

## Vacillate or Vaccinate? Fewer than half of Canadians say they'd get a COVID-19 inoculation as soon as possible

*Number of Canadians indicating they'd seek vaccination ASAP drops seven points since mid-summer*

**October 2, 2020** – For hundreds of millions around the world – and here in Canada – the arrival and wide distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine represents a tantalizing return to the lives they lived before the pandemic.

But new data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds fewer than half of Canadians (39%) say they'd seek to be vaccinated as soon as one was widely available. Just as many say they'd be willing to take a vaccine, but would want to wait first (38%), while the rest are split between taking a solid anti-vaccination stance (16%) and indecision (7%).

For public health officials, these data may represent a worrisome shift in direction on the part of Canadians: in late July, when ARI first canvassed Canadians on this issue, close to half (46%) said they would get a vaccine as soon as they could.

Notably, respondents in Alberta and Quebec – the two Canadian regions with the highest per capita cases of COVID-19 infection – are not only among the most resistant to

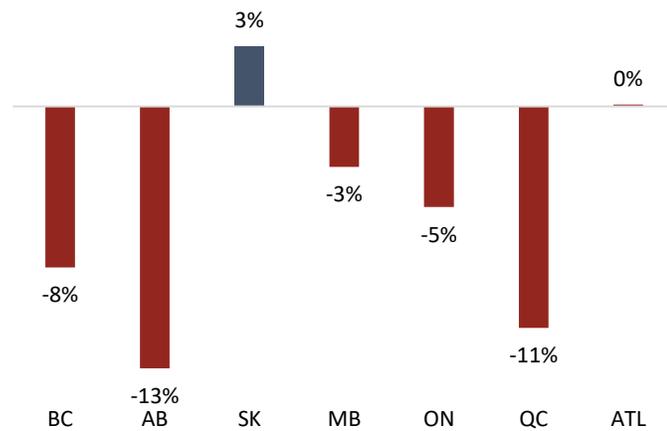
vaccination, but also more likely to have entrenched their stance since the summer. In Alberta, the proportion of residents considering vaccination as soon as possible dropped 13 points from July; in Quebec, this proportion has declined 11 percentage points. Much of this may be driven by fear of possible side effects, which seven-in-ten (69%) Canadians agree would concern them. Albertans are the most worried, with eight-in-ten (79%) saying they would be concerned.

On the other hand, another key aspect of virus mitigation has increased greatly over the same two-month period. More than four-in-five Canadians (84%) now say they are wearing a mask always or most of the time when around others in public. This is up nearly 30 points from July.

### More Key Findings:

- Two-in-five (41%) of those who would immediately get a vaccine say they would be worried about side effects. Concern about this is much higher, and likely a crucial sticking point, among those

**Change in willingness to be vaccinated as soon as COVID-19 vaccine available - between July 25 and September 25**



### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from September 23-25, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,660 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.

### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

who would get a vaccine only after waiting (84%) and those who do not intend to ever be vaccinated (92%).

- Provincial governments generally receive high marks for their testing procedures. Three-quarters of Canadians say their province is going a good job, with Quebec lowest (70%) and Atlantic Canada highest (91%).
- Perceptions of the messaging from premiers is more variable. Albertans and Manitobans are far more critical of the communication they have received from provincial leadership regarding COVID-19 than residents in British Columbia, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada.

### **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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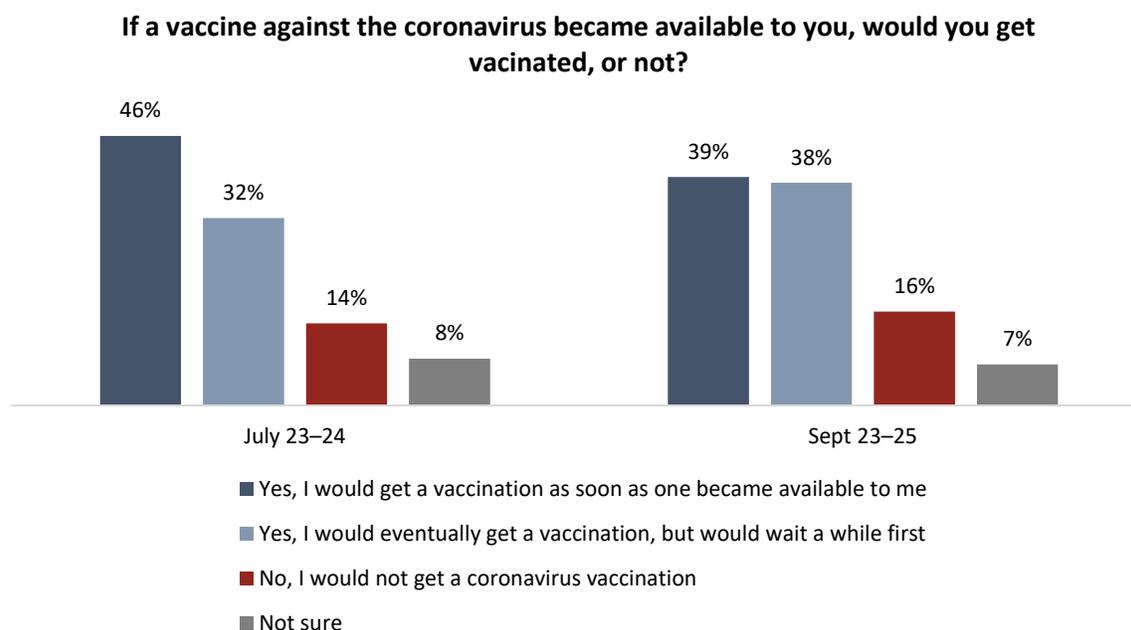
**Part One: To vaccinate or wait?**

