

## Unvaccinated? Meet the Unsympathetic: Most inoculated Canadians indifferent to whether the non-jabbed get sick

*Most CPC supporters support making vaccines mandatory in public places to encourage immunization*

**August 17, 2021** – The first few days of Canada's 44th general election campaign are not only highlighting the differences between party leader's stances on mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations in this country, but also how voters feel about the issue.

The upshot? Most support some use of either carrot or stick – though more prefer the stick – to increase inoculation rates as a fourth wave of the pandemic threatens to further delay a return to some semblance of pre-pandemic normalcy.

In an early attempt at creating a wedge between himself and Conservative Party of Canada leader Erin O'Toole, Liberal Party Leader Justin Trudeau [announced vaccine mandates](#) covering airline and rail travel and federally regulated employees late last week.

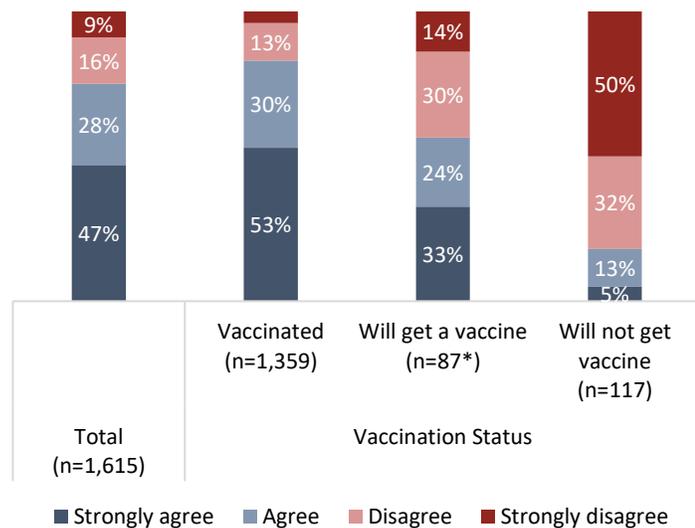
Asked in the hours after the writs had dropped for his response, O'Toole demurred, saying he was opposed to mandatory vaccinations, adding [he did not view vaccines as a "political issue"](#).

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds political divides in how Canadians want to encourage the unvaccinated to change their minds.

While majorities among decided and leaning supporters of all major federal parties support either regulations or incentivization or both to spur higher vaccination levels, the rate of support is lowest among CPC voters (67% vs. 93% for supporters of the Liberals).

The major contrast is among those who say government should do nothing to encourage increased vaccination. While it is the minority view among supporters of the Liberals and NDP (seven and 12 per cent respectively), this sentiment represents fully one-third of Conservative supporters (33%).

**Agree vs Disagree: "I don't have a lot of sympathy for people who chose not to be vaccinated and then got COVID-19"**



### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Aug. 7-10, 2021 among a representative randomized sample of 1,615 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 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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### More Key Findings:

- Canadians are still proceeding with caution in their daily routines. Nearly all (91%) still sanitize regularly, and most are social distancing (80%) and wearing a mask indoors (79%). That said, Ontario and Quebec residents are almost three times as likely as those in Saskatchewan and Alberta to wear their mask 'always' when in close contact with others or indoors.
- Those in the lowest income brackets are most pessimistic about the pandemic. Two-in-five of those in households making less than \$50,000 annually still believe the worst of the pandemic is yet to come for their personal finances and the provincial economy.

### 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: How to handle the hesitant

COVID-19 is sure to play a significant role in Canada's 44th election. Already, Canadians have been debating party policy, after Conservative Party leader Erin O'Toole re-committed to his decision not to enforce vaccination among CPC candidates. He did, however, say that rapid testing and other measures in the "toolbelt" would be used to ensure the health of his campaign team. O'Toole insists that "vaccines are not a political issue." but the evidence would suggest otherwise.

#### Political divide

There are clear political divides over how Canadians would like to see this issue handled. Three-quarters of Canadians support the use of regulations – such as mandatory vaccination to enter certain public spaces in their province – as an instrument to convince unvaccinated Canadians towards being jabbed.

