

## All but AstraZeneca? Most unvaccinated Canadians uncomfortable with brand; fewer would take the job if offered

*Only two-in-five who want to be vaccinated say they'd be comfortable receiving AZ vaccine*

**April 12, 2021** – Weeks of questions, blood clot concerns and changing guidance over who should receive the AstraZeneca vaccine has had a devastating impact on Canadian confidence in it.

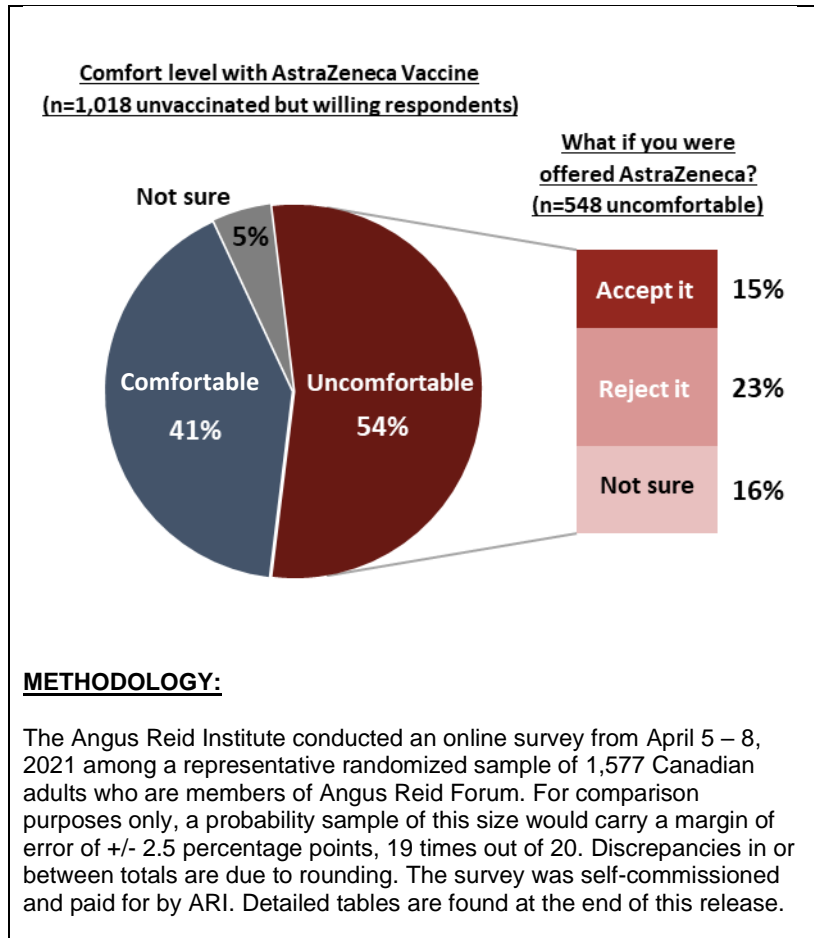
New public opinion data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds just 41 per cent of Canadians who are yet unvaccinated – but intend to be – are comfortable with receiving an AZ vaccine, currently comprising about 20 per cent of Canada's stockpile.

The survey's findings show that while urgency to be inoculated against COVID-19 climbs again to an all time high, critical doubts about one of the main brands that make up this country's vaccine program could result in Canadians opting not to be vaccinated at all if a dose of AstraZeneca were the only option on offer.

Nearly one-quarter (23%) of those who haven't yet received a vaccine but intend to say they would reject a dose from AstraZeneca outright if that is the brand being administered to them.

Levels of discomfort increase considerably among women over the age of 34, two-in-five of whom say they are 'extremely uncomfortable' with the idea of receiving the AstraZeneca dose.

Against the backdrop of these doubts, public health officials and politicians must also battle skepticism over another critical aspect of COVID-19 related data: the very number of people who have been infected. Fully one-in-five people in this country believe the federal government has been inflating COVID-19 statistics, that the real figures are lower, while fewer than a third think the official data is accurate (32%).



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## More Key Findings:

- Assessment of vaccine rollout by provincial governments has worsened in Manitoba and Ontario but improved in most regions over the past month. Residents in Quebec, Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan are most positive.
- Despite receiving more doses of COVID-19 vaccines in recent weeks, Canadians remain divided about the federal government's procurement efforts. 45 per cent have confidence in the Liberal government to handle procurement and distribution to the provinces; 50 per cent do not.
- Desire to be vaccinated continues to rise. 69 per cent of Canadians have either had at least one dose or would like to be vaccinated as soon as possible

