

## COVID-19: Three-in-five worry about side-effects of a vaccine; many plan to take a 'wait and see' approach

*While some are hesitant to get vaccine, four-in-five say they would do it to protect their family*

**August 4, 2020** – Health experts have warned a true post-COVID-19 “return to normal” – resumption of life that includes large gatherings, international travel, and no longer measuring one’s social life by a ‘bubble’ – may not occur until long after a critical mass of Canadians receive a yet-to-be developed vaccine.

When and if a coronavirus vaccine becomes widely available in Canada remains unknown, but debate and discussion over who should get it first, whether vaccination should be mandatory, and worries about potential side effects are already permeating the public sphere.

The latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians largely unified in intention to be vaccinated but divided over how soon they’d avail themselves of the dose.

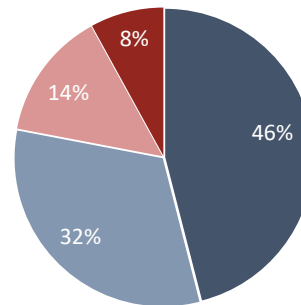
Half of Canadians say they have no reservations and are ready to get a vaccination as soon as it becomes available. However, one-in-three (32%) say they would likely wait a while.

One characteristic that divides these two groups is worry over potential side effects from a new and potentially quickly developed immunization. The majority of those who say they will wait to get the vaccine also say they are worried about side effects (76%). By contrast, among those who are eager to get it, half as many (37%) carry that concern.

### More Key Findings:

- Three-quarters of Canadians say that a coronavirus vaccine should be mandatory in extended care homes and for healthcare workers. Three-in-five say this of schools (63%).

**If a vaccine against the coronavirus became available to you, would you get vaccinated, or not?**



- Yes, I would get a vaccination as soon as one became available to me
- Yes, I would eventually get a vaccination, but would wait a while first
- No, I would not get a coronavirus vaccination
- Not sure

### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from July 23 – 24, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,519 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- The vast majority of Canadians say that life will not go back to normal in their community until people are vaccinated. This drops to 59 per cent among rural residents but rises to 77 per cent among urbanites.
- Those who supported the Liberals or New Democrats in the 2019 election are overwhelmingly in favour of seeking vaccination – nine-in-ten say they will do so. This drops to three-in-five among past CPC voters.

### **About ARI**

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

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#### **Part One: Anticipated timelines**

Controlled, clinical trials for coronavirus vaccinations are at different stages across the globe. According to the [WHO's most recent reports](#), there are 25 candidate vaccines worldwide in clinical evaluation – [five of which](#) are in the third and final stage of clinical trials. Vaccines that pass this third phase could become available as early as [the end of the year](#). Canada has authorized two candidate vaccines [for clinical trials](#) in the country, though neither have passed the first phase.

