and using paid sick leave (37%) were the most commonly reported consequences.

Canadians look to trusted healthcare sources for information

Family physicians, government health websites and pharmacists remain Canadians' most trusted sources of information about respiratory illnesses and vaccines. However, only about one-third (36%) say they are likely to proactively discuss respiratory illness prevention with a healthcare professional in the coming months, highlighting an opportunity to encourage more informed conversations ahead of respiratory illness season.

These are the results of only some of the questions covered in this survey. For more details on this study, please consult the complete report which is available for download on this page.





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About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between the 18th and 23rd of June 2026, on behalf of Merck. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadian adults aged 25 to 75 years was interviewed. Quotas and weighting were employed (age, gender and region) 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 ± 3.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 25 to 75 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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Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. Our 75 business solutions are based on primary data from our surveys, social media monitoring, and qualitative or observational techniques.

"Game Changers" – our tagline – summarizes our ambition to help our 5,000 clients navigate with confidence our rapidly changing world.

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