

Pfizer, Moderna & Meh: Highly effective COVID-19 vaccines don't impact Canadian desire for immunization

Canadians no more, no less willing to be vaccinated against novel coronavirus than two months ago

November 20, 2020 – Markets soared and optimism surged when Pfizer [announced](#) its COVID-19 vaccine trials have yielded 90 per cent effectiveness at preventing the virus. Subsequent [announcements](#) by Moderna and a Russian research team are bolstering the first glimpses of what may be the end game for a pandemic that has ravaged the world for more than eight months.

But the latest data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians no more willing to avail themselves of a COVID-19 vaccine than they were two months ago. Indeed, they are *less* willing to get one as soon as possible than in July, when the development and success of a vaccine was far from certain.

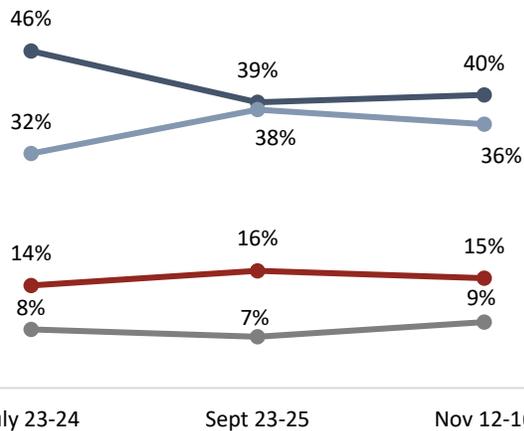
Two-in-five say they would get inoculated as soon as possible (40%). Close to the same number are more cautious, saying they would wait for others to go first and immunize later (36%). A consistent 15 per cent of Canadians say they will not get vaccinated, while one-in-ten (9%) are unsure. These numbers are essentially unchanged from mid-summer.

While clinical trials for vaccine candidates continue and distribution plans expand, provincial governments continue to deal with the challenge of record high case numbers in their municipalities. Amid this, most Canadians continue to say that their provincial government is doing a good job of handling the pandemic. Residents are most positive in Atlantic Canada (91%), British Columbia (76%) and Quebec (73%). That said, just 37 per cent of Manitobans and 50 per cent of Albertans say their government is performing well. Further, three-in-five Ontario residents say this of the Ford government in Ontario, compared to 76 per cent in August.

More Key Findings:

- Seven-in-ten (68%) Canadians say they are personally concerned about contracting COVID-19. This is statistically unchanged from late-September and remains close to peak levels from the past ten months of tracking.

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



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from November 12 - 16, 2020 among a representative randomized sample of 1,578 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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- Half of Canadians (48%) say restrictions in their province should be stronger. This rises to 63 per cent in B.C. and 57 per cent in Ontario. Residents in Quebec and Atlantic Canada are most likely to say their government has hit the right mark.
- One-in-four Alberta and Saskatchewan residents say they do not plan on getting vaccinated for COVID-19 (25%). Just 10 per cent of Atlantic Canadians and 13 per cent of British Columbians say this.

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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Concern levels remain high

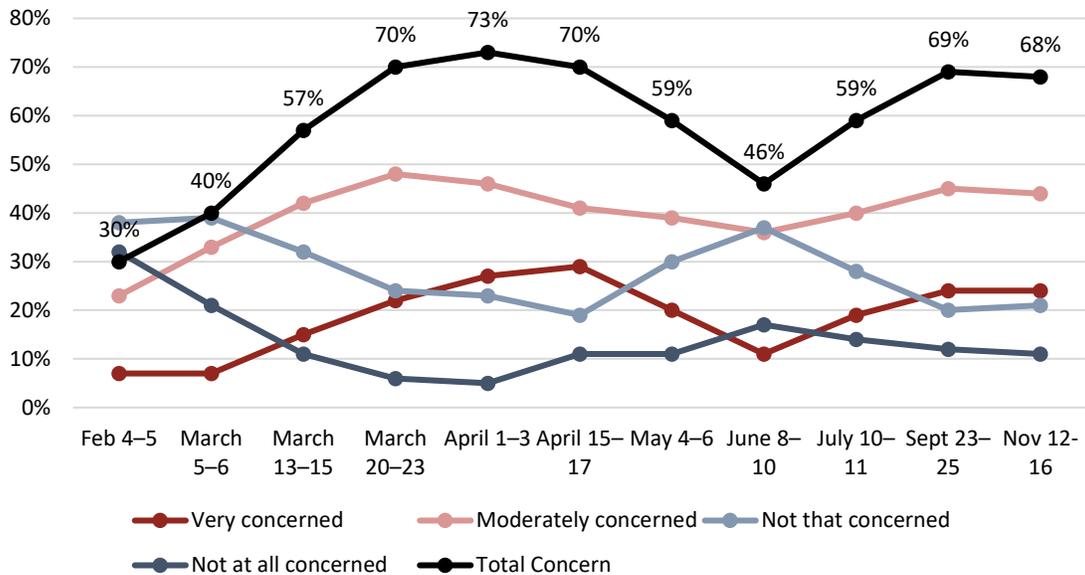
Canadians were told in the summer to prepare for a second wave and to be increasingly careful as temperatures dropped, in order to offset the potential rise in cases of COVID-19. Currently, the country is facing a seven-day average of more than [4,000 new cases](#) of the virus each day, well over double the peak rate in the initial spring surge.