**Early adopter group shrinks, more will wait and see**

The federal government recently announced it had signed a deal with pharmaceutical companies Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline to secure more than 70 million doses of a future COVID-19 vaccine. It also came to agreement with Pfizer, Moderna, Johnson & Johnson and Novavax. Yet these negotiations are not necessarily capturing the attention of a significant segment of the country. While 41 per cent say they feel the government has done a good job securing sufficient doses for the country, the most common response from Canadians (46%) is that they don't know enough to say ([see detailed tables](#)).

A more pertinent question for the federal government may be: how will they convince Canadians to take the doses?

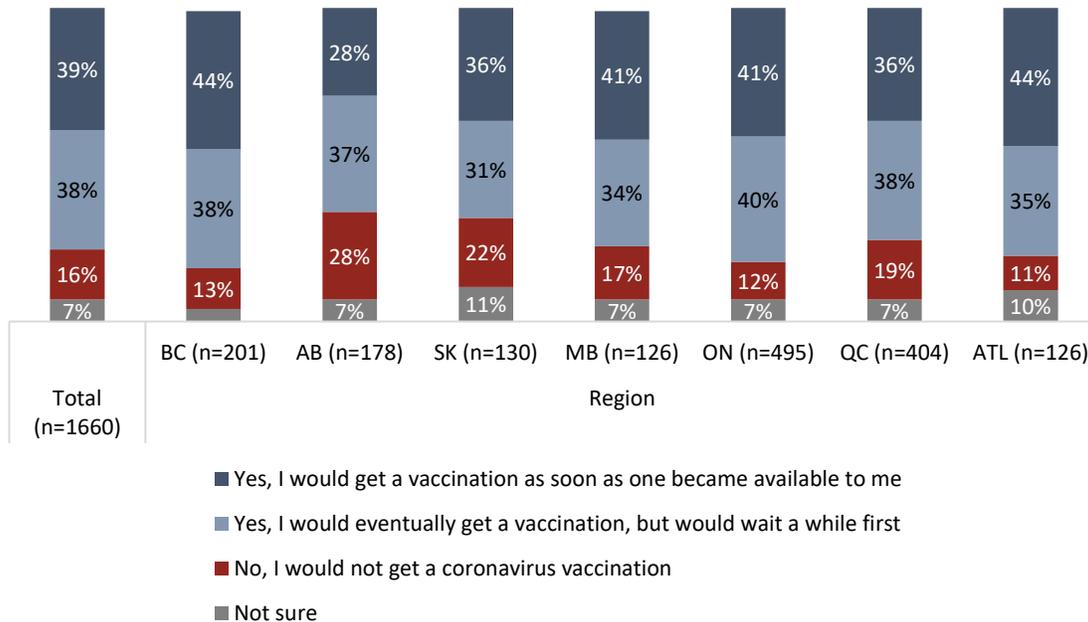
Asked about their own willingness to vaccinate, just two-in-five say they're comfortable being inoculated as soon as they are able to. The same number say they would eventually inoculate themselves, but only after waiting. This represents a shift in opinion from two months ago, when nearly half (46%) were willing to be at the front of the line for a vaccine. Notably, the number who are unwilling or unsure has not changed during this period:



**At least one-in-five in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, unwilling to vaccinate**

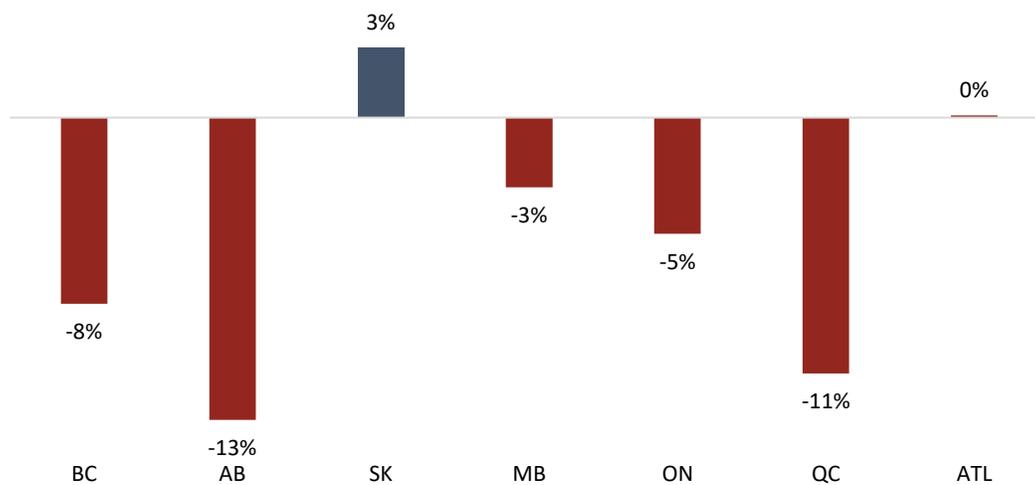
The regional story varies considerably. British Columbians and Atlantic Canadians are most likely to be willing to inoculate early, while Alberta residents show the most resistance to any vaccination:

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



The two regions with the highest per capita case counts in the country, Alberta, and Quebec, are not only among the most resistant to vaccination, but are also the two that have moved further in that direction between July and September:

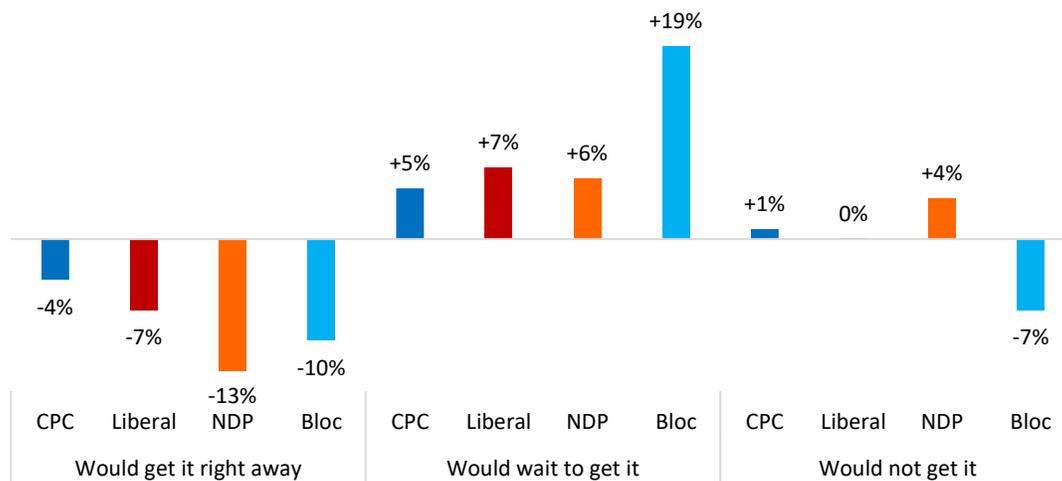
**Change in willingness to be vaccinated as soon as COVID19 vaccine available - between July 25 and September 25**



**Hesitancy grows across the political spectrum**

Those who supported the Conservative Party in the past federal election remain much less willing to be vaccinated. One-quarter (27%) of CPC voters say they would not get a vaccine for COVID-19, compared to four per cent of past Liberal voters and eight per cent of past NDP voters ([see detailed tables](#)). That said, there has been movement away from immediate vaccination and toward waiting among supporters of each of the major federal parties, particularly among the Bloc Quebecois:

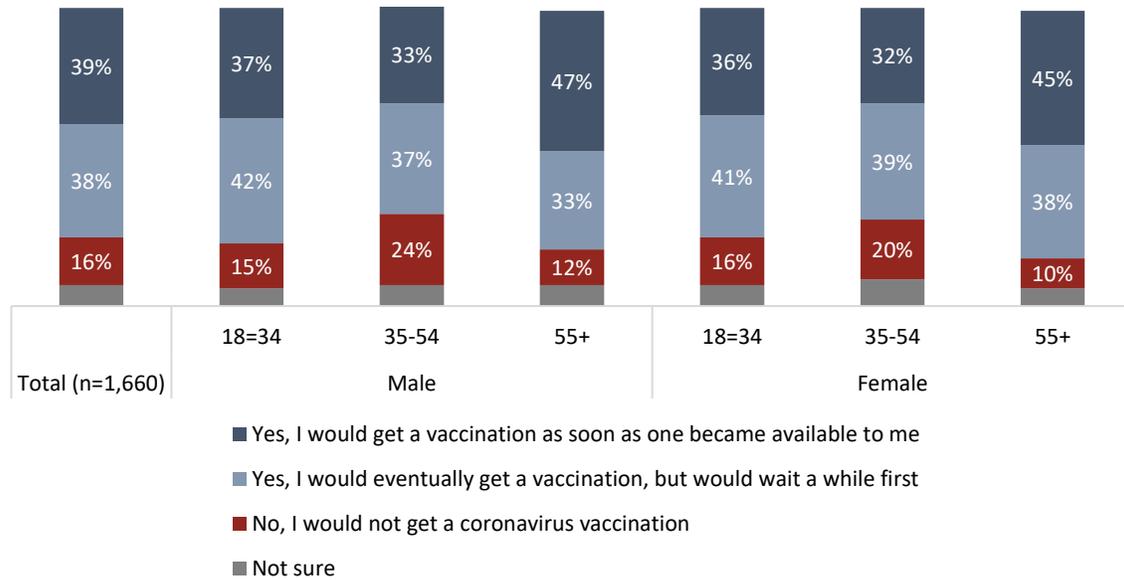
**Change in willingness to get COVID19 vaccine - beteen July 25 and September 25**