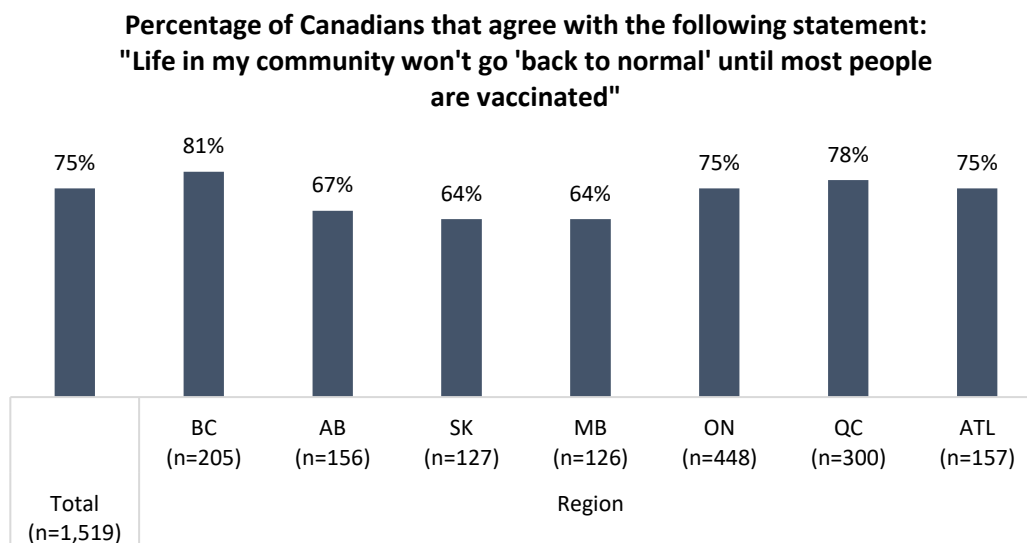
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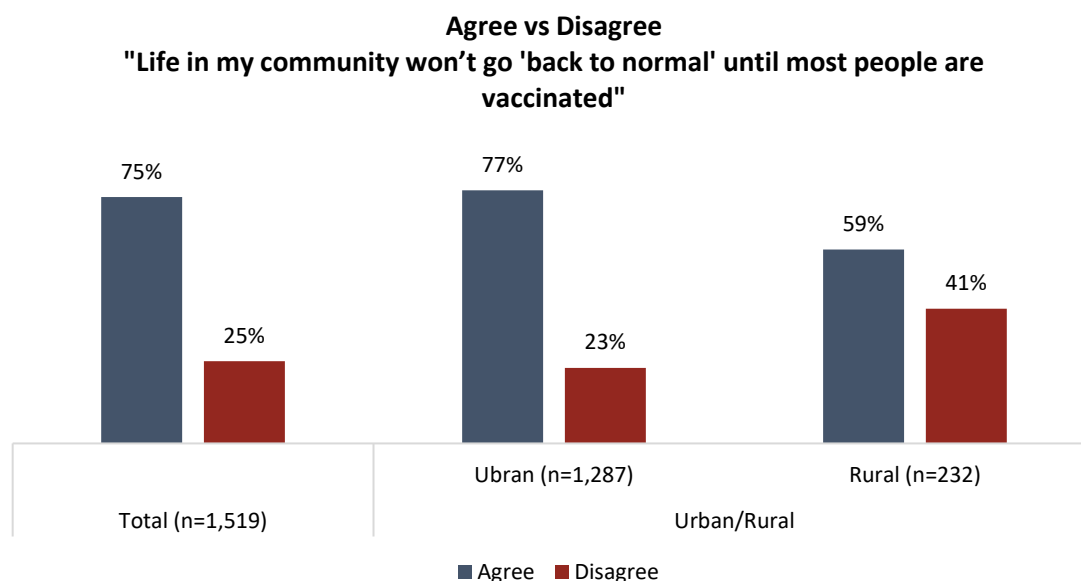
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### Getting back to normal

The importance of a vaccine for COVID-19 is clear to many Canadians. Three-quarters say that they do not feel life in their community will get back to normal until most people are vaccinated. There are regional differences on this question, with agreement dropping to 64 per cent in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and rising to 81 per cent in B.C.:



This regional division may be partially explained by urban-rural population splits in some provinces. Fewer Canadians living in rural areas say their part of the country will not be back to what it was until a vaccine is found and distributed, compared to those living in urban settings:



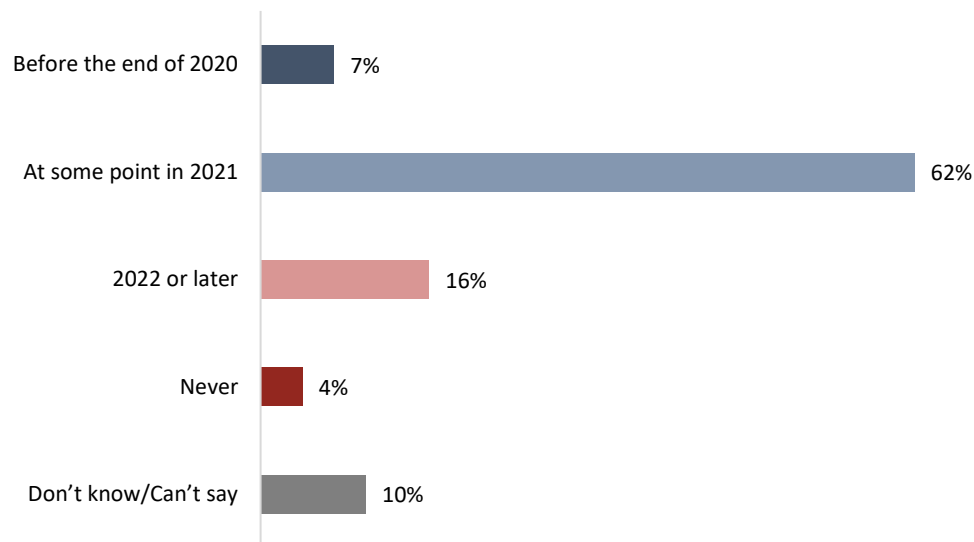
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### **When Canadians expect a vaccine to be available**