As cases dropped over the summer, so too did concern among the population regarding sickness. The subsequent increase beginning in early September has engendered a return to anxiety for many. Seven-in-ten Canadians say they are worried about becoming sick now, a level on par with the initial crest of concern levels in April:

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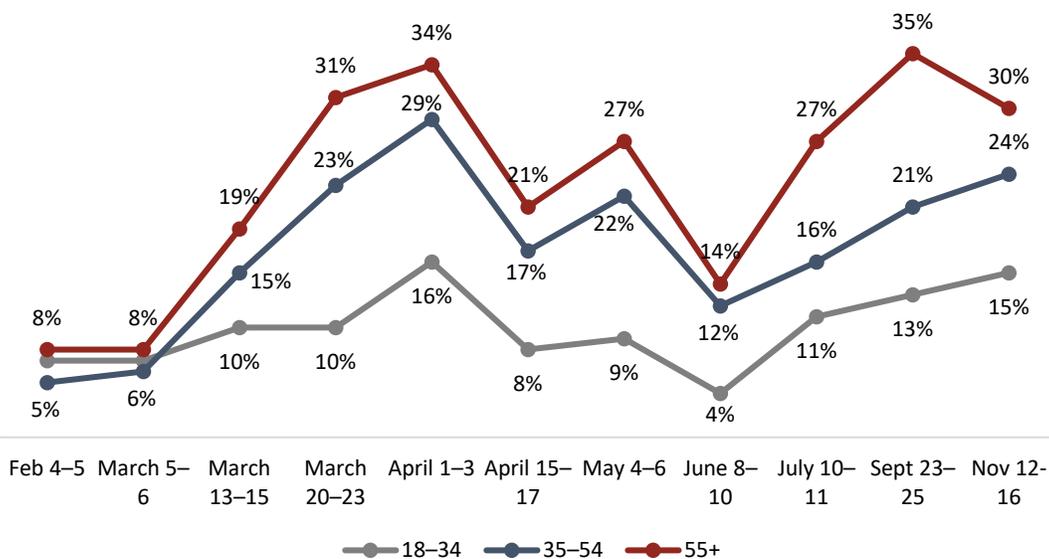
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Personal concern over contracting COVID-19



Notably, three-in-ten residents over the age of 54 are “very worried” about becoming sick. That said, this level peaked in September, while concern among younger cohorts has risen slowly and continually since early June:

Percentage of Canadians saying they are "very concerned" about contracting COVID-19



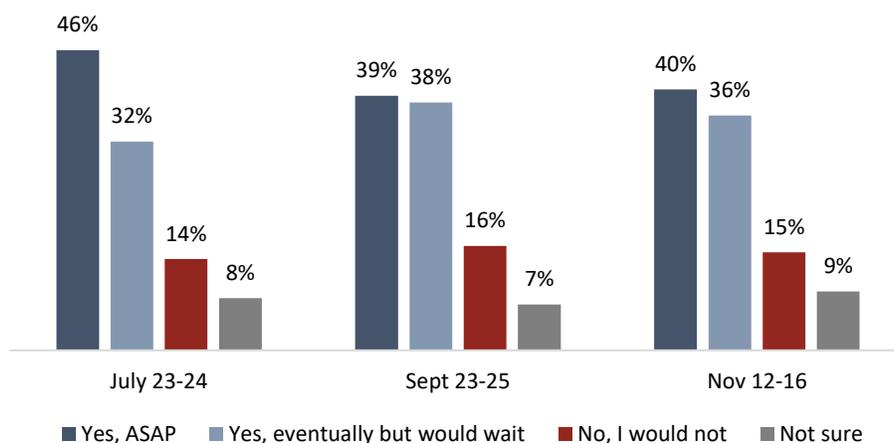
Anxiety has crept into every corner of the country as COVID-19 has spread. A majority in all regions now say they are worried about becoming sick, something that had yet to happen until this wave of data. Residents in Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia are more worried:

Percentage very/moderately concerned about personally becoming sick from coronavirus								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
July 10-11	59%	61%	54%	43%	53%	62%	56%	65%
September 23-25	69%	69%	47%	59%	66%	76%	72%	59%
November 12-16	68%	71%	57%	56%	65%	70%	73%	58%

Vaccine hesitancy persists

Despite these heightened levels of concern, the likelihood that Canadians will seek out a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible remains relatively low. Just two-in-five residents (40%) currently say they would be comfortable getting the vaccine as soon as it is freely available to them, while 36 per cent say they will seek out the vaccine after a while, once others have had it first. These proportions are essentially unchanged compared to data collected in September, suggesting the recent headlines about vaccine effectiveness have had little impact on immunization inclination.

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

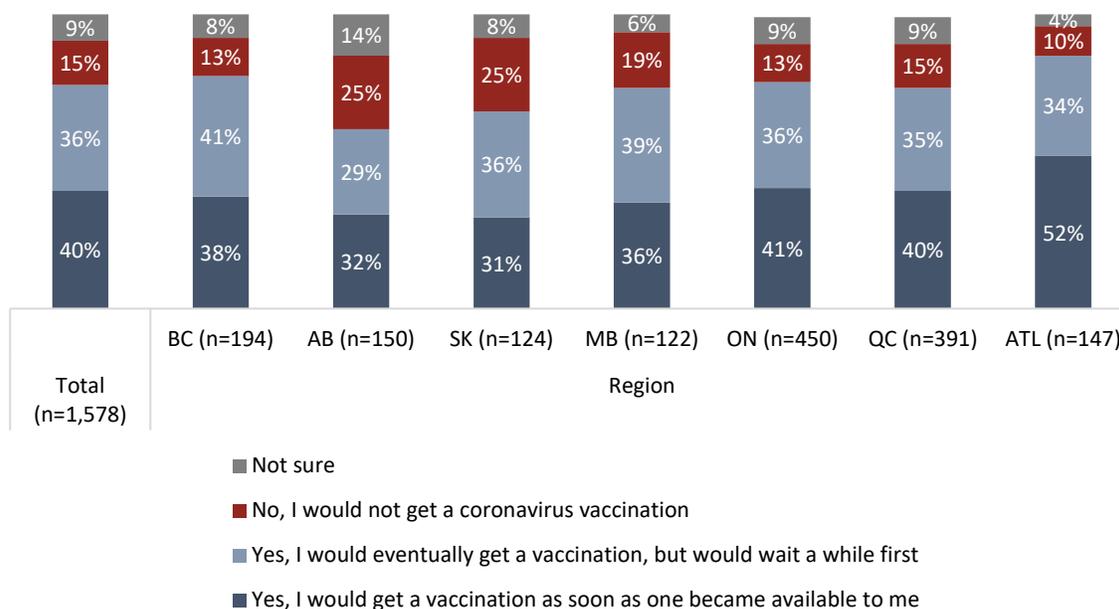


While considerable portions of the entire country remain hesitant or in opposition to the idea of vaccination, there are certain areas which will prove more of a challenge for public health officials. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, one-in-four residents say they will not get the vaccine, the highest such proportions in the country. While herd immunity targets have not been established for this specific coronavirus, having large portions of the population resistant to the vaccine could decrease the likelihood of achieving these levels:

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Would you get the COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to you?



Alberta, Manitoba residents more critical of provincial leadership

The approach to COVID-19 spread prevention has been regionally specific in Canada. In Atlantic Canada, residents have dealt with relatively low numbers of positive tests after [sequestering](#) themselves in a four-province bubble. Quebec and Alberta have dealt with the worst spread on a per capita measure, though each province has taken a different approach to restricting behaviours due to the virus.