**Older Canadians most willing to vaccinate, but many still want to wait**

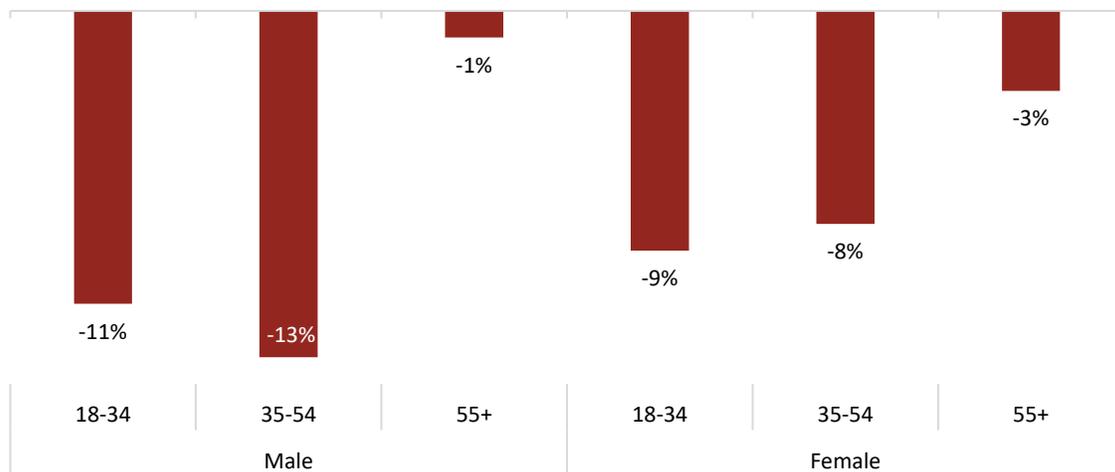
Older women and men are considerably more likely to be ready for an early inoculation. This is perhaps unsurprising, as the virus has proven more dangerous among this segment of the population.

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



By contrast, significant numbers of younger Canadians have in the last two months shifted away from wanting an immediate vaccination:

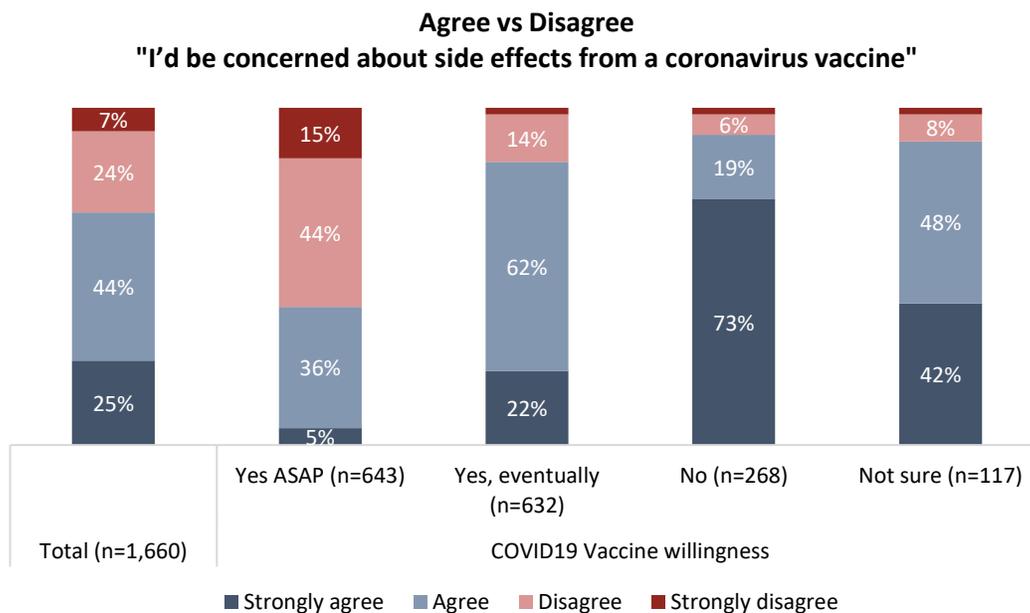
**Change in willingness to be vaccinated as soon as COVID-19 vaccine available - between July 25 and September 25**