## 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: Vaccination trends

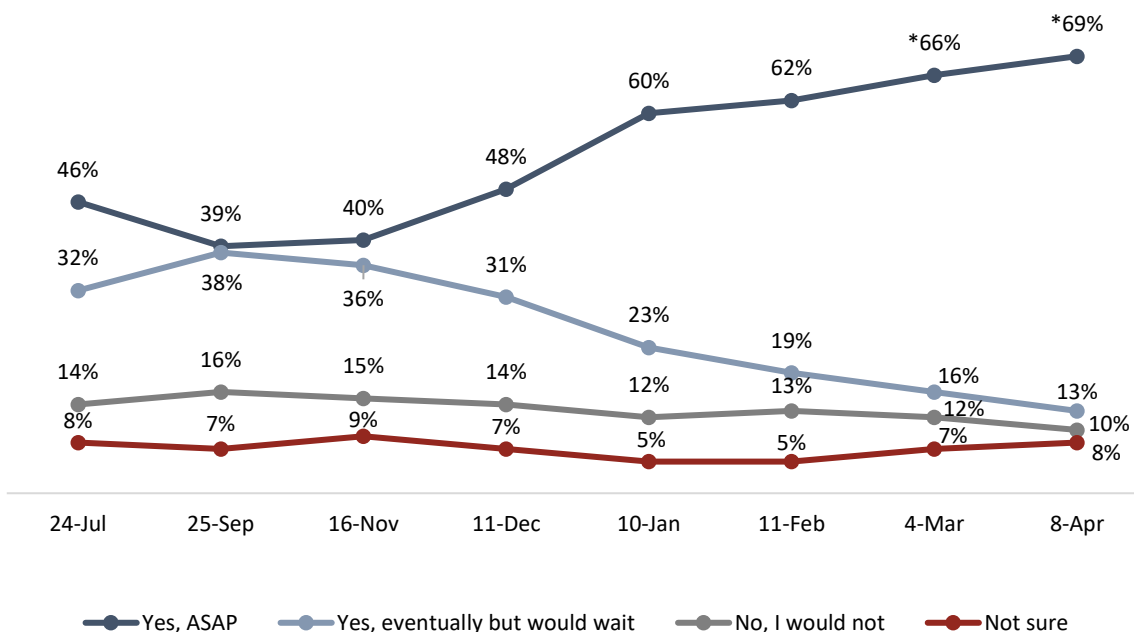
As Canadians endure a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, spurred on by highly infectious variants of the virus – B117 originating in the UK, P1 from Brazil, and B1351 from South Africa – all eyes are on the coast-to-coast mass vaccination program. Positive news for public health officials finds Canadians feeling ever more urgency to receive their jab. If 2020 was characterized by hesitancy surrounding the potential inoculation, public opinion now trends in favour of being inoculated, as soon as possible:

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



*\*Includes both those who want vaccine immediately and those who have already had at least one dose*

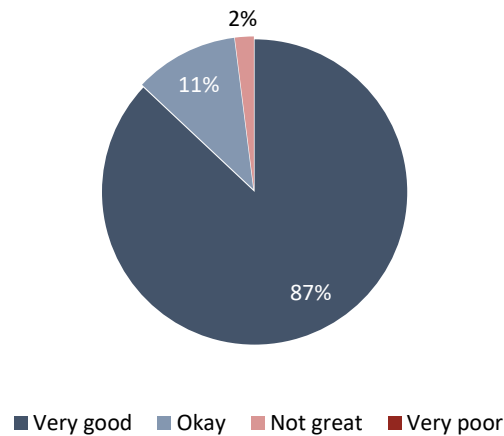
**Experiences with vaccination overwhelmingly positive**

To date, approximately 18 per cent of Canadians have had at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. This survey, notably, yielded exactly 18 per cent of respondents stating that they had been vaccinated (see detailed tables). Among them, the experience has been largely positive. Nine-in-ten (87%) had a very good experience, while 11 per cent said it was just okay:

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**Experience receiving the vaccine, among those with at least one dose, n=274**



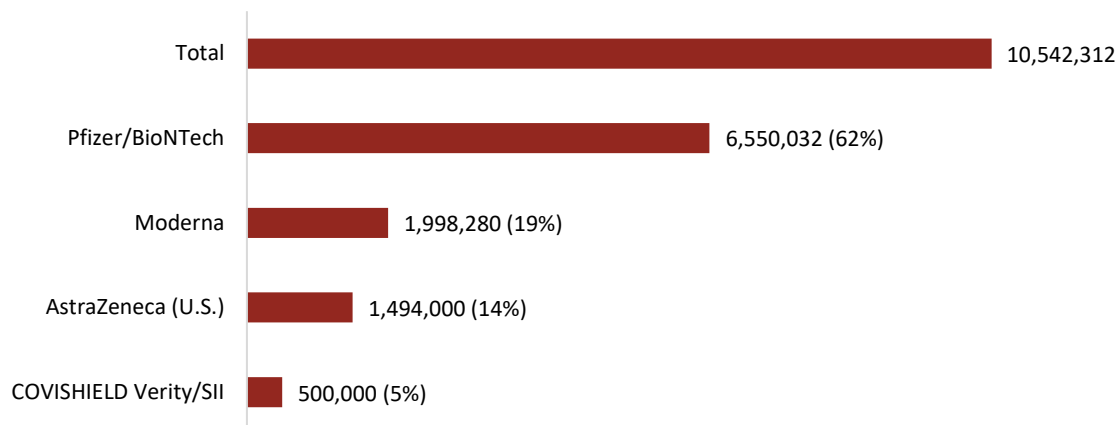
**Not all vaccines perceived equally**

While experiences have been good and willingness to receive a vaccine is trending upward, a troubling undercurrent is emerging around significant discomfort with one of the vaccines on offer: AstraZeneca.