If a vaccine is necessary to get back to normal in the view of most Canadians, few expect that to happen in 2020. Just seven per cent say they expect a vaccine to be available by the end of the year, while the majority expect it to happen in 2021:

**When do you personally think such a vaccine against the coronavirus would be widely available to the public?  
(All respondents, n=1,519)**



### **Part Two: Willingness to be vaccinated**

#### **Most say they'd vaccinate – now or later**

Estimates differ, but according to the Mayo Clinic, approximately 70 per cent of a given population would need to become immune to COVID-19, through either vaccination or as a result of previous infection, to stop the epidemic.

Overall, nearly half of Canadians (46%) say they will get a vaccination as quickly as possible if it becomes available. Another one-in-three (32%) say they are willing to be vaccinated but not immediately. Fewer, but still a significant one-in-seven (14%), say that they will not get a vaccine in addition to eight per cent who say they are not sure.

Notably, there are no major differences on this question by age or gender demographics. At least two-in-five from all cohorts are ready for a day one vaccine. That said, men are more likely than women to say no outright when compared across all age groups:

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If a vaccine against the coronavirus became available, would you get vaccinated, or not?							
	Total (n=1,519)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=206)	35-54 (n=252)	55+ (n=271)	18-34 (n=223)	35-54 (n=273)	55+ (n=293)
Yes, I would get a vaccination as soon as one became available to me	46%	48%	46%	48%	45%	40%	48%
Yes, I would eventually get a vaccination, but would wait a while first	32%	32%	28%	30%	36%	33%	31%
No, I would not get a coronavirus vaccination	14%	15%	21%	16%	7%	13%	12%
Not sure	8%	6%	5%	6%	11%	13%	9%

### Regional variance

If the target threshold for an immune population is around 70 per cent, many Canadian provinces may have to work to convince residents to vaccinate. British Columbia and Ontario residents are most inclined, with at least four-in-five willing to be vaccinated, while rates in other provinces are below that level. Fewer (64%) of Saskatchewan residents say they would get a vaccine for COVID-19:

If a vaccine against the coronavirus became available, would you get vaccinated, or not?								
	Total (n=1,519)	Region						
		BC (n=205)	AB (n=156)	SK (n=127)	MB (n=126)	ON (n=448)	QC (n=300)	ATL (n=157)
Yes, I would get a vaccination as soon as one became available to me	46%	52%	41%	33%	44%	46%	47%	44%
Yes, I would eventually get a vaccination, but would wait a while first	32%	30%	30%	31%	32%	35%	29%	34%
No, I would not get a coronavirus vaccination	14%	10%	22%	20%	17%	13%	14%	11%

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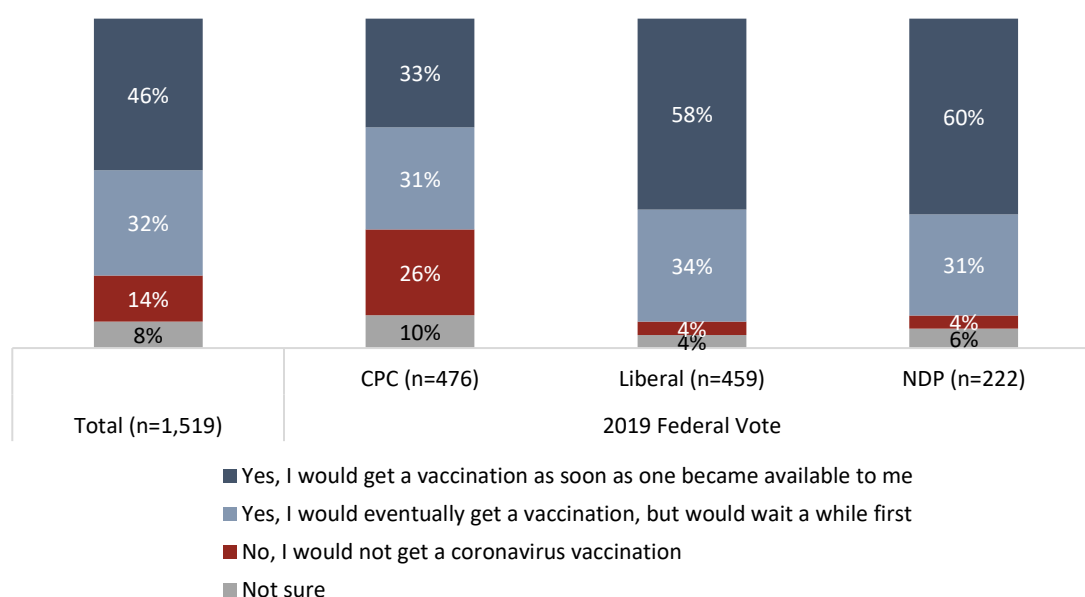
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Not sure	8%	9%	7%	16%	8%	6%	10%	11%
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### Part Three: Factors driving willingness