**What is driving unwillingness?**

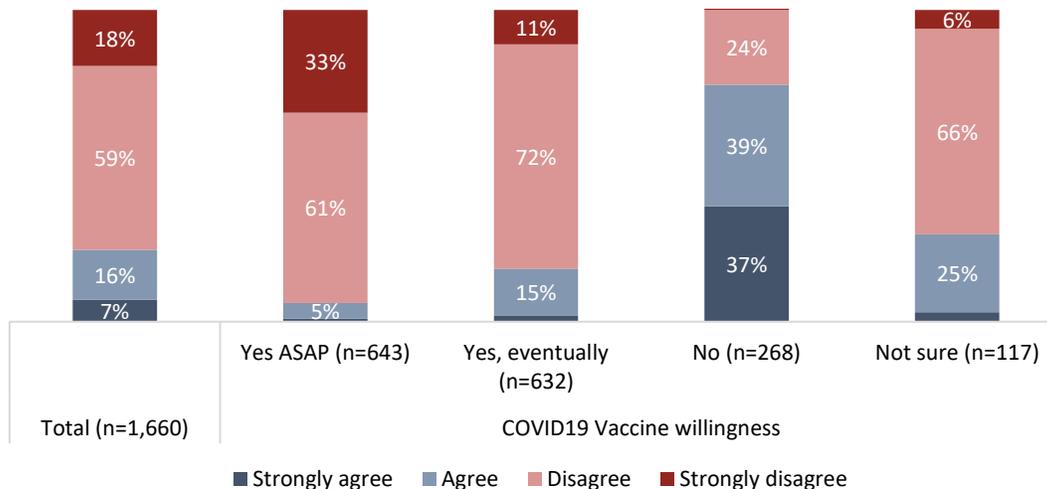
A number of factors help explain why Canadians are voicing more hesitancy towards COVID-19 vaccination.

One of the most prevalent concerns among both later adopters and those unwilling to get the vaccine centres on potential side effects. Overall, 69 per cent of Canadians are worried about this. That proportion drops below a majority for those who will inoculate as soon as possible but appears to be a major worry for those are on the fence and opposed. This is precisely what large-scale controlled trials are designed to study and identify, before the vaccine goes out for mass distribution:



Vaccine opponents are largely alone on their skepticism of a potential vaccine's effectiveness. While three-quarters of that group doubt that the vaccine will work, both early and late adopters disagree with this notion:

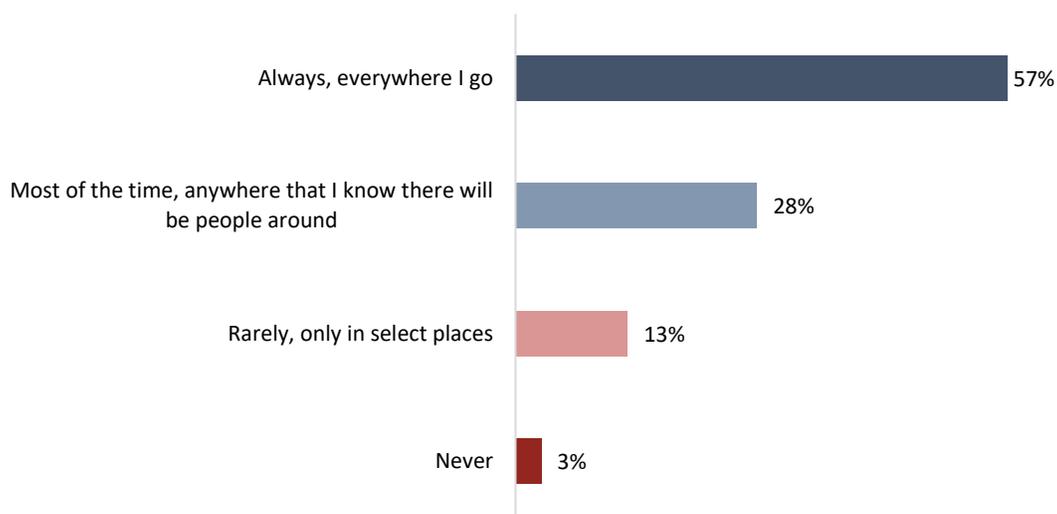
**Agree vs Disagree:  
"A coronavirus vaccine won't be effective"**



**Part Two: Vast Majority say they're regularly wearing masks**

For the vast majority of Canadians, "masking up" is becoming a regular part of life. Most (57%) say they wear a mask whenever they know they won't be able to socially distance. Only three per cent say they never wear one. Notably, [in July](#) when the Angus Reid Institute asked a similar version of this question, just 20 per cent were always wearing one in public, compared to 57 per cent now:

**During the past few weeks, how frequently, if at all, have you worn a facemask in public places where you're not able to social distance due to the COVID-19 outbreak?**



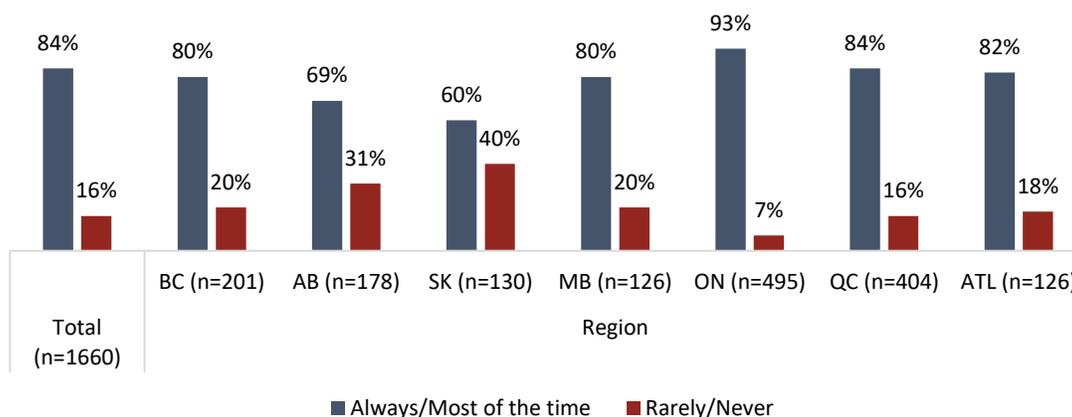
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**Demographic inconsistencies**