To recap, Health Canada recently changed the label on that vaccine after "[very rare reports of blood clots associated with low levels of blood platelets.](#)" Public health officials say the vaccine remains safe and that the benefits heavily outweigh the risks, but [countries around the world](#) have paused delivery or set age limits on usage such that younger individuals do not receive it. Canada [stopped administering](#) the vaccine to people under the age of 55 at the end of March.

AstraZeneca itself, and the version manufactured by the Serum Institute of India, called COVISHIELD, make up just under 20 per cent of total vaccines distributed in Canada thus far.

**Total COVID19 vaccines distributed in Canada  
(Government of Canada Website, updated April 7)**

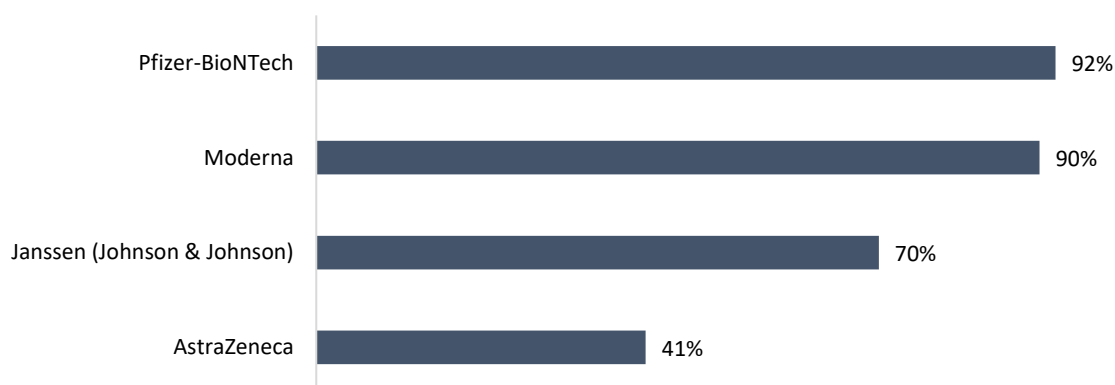


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Canadians who have not received a vaccine but are planning to are far more comfortable with doses manufactured by Pfizer and Moderna than they are with AstraZeneca's offering and that of the forthcoming Johnson and Johnson vaccine ([scheduled to arrive](#) in Canada in the coming weeks). Far and away however, AstraZeneca is the vaccine that prompts the most discomfort among Canadians:

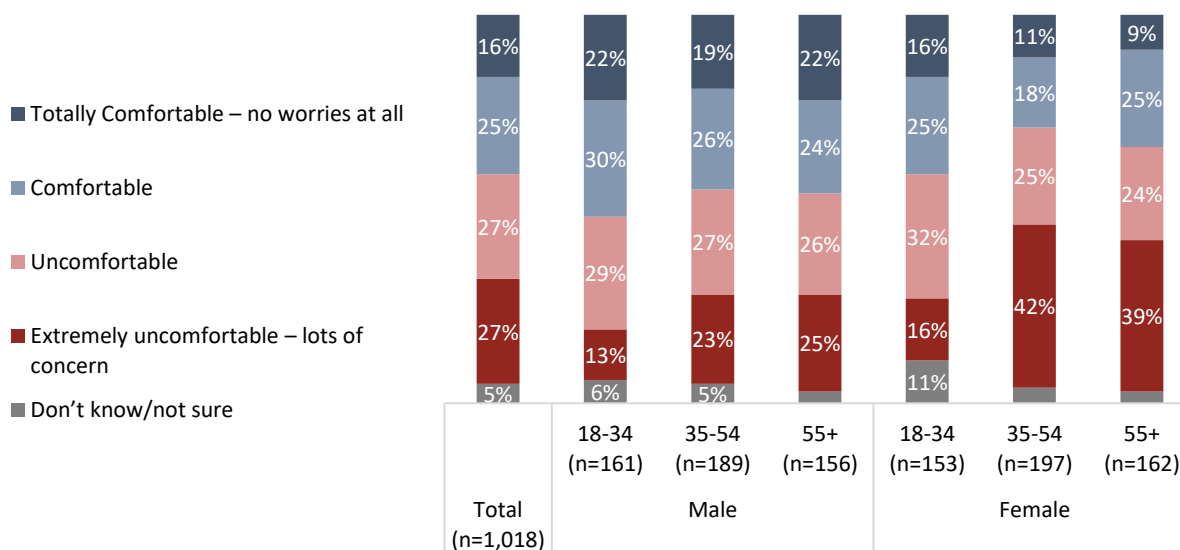
**How comfortable you would be if you received any of them. For each, please rate your level of comfort:  
Among those not vaccinated yet but would like to receive one, n=1,018**