In Quebec, a province-wide mask mandate came into effect in July, and portions of the province have been in [partial-lockdown](#) due to high case numbers. In Alberta, Premier Jason Kenney [reiterated recently](#) that “Albertans believe in freedom and not government micromanagement” in stating that he would not impose a mask mandate in the province.

Manitoba went into its lockdown procedure on November 12, shutting down gyms, indoor dining, and other services. Social contacts in the province are restricted to households only. In Ontario, restrictions have been more generous. Even in “red zone” regions of the province, indoor gatherings of [up to 10](#) people are still acceptable.

Atlantic Canadians are most positive when asked about how their provincial governments have responded to the pandemic. Nine-in-ten say their province has done a good job in that region. In British Columbia, which introduced a series of new restrictions to curb rising cases, three-quarters of residents say the BC NDP has done a good job of managing the outbreak.

Manitoba residents are by far the most critical of their government. Just 37 per cent say Brian Pallister’s Conservative Party has done a good job. In Alberta, just half of residents say the same of Jason Kenney’s United Conservative Party:

Percentage saying their provincial government has done a Good Job in handling the COVID-19 response								
	Total	Region						
		BC	AB	SK	MB	ON	QC	ATL
March 13-15	69%	74%	59%	61%	62%	59%	88%	69%
April 15-17	86%	86%	70%	82%	76%	87%	93%	83%
August 5-8	73%	81%	52%	68%	66%	76%	75%	78%
November 12-16	66%	76%	50%	65%	37%	60%	73%	91%

Do restrictions need to go further?

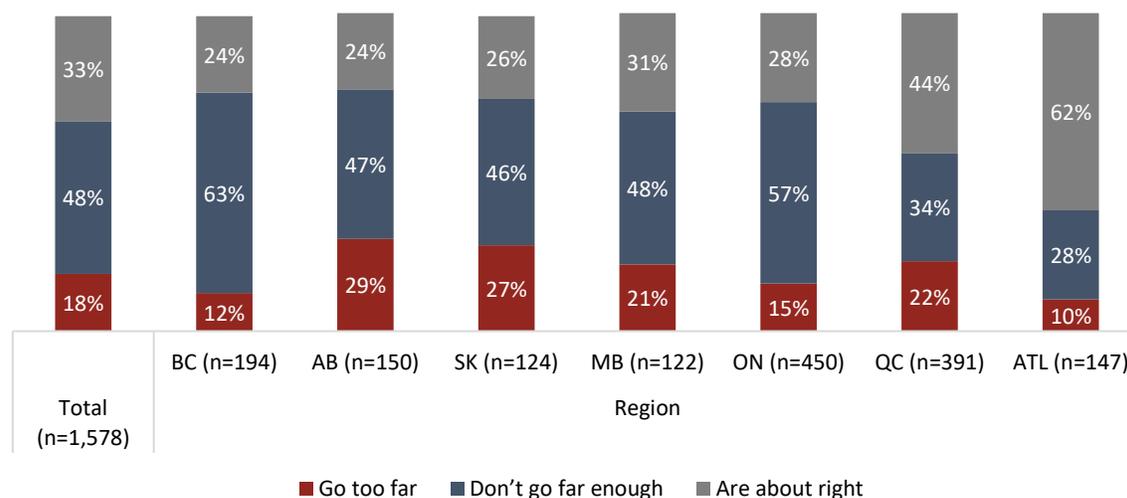
Dissatisfaction with their provincial government may be driven by feelings that current restrictions are either too strong or too weak. For half of the country (48%) restrictions do not go far enough to reduce the spread of COVID-19. This number is highest in British Columbia (63%), however this survey ran prior to the November 19 announcement that expanded and extended a strict social lockdown and made masks mandatory indoors in public spaces.

At least one-in-five in Quebec (22%), Saskatchewan (27%) and Alberta (29%) say their government has gone too far in curbing activities.

That said, Quebec residents - alongside Atlantic Canadians - are also most likely to say their province has implemented restrictions that are “about right”.

Herein lies the challenge of balancing public health with personal freedom and economic activity, for governments across the country. In every region there is significant disagreement about the strategy taken by each respective government:

Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your area to prevent the coronavirus from spreading, do you think these restrictions go too far, don't go far enough, or are about right?