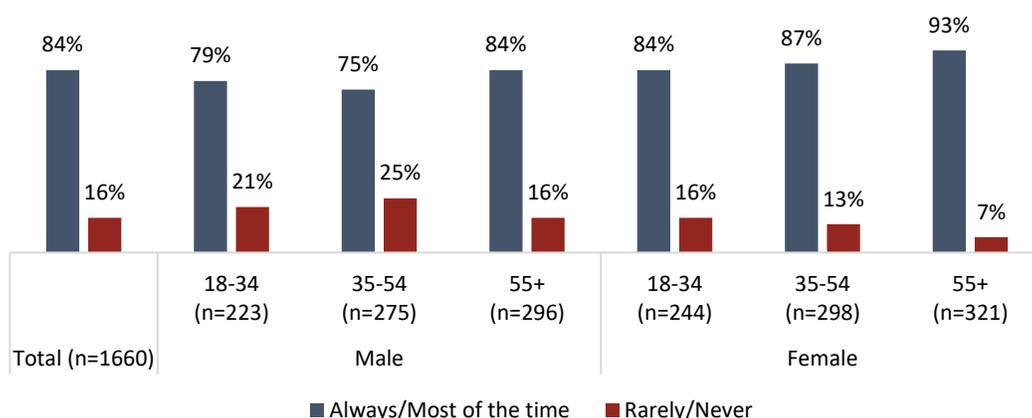
The story of mask adoption isn't a consistent one nationally. Ontario, with its large population, can skew the regional story, given that nearly all respondents say they are wearing their mask most or all of the time (93%). By contrast, 31 per cent of Albertans and 40 per cent of Saskatchewan residents say they do not wear a mask when they can't keep distance:

**During the past few weeks, how frequently, if at all, have you worn a facemask in public places where you're not able to social distance due to the COVID-19 outbreak?**



Men under the age of 55 are least likely to be wearing their mask consistently, but at least three-quarters of all age and gender groups say that they are doing so more than half the time:

**During the past few weeks, how frequently, if at all, have you worn a facemask in public places where you're not able to social distance due to the COVID-19 outbreak?**



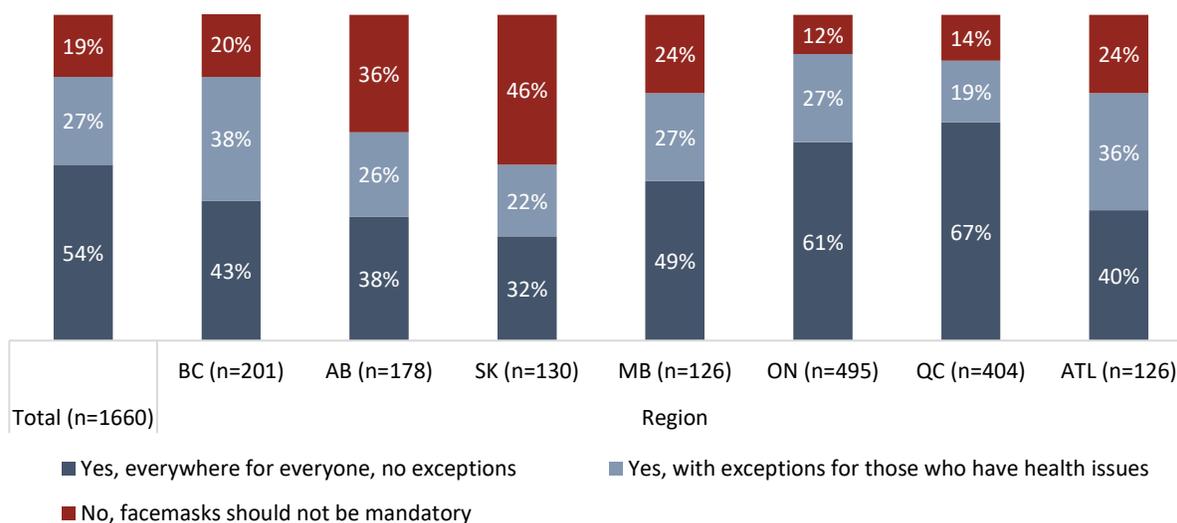
Why not wear a mask whenever you can't social distance? Among the 16 per cent of Canadians who don't, the answer often lies in the banality of learning a new habit: they forget (25%). Others say they

don't wear masks because they're not worried about contracting COVID-19 (23%), find masks uncomfortable (23%) or believe they aren't effective (21%) ([see detailed tables](#)).