**Women more concerned about AstraZeneca**

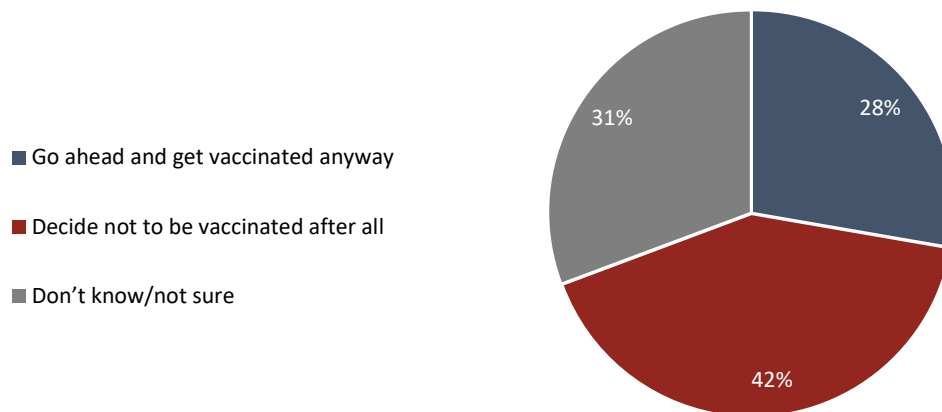
Levels of comfort receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine are much lower among female respondents than males, with two-in-five women over the age of 35 saying they are extremely uncomfortable being offered that vaccine:

**Level of comfort receiving the AstraZeneca vaccine  
Among those not vaccinated yet but would like to receive one, n=1,018**



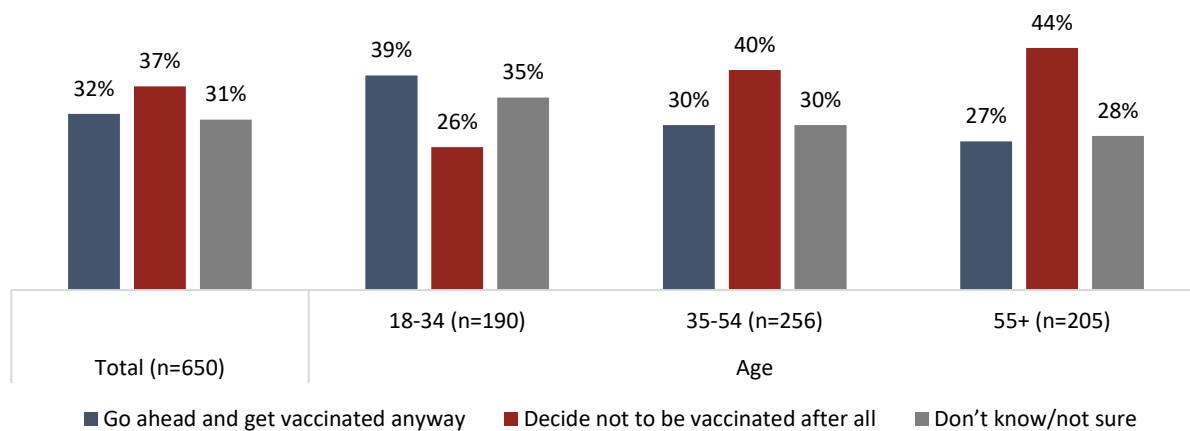
Among those uncomfortable with AstraZeneca, two-in-five say they that if they were offered that brand of vaccine, they would reject it. Importantly, another 31 per cent among this group say they don't know what they would do:

**If you were offered the AstraZeneca vaccine, would you ultimately take it?  
(Among those who say they are uncomfortable with AZ vaccine, n=548)**



Among those who express discomfort towards any of the vaccines being (or soon to be) administered in Canada, younger people are much more willing to overcome their worries and take the jab anyway, while those over the age of 54 are more hesitant to be receive a dose of a vaccine in which they are not fully comfortable:

**Suppose it was your turn to be vaccinated, but the vaccine being administered was one you did not feel completely comfortable with, would you:  
(Among anyone who voiced discomfort with a vaccine)**

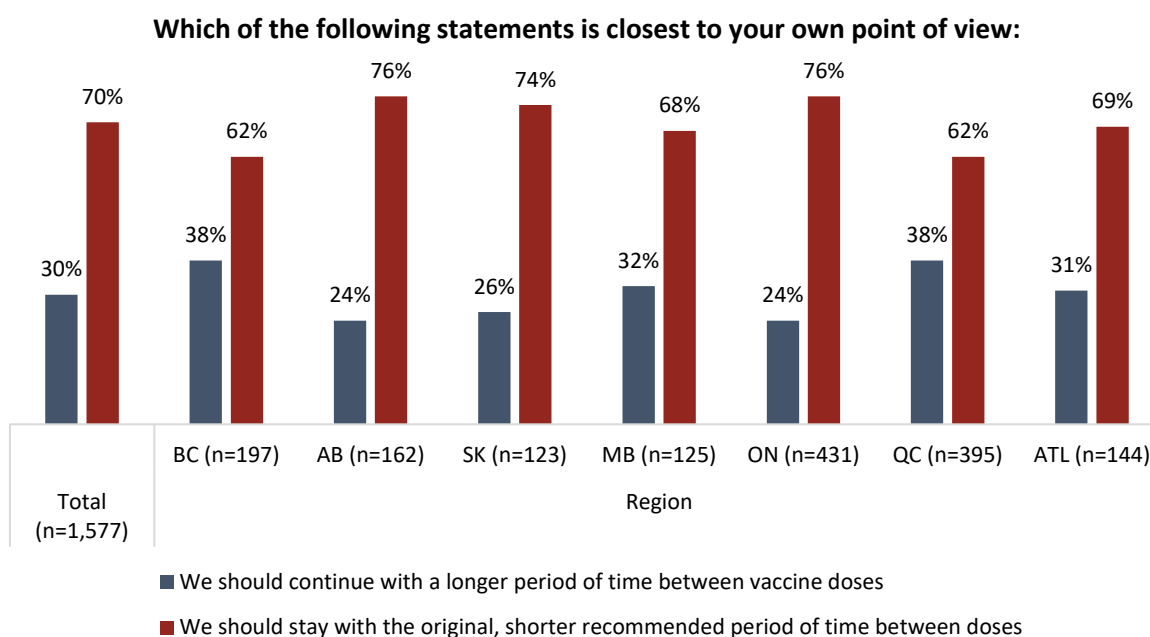


### **Few are supportive of longer period between doses**

Another potential source of discomfort is the timeline between first and second doses of the vaccine. Several provinces in Canada have lengthened this period beyond what the manufacturers recommend.