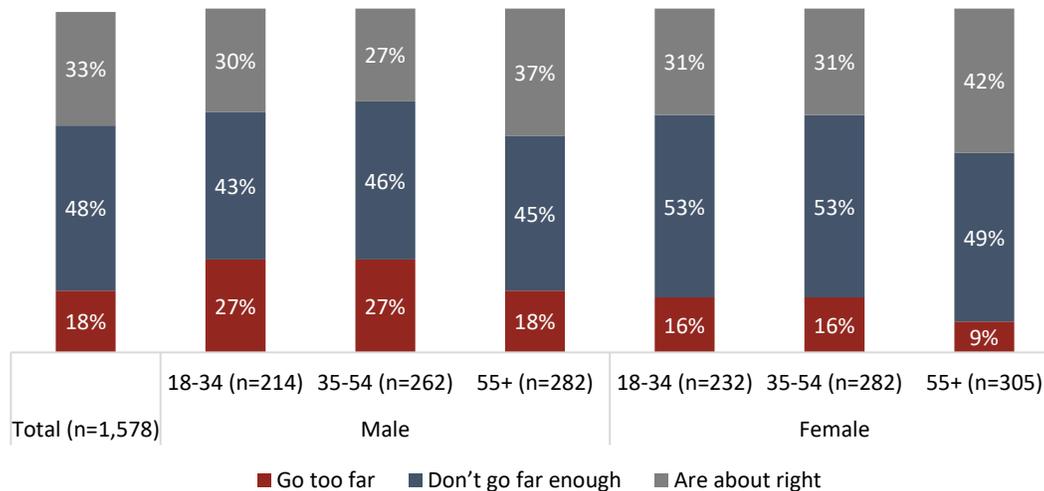


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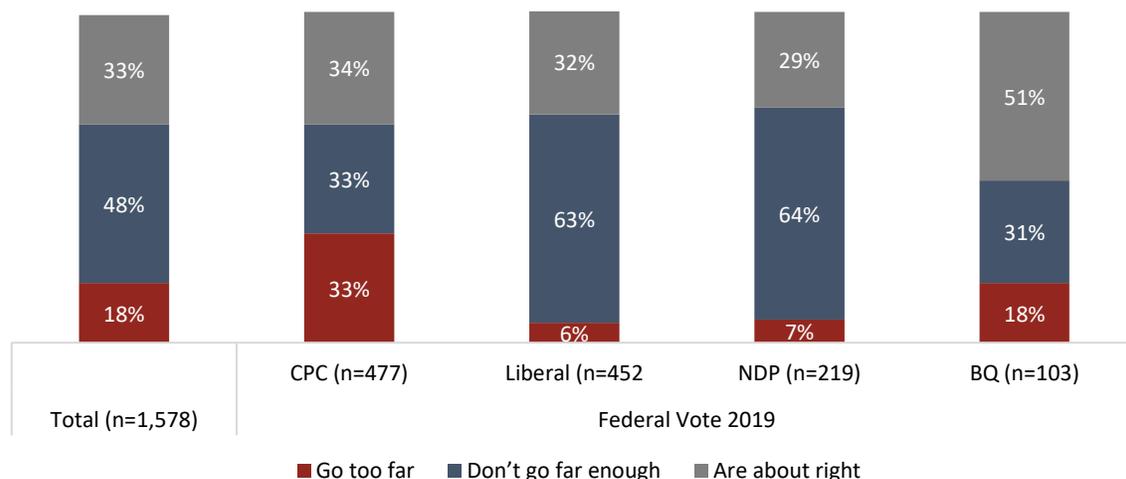
Men under the age of 55 are most vocal about restrictions going further than they would like, while women of all ages are far less likely to feel this way:

Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your area to prevent the coronavirus from spreading, do you think these restrictions go too far, don't go far enough, or are about right?



The strongest correlating factor in someone's views about restrictions, however, is political affiliation. Those who voted for the Conservative Party of Canada in the last federal election are five times as likely as past Liberal or NDP supporters to say current controls go too far:

Overall, thinking about restrictions that have been put in place in your area to prevent the coronavirus from spreading, do you think these restrictions go too far, don't go far enough, or are about right?



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

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