Mindsets are varied across other population demographics as well. One of the major dividing factors is political. Vaccination willingness hovers around nine-in-ten for those who supported the Liberal Party and NDP in the last federal election, while it drops to 64 per cent among those who supported the CPC:

#### If a vaccine against the coronavirus became available, would you get vaccinated, or not?



To further explore these differences, the Angus Reid Institute presented respondents with a series of statements and asked whether they agreed or disagreed. Most aspects of this discussion generate considerable agreement across age and gender, education, and income levels ([see detailed tables for more information](#)). There is, however, a persistent force for division: political ideology.

#### Ideological disagreement?

With every statement presented, past Conservative voters differ, at least to some extent, with past Liberal and NDP supporters. CPC voters are more likely to worry about side effects from the vaccine, be concerned about contracting COVID-19 from it, and doubt its effectiveness.

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If a vaccine against the coronavirus became available, would you get vaccinated, or not?				
	Total (n=1,519)	Federal vote 2019		
		CPC (n=476)	Liberal (n=459)	NDP (n=222)
It is vital that people with chronic health conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, get vaccinated	87%	78%	96%	94%
We should listen to doctors who recommend vaccines	84%	72%	95%	95%
I would get a vaccine to protect my family	82%	69%	93%	91%
Life in my community won't go "back to normal" until most people are vaccinated	75%	59%	90%	88%
I'd be concerned about side effects from a coronavirus vaccine	61%	71%	52%	53%
I'd be concerned about getting infected with the coronavirus from a vaccine	23%	30%	14%	16%
A coronavirus vaccine won't be effective	23%	31%	12%	12%
The coronavirus outbreak is not as serious as some people say it is	23%	43%	8%	5%
I wouldn't have time to get a COVID-19 vaccine	9%	11%	5%	6%

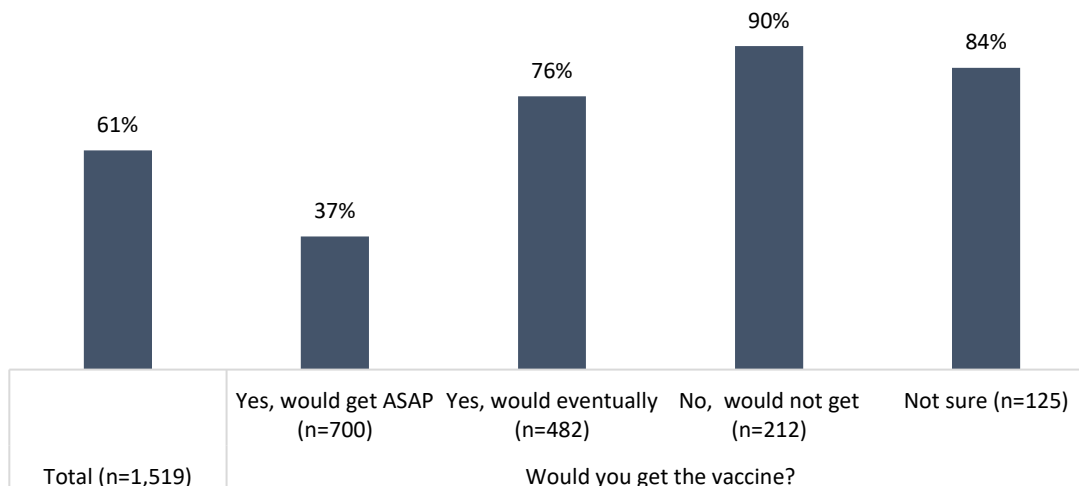
### Side effects

While there are protocols and safeguards built into the trial stage before a vaccine product can get to market, concerns about the side effects of a coronavirus vaccine are pervasive. Overall, three-in-five Canadians (61%) share these concerns. This proportion is lower among those who say they would get the vaccine right away (37%), but reaches three-quarters (76%) among those who want to wait and see before getting vaccinated:

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**Percentage of Canadians that agree with the following statement:  
"I would be concerned about side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine"**

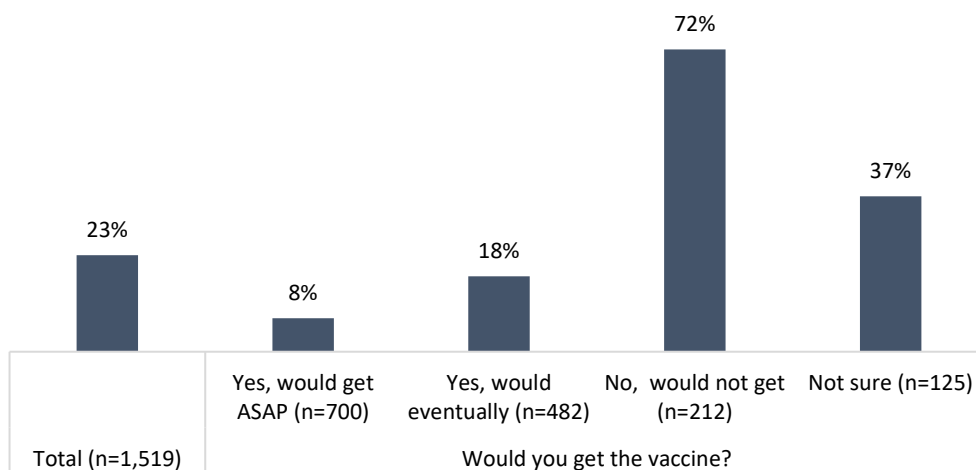


**Effectiveness**

Ultimately, some Canadians have another major question that will only be answered with time and research: will the vaccine work?

A significant segment – one-quarter of respondents – say a vaccine will not be effective. These responses are relatively stable across age and gender, but differ greatly when compared by a person’s willingness to be vaccinated:

**Percentage of Canadians that agree with the following statement:  
"A coronavirus vaccine won't be effective"**



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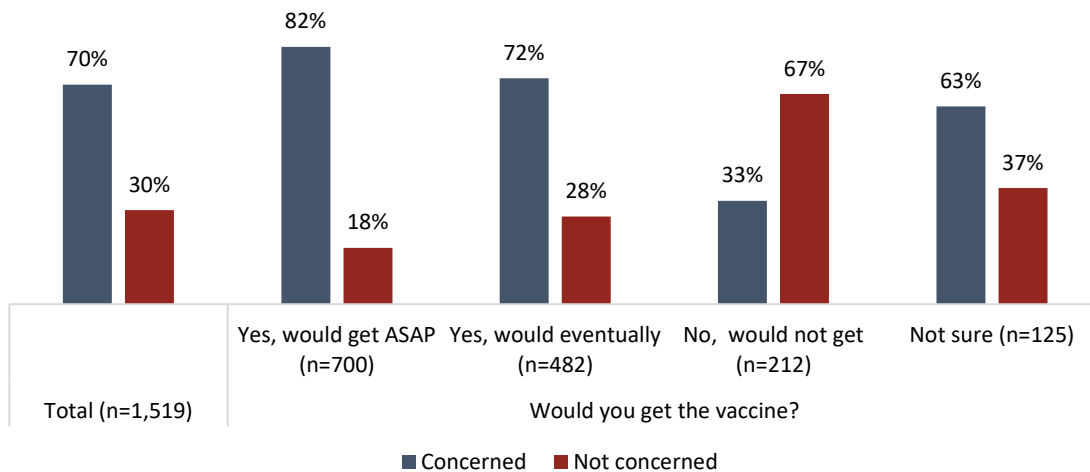
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**Community**

Levels of concern about the impact of COVID-19 on one’s community differ greatly within these ‘willingness to be vaccinated’ groups. Overall, 70 per cent of Canadians worry people in their community may become ill with COVID-19. Among those who are willing to be vaccinated right away, concern rises to four-in-five (82%). On the other end of the spectrum, two-thirds (67%) of those who are unwilling to be vaccinated are not concerned about people in their community:

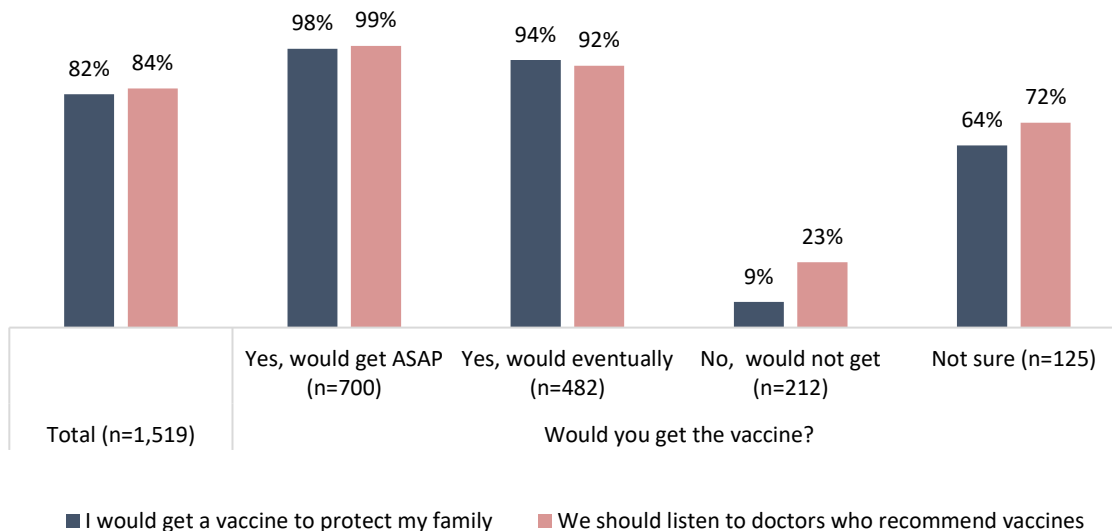
**Concern about community members becoming sick with COVID-19, compared by willingness to be vaccinated**



**Canadians trust doctors, want to protect their families**

More key factors for those willing to be vaccinated: trust in doctors and a desire to protect their families:

**Percentage who say they would be vaccinated to protect their family or that we should listen to doctors - by willingness to be vaccinated**



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**Part Four: Attitudes surrounding COVID-19 vaccination**

**Where should it be mandatory?**

Canadians differ over the places or situations in which being vaccinated should be mandatory, if at all. Support is highest for mandatory vaccination of healthcare workers and those working in or visiting extended care homes. In each case, three-quarters feel it is necessary. A majority say this about schools, while half of Canadians back mandatory vaccination to access more broadly used spaces such as restaurants and shopping centres, or to attend large public gatherings. One-in-six say vaccination shouldn't be mandatory in any of these places:

If a coronavirus vaccine does become available, in which of these scenarios or places, if any, do you think a vaccination should be mandatory?							
	Total (n=1,519)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=206)	35-54 (n=252)	55+ (n=271)	18-34 (n=223)	35-54 (n=273)	55+ (n=293)
For healthcare workers	76%	74%	72%	73%	77%	75%	84%
In extended care homes	76%	72%	73%	74%	76%	75%	82%
Schools	63%	62%	56%	64%	65%	61%	68%
At workplaces (job sites, offices, restaurants, etc.)	52%	46%	45%	55%	48%	46%	68%
Public events or large gatherings (concerts, events with 50+ people, etc.)	47%	45%	43%	50%	51%	39%	54%
Other	8%	5%	5%	10%	4%	5%	15%
None of the above	16%	17%	21%	16%	14%	22%	11%

**Some of those who won't get vaccinated support mandatory vaccines for others**

Notably, those who would get vaccinated overwhelmingly say that people in high risk areas like healthcare and extended care should have to be vaccinated as well. However, this is a similarity they share with one-quarter of those who *would not* get vaccinated themselves. In fact, 37 per cent of those who would not get vaccinated say that immunization should be mandatory in other parts of society.

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If a coronavirus vaccine does become available, in which of these scenarios or places, if any, do you think a vaccination should be mandatory?					
	Total (n=1,519)	Would you get vaccinated for COVID-19?			
		Yes, would get ASAP (n=700)	Yes, would eventually (n=482)	No, would not get (n=212)	Not sure (n=125)
For healthcare workers	76%	92%	79%	25%	58%
In extended care homes	76%	91%	79%	29%	54%
Schools	63%	83%	64%	11%	33%
At workplaces (job sites, offices, restaurants, etc.)	52%	72%	50%	9%	24%
Public events or large gatherings (concerts, events with 50+ people, etc.)	47%	66%	42%	7%	24%
Other	8%	11%	7%	3%	2%
None of the above	16%	2%	13%	63%	33%

*For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).*

*For detailed results by willingness to get a COVID-19 vaccine, [click here](#).*

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