Public health officials continue to assure Canadians that this is safe and that allowing more people to receive at least one dose sooner means some protection is better than none at all for a bigger group. Critics, however, argue that there is not enough information about how much protection the vaccines provide against COVID-19 after just the first dose to guarantee the safety of this decision.

For their part, Canadians would largely prefer that the original guidance with a shorter time period between doses be maintained. This is the case for at least 62 per cent of resident in every region:



### **Part Two: How many have been sick?**

Canada passed a grim milestone in early April as the nation confirmed its one millionth case of COVID-19. Canadians are fairly certain the official number should be much higher.

### **One-in-nine think they've had COVID**

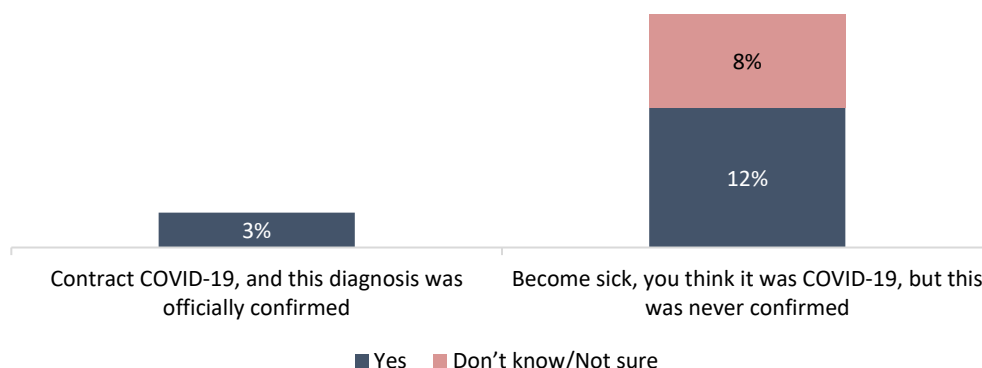
Indeed, three per cent of respondents to this survey say that they have had a confirmed positive test for the virus; this is right in line with the nationally report number. That said, four-times as many say that they think they have been sick with COVID-19 (12%) while another 8 per cent would not rule it out:

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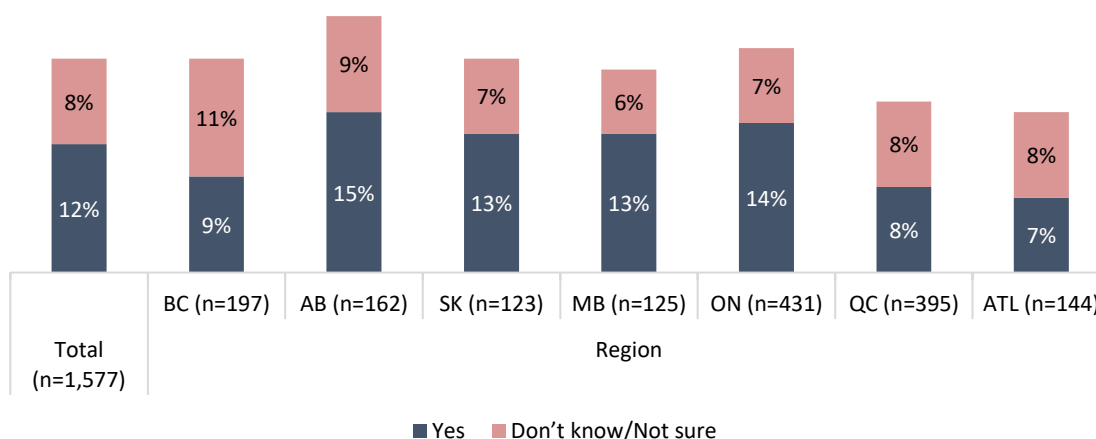
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In the last 13 months did you...