### **Should masks be mandatory in your city?**

Overall, one-in-five Canadians (19%) do not support any form of mandatory mask policy in their city. This rises to 46 per cent in Saskatchewan, and drops to just 12 per cent in Ontario and 14 per cent in Quebec, where mask mandates have become more common:

**Regardless of how your city is handling it so far, would you say that masks should or should not be mandatory in all indoor public spaces where you live?**



### **Part Three: COVID-19 testing**

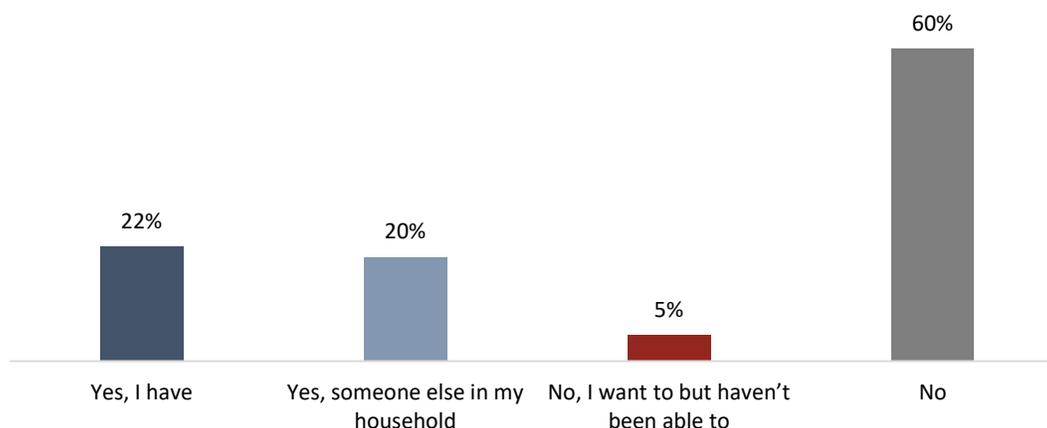
To date, [more than 7.3 million](#) tests have been administered in Canada, with more than 150,000 people testing positive. As a portion of the total Canadian population, that is approximately one-in-five.

The Angus Reid Institute data closely tracks with this proportion, finding that among the adult population, 22 per cent say they have been tested, and 40 per cent of households say they have had someone tested.

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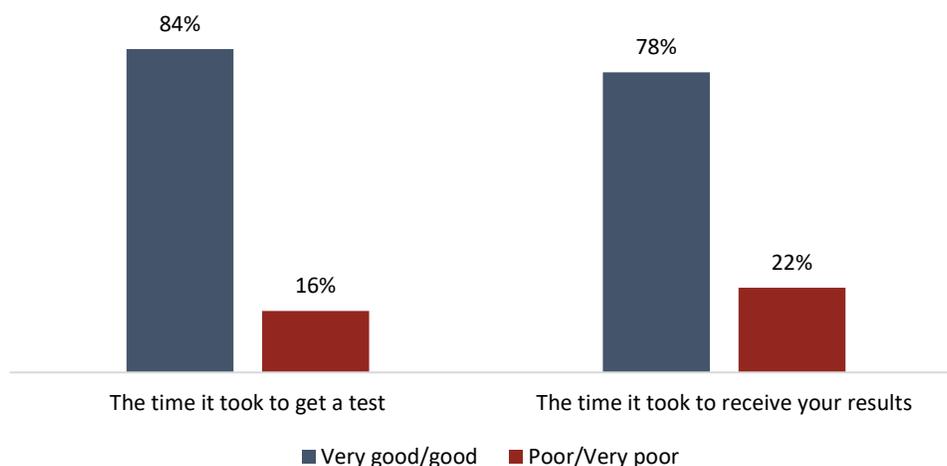
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**Have you or anyone in your household been tested for COVID-19?**  
All respondents, n=1,660



Despite many pandemic challenges, testing procedures appear to be relatively well received. More than four-in-five (84%) Canadians who have been tested say that the time it took to get the test was acceptable. A similar proportion say the same of the time that it took to receive their results – though slightly more were dissatisfied with the time it took to receive the results.

**Overall, how would you describe each of the following...?**  
(Among those who had a test themselves or had someone in the household tested, n=584)



**Clarity of messaging from premiers**

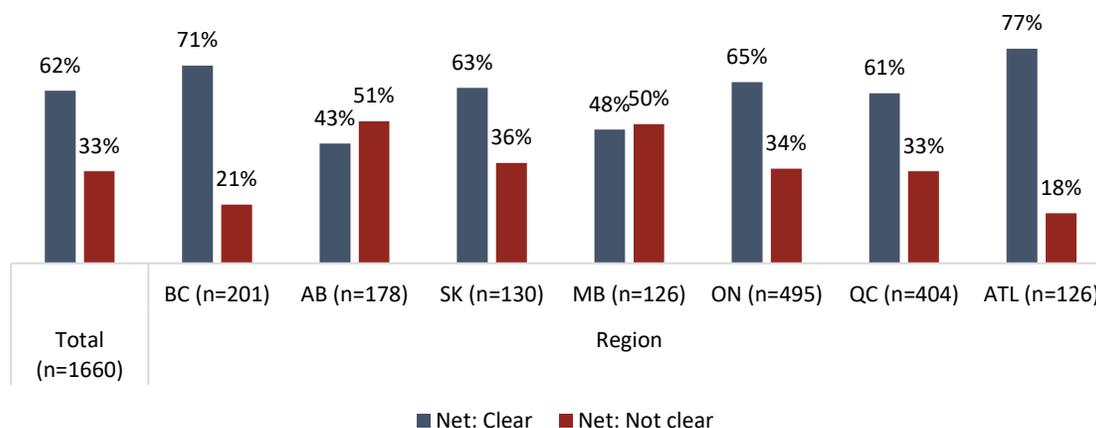
Nationally, nearly two-thirds (62%) have found the information and directions given about COVID-19 by their premier to be clear, while one-third say the opposite. There are significant regional variations, with