Albertans and Ontarians are most likely to say that they have or may have been ill with COVID-19, while at least 15 per cent in every region express this uncertainty. Canadians over the age of 54 are least likely to think that they have contracted COVID-19 ([see detailed tables](#)):

Thinking about yourself, personally in the last 13 months, did you...?  
"Become sick, you think it was COVID-19, but this was never confirmed"



**Many doubt the official numbers**

The government of Canada regularly reports on positive cases as communicated by health authorities across the country. This likely does not capture the number of total cases, given the asymptomatic nature

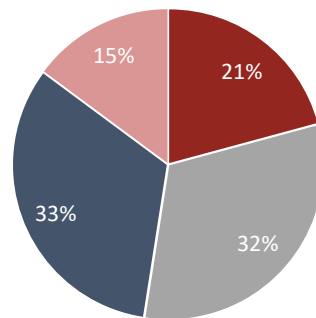
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of some experiences, and the mild symptoms felt by many. While only one-in-three Canadians feel that the number of cases reported is accurate, a significant segment, nearly one-in-five (21%) are skeptical and believe the number has been *inflated*. A greater number (33%) say that it is likely too low:

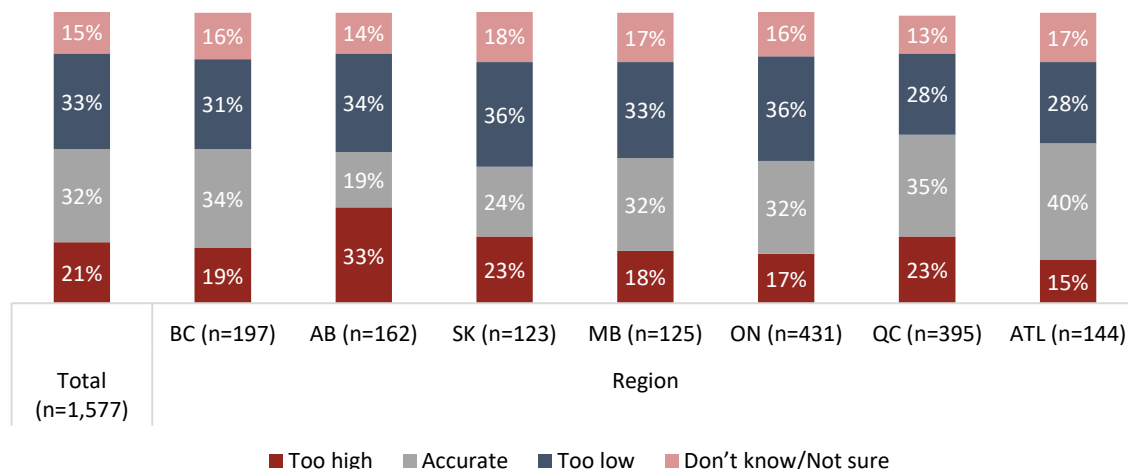
**According to official statistics from the Canadian government, there have been around one million cases of COVID-19 in this country. Do you think this number is:**



■ Too high ■ Accurate ■ Too low ■ Don't know/Not sure

In most of the country two-thirds of Canadians say that the reported number is either correct or too low. In Alberta, however, residents are notably more likely to say that it is too high:

**According to official statistics from the Canadian government, there have been around one million cases of COVID-19 in this country. Do you think this number is:**



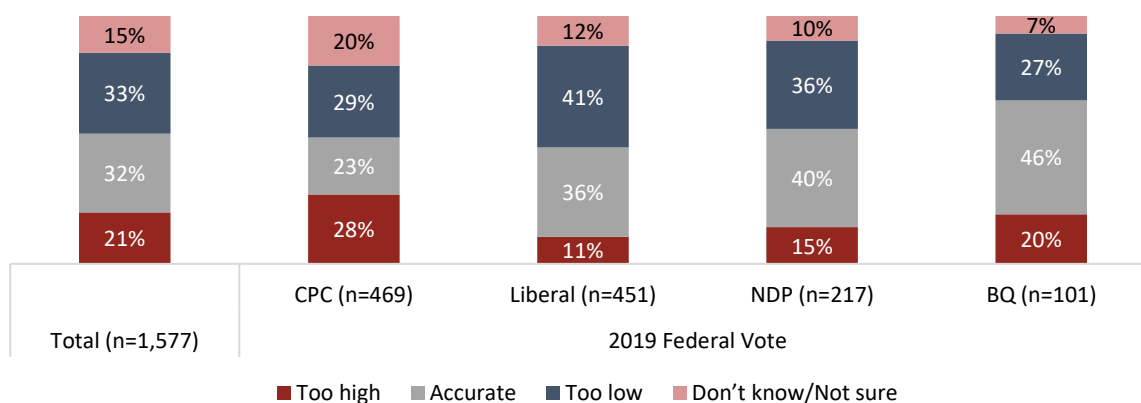
There is also evidently a political element to data reporting. Past Liberal and New Democratic Party voters are more likely than the national average to say that reports undercount the number of COVID-19

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cases, while past Conservative and Bloc Quebecois voters are more likely to say the numbers reported are inflated:

**According to official statistics from the Canadian government, there have been around one million cases of COVID-19 in this country. Do you think this number is:**



### Part Three: Assessment of procurement and distribution

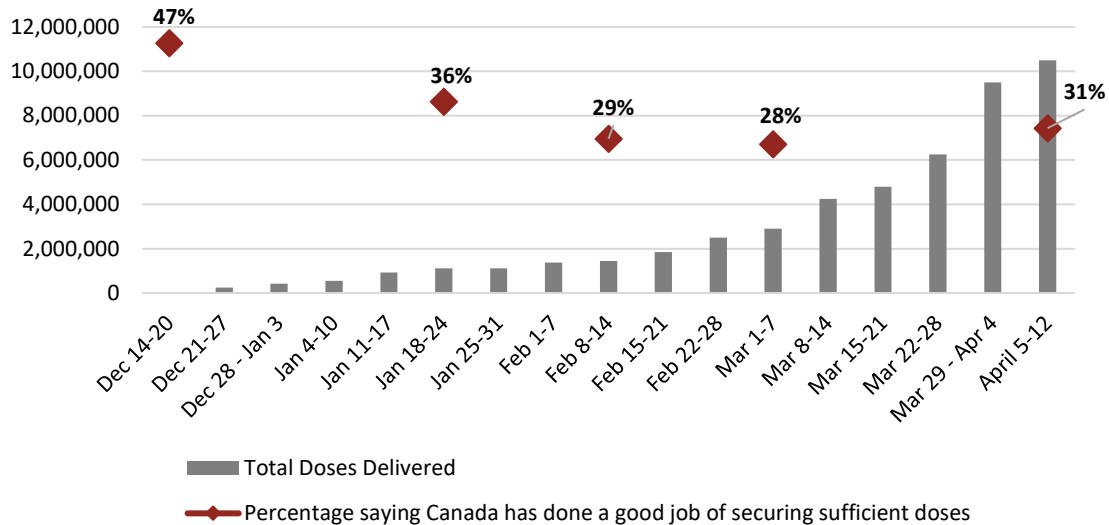
Canada's rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations has sped up considerably in recent weeks. After a slow start, characterized by months of delay and ensuing frustration, more than 10 million doses have now been distributed to the provinces by the federal government. Despite this, however, there are still concerns about whether the federal government has procured sufficient doses for everyone who wants a jab to receive one in a timely fashion.

The graph below shows the percentage of Canadians saying the government has done a good job in securing sufficient doses of the vaccine, plotted alongside the total number of doses distributed to the provinces and territories. Much of this continuing criticism may owe to the fact that the United States is [well ahead of Canada](#) in its vaccination progress:

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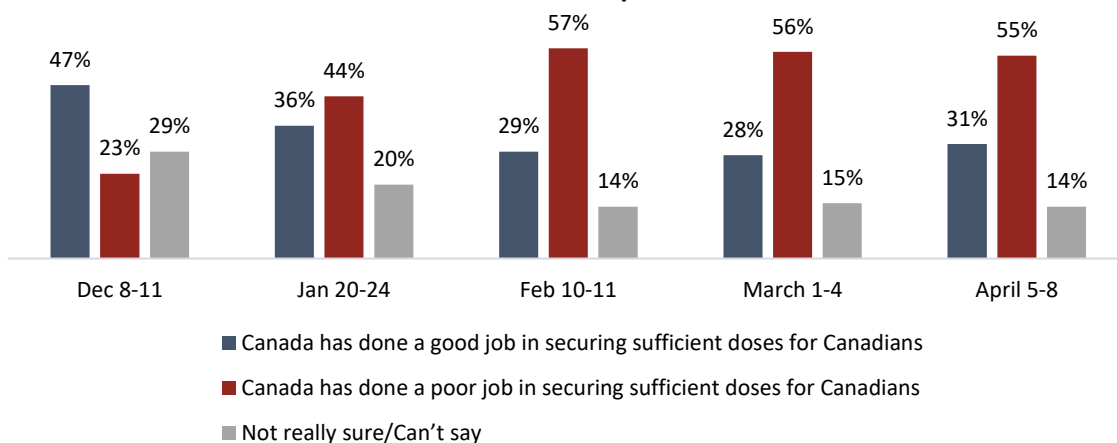
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**Percentage saying Canada has done a good job of securing COVID-19 vaccines versus total number procured and distributed to provinces  
(Data from Government of Canada website)**



Looking at these data in full, at least 55 per cent of Canadians have been critical of the government on this question since early February:

**Based on what you have read, seen, or heard, what is your assessment of Canada's efforts to secure doses of a potential COVID-19 vaccine?**

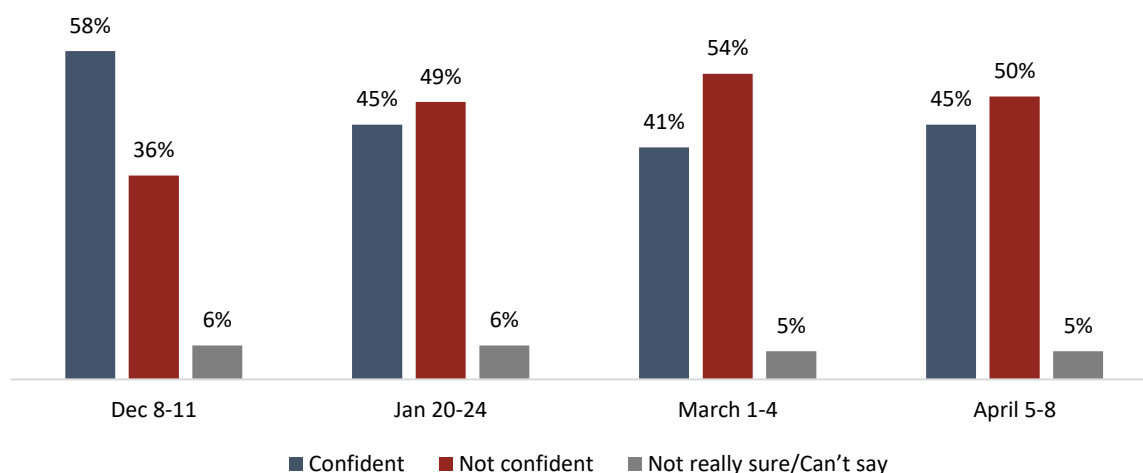


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**Confidence in federal government improves slightly**