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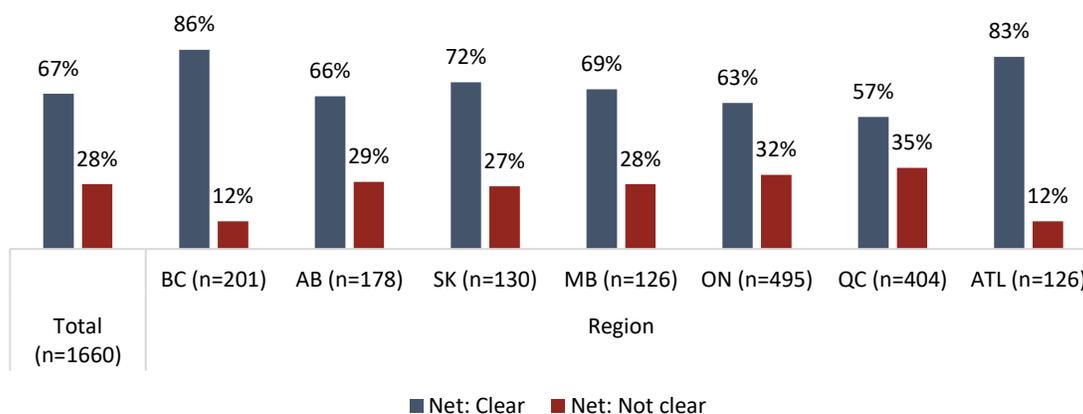
those in Manitoba split on the issue, and Albertans more likely to say their premier has been unclear (51%) rather than clear (43%).

**Thinking about the information, guidance, and directions that have been given about COVID-19 from your provincial premier, would you say it has been clear or unclear?**



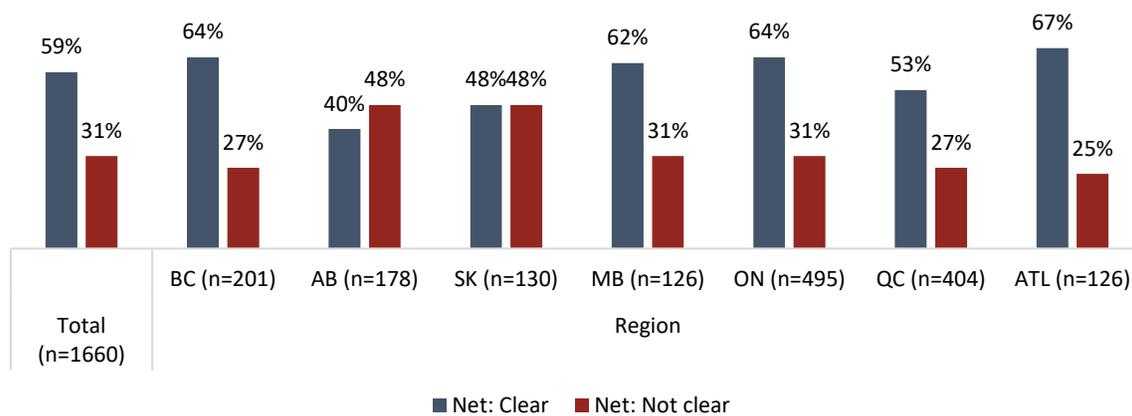
Canadians are slightly more likely to say their provincial health officers have provided clear communication than their premiers, with two-thirds (67%) saying messaging has been clear and 28 per cent saying it has been unclear. These proportions are nearly the same in both Alberta and Manitoba, standing in contrast to perceptions of messaging by the premiers there. The health officers of British Columbia and the Atlantic region received particularly high marks, with over four-in-five residents receiving this messaging loud and clear.

**Thinking about the information, guidance, and directions that have been given about COVID-19 from your provincial health officer, would you say it has been clear or unclear?**



By comparison to provincial COVID-19 messaging, Canadians appear more confused by communications from Teresa Tam, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, though a majority (59%) still say they have been clear. Opinions of her messaging also vary quite a bit by region, with about half (48%) of both Albertans and Manitobans saying her communications have been unclear ([see detailed tables](#)).

**Thinking about the information, guidance, and directions that have been given about COVID-19 from Canada's Chief Public Health Officer Teresa Tam, would you say it has been clear or unclear?**



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