The good news for federal officials is that confidence in the government to manage procurement and distribution has increased slightly to nearly an even divide. More than two-in-five (45%) say that they are confident in the Liberals while half (50%) disagree:

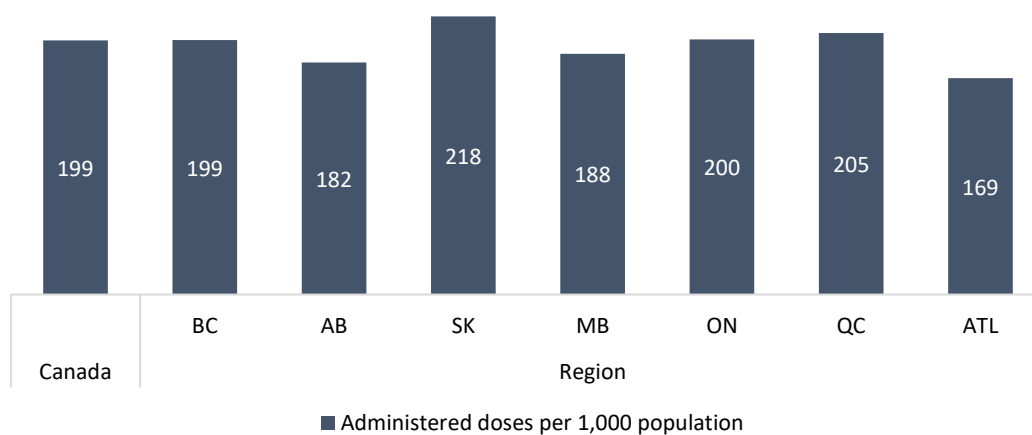
**And how confident are you in the federal government to effectively manage the distribution of vaccines to the provinces/territories in Canada?**



**Ontario, Manitoba most critical of provincial rollout**

While the federal government plays a significant role in procurement, the operation of taking delivery of vaccine and ultimately jabbing them into the arms of Canadians is largely left to provincial health authorities. This has led to tension in recent days as Prime Minister Trudeau urged provinces to speed up delivery with the nation's stockpile increasing each week. As of April 9<sup>th</sup>, most regions have delivered doses at a relatively similar rate, with Atlantic Canada having given out the fewest per capita doses and Saskatchewan the most:

**Doses per 1,000 in each province (As of April 9th\*)**



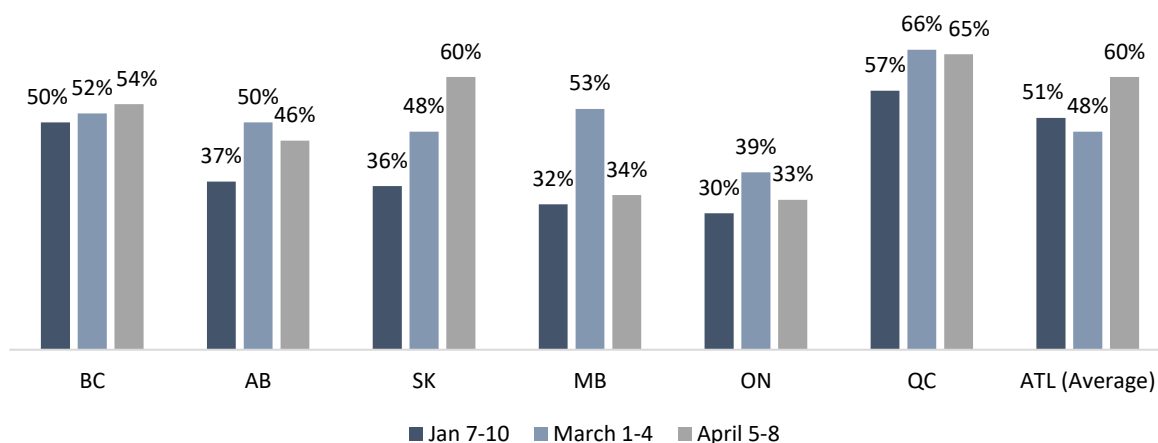
Source: <https://covid19tracker.ca/vaccinationtracker.html>

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In terms of overall provincial performance on this key issue, the governments of Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, and Saskatchewan, earn the most praise from their respective constituents; at least three-in-five say their governments have done a good job in handling distribution. By contrast, only one-in-three in Manitoba and Ontario feel this way:

**Percentage saying their provincial government is doing a good job handling vaccine distribution in their province**



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

**Summary Table:**

Weighted sample sizes BASE: Anyone who said they were uncomfortable with any of the vaccines offered	Total (n=650)	AstraZeneca Responses		
		Comfortable (n=49)	Uncomfortable (n=548)	Don't know/not sure (n=54)
Go ahead and get vaccinated anyway	32%	63%	28%	48%
Decide not to be vaccinated after all	37%	7%	42%	15%
Don't know/not sure	31%	31%	31%	37%

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