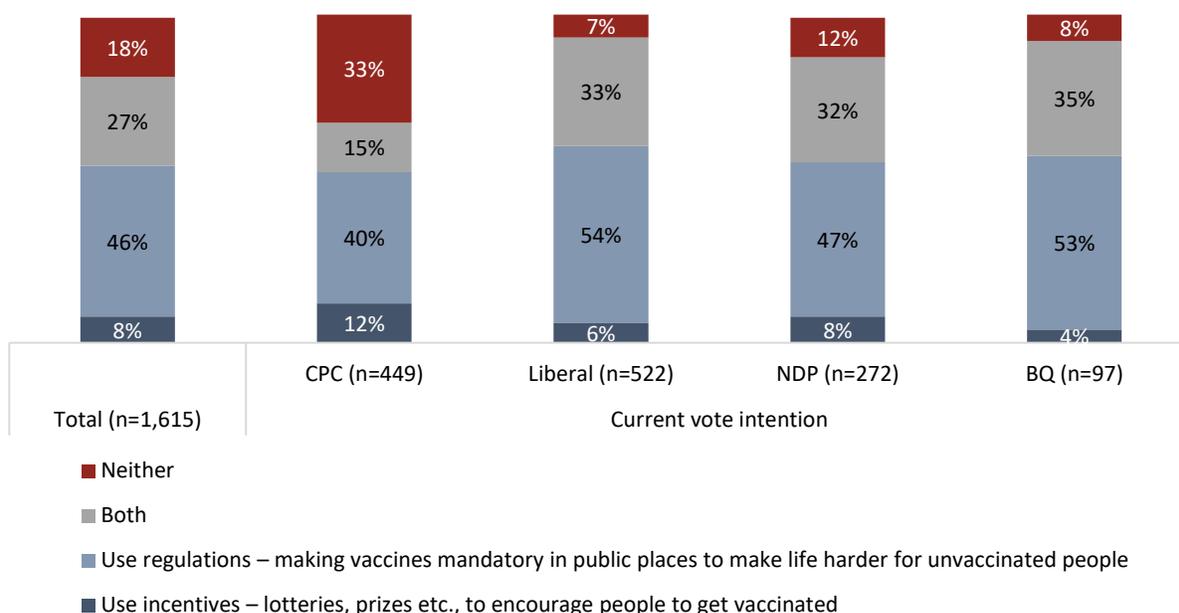
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This group leans less towards the carrot than the stick. Fully (46%) say regulations should be the sole strategy their provincial government (the level of government responsible for setting health policy) employs. By contrast, one-quarter (27%) say it should be part of a combined approach including incentives.

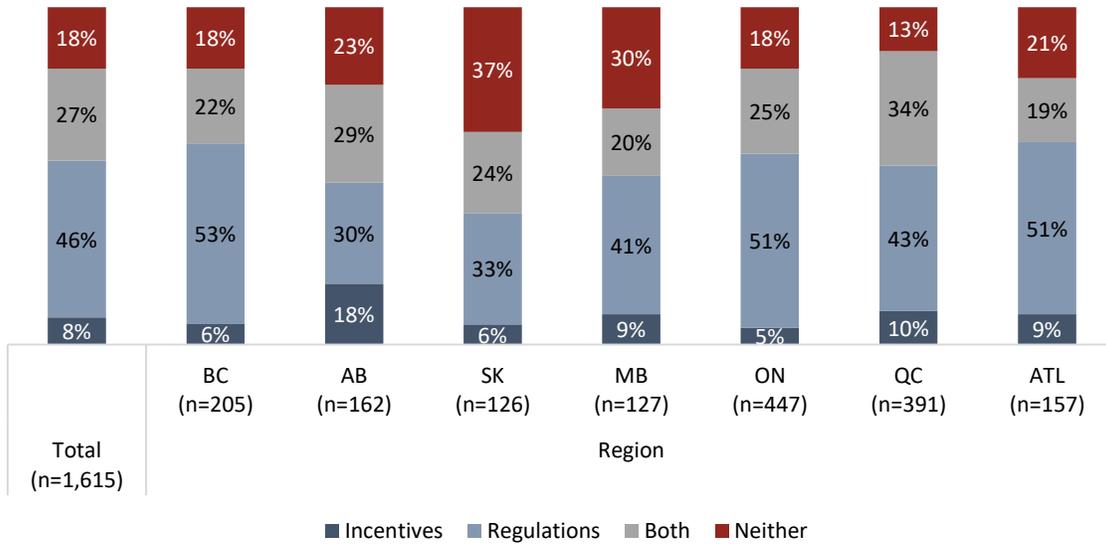
Across the political spectrum, support for mandatory measures either solely, or in combination with incentives, exceeds half the population (55%). Notably, fully one-third (33%) of those who intend to support the CPC in the coming election oppose the use of either incentives or regulations. For partisans of the other major federal parties, support for regulations or a combination approach reaches – or exceeds – four-in-five:

**How do you think your own provincial government should approach this?**



These divisions run deep in parts of western Canada. In Saskatchewan, 37 per cent of residents say their provincial government should do nothing to encourage vaccination; three-in-ten in Manitoba say the same. In British Columbia, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada, support for primarily regulatory measures reaches a majority:

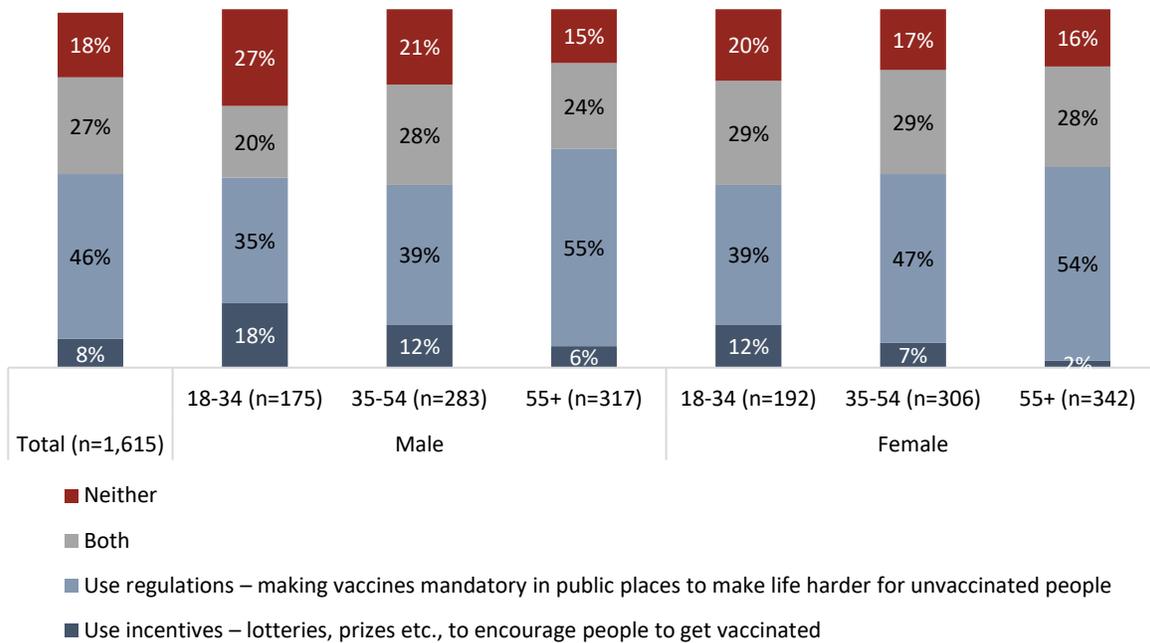
**Which approach do you think your provincial government should take?**



**Young men most likely to push back**

Support for government to mandate regulations is high among all age groups, but young men are most resistant. This group has continually been least likely to show concern over COVID-19, but importantly, are also least likely to vote:

**How do you think your own provincial government should approach this?**



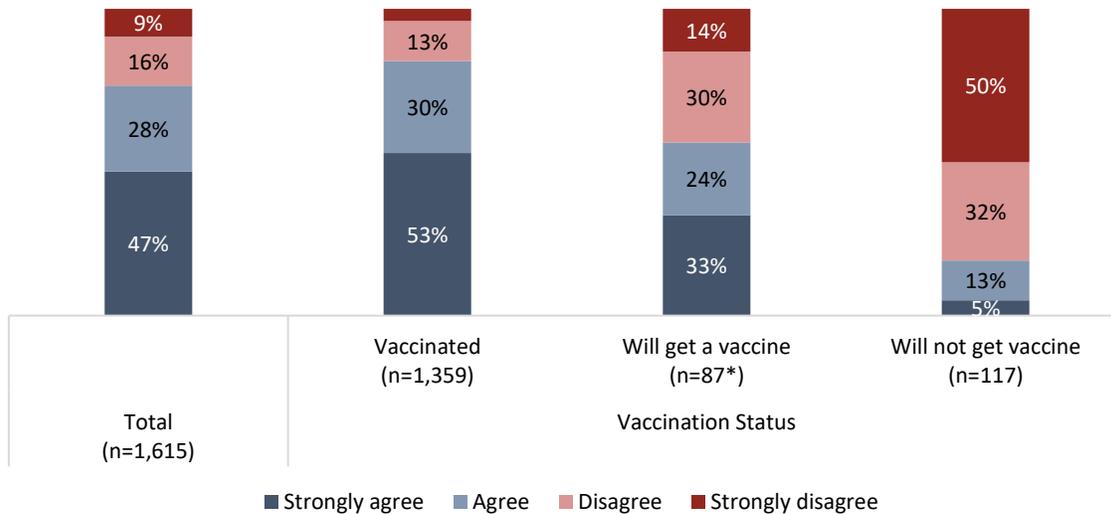
**Part Two: Little sympathy for the unvaccinated**

Recent Angus Reid Institute data [reveals increasing tension](#) between the vaccinated and the unvaccinated. Even if Canada’s [world-leading](#) vaccination progress has recently [slowed](#), the size of the latter group has diminished week over week. Still, recent public health data suggests that the [overwhelming majority of cases](#) and hospitalizations are now occurring among those who choose not to receive their jab or have yet to be fully immunized.

**Related: [Half of vaccinated Canadians say they’re ‘unlikely’ to spend time around those who remain unvaccinated](#)**

With a higher propensity of those now sick likely to be unvaccinated, patience among the vaccinated is running out. Overall, three-quarters of Canadians (75%) say they have “no sympathy” for unvaccinated individuals who contract COVID-19. This rises to 83 per cent among fully vaccinated Canadians. Those who will not be vaccinated have sympathy for anyone who makes the same choice and does, indeed, become ill:

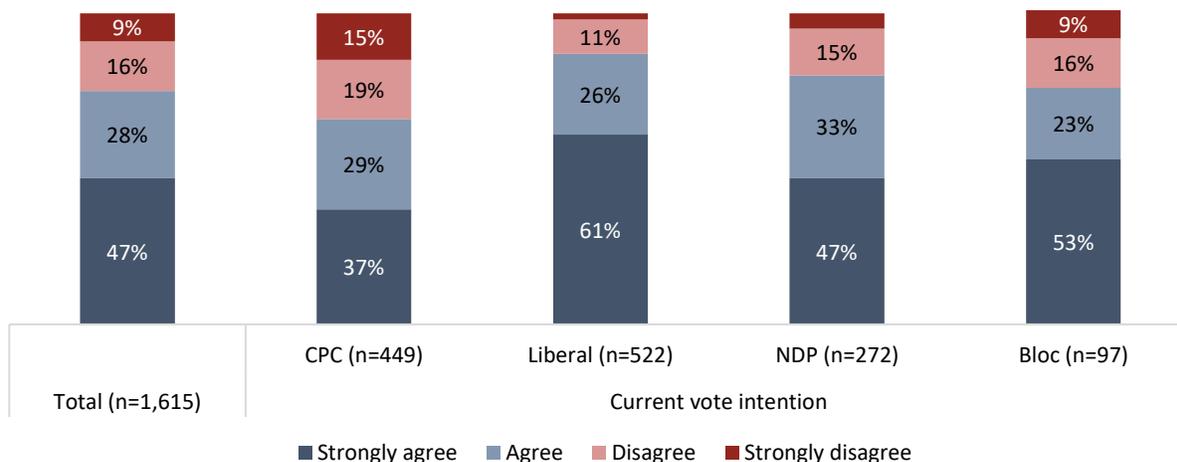
**Agree vs Disagree: "I don't have a lot of sympathy for people who chose not to be vaccinated and then got COVID-19"**



*\*Small sample size, interpret with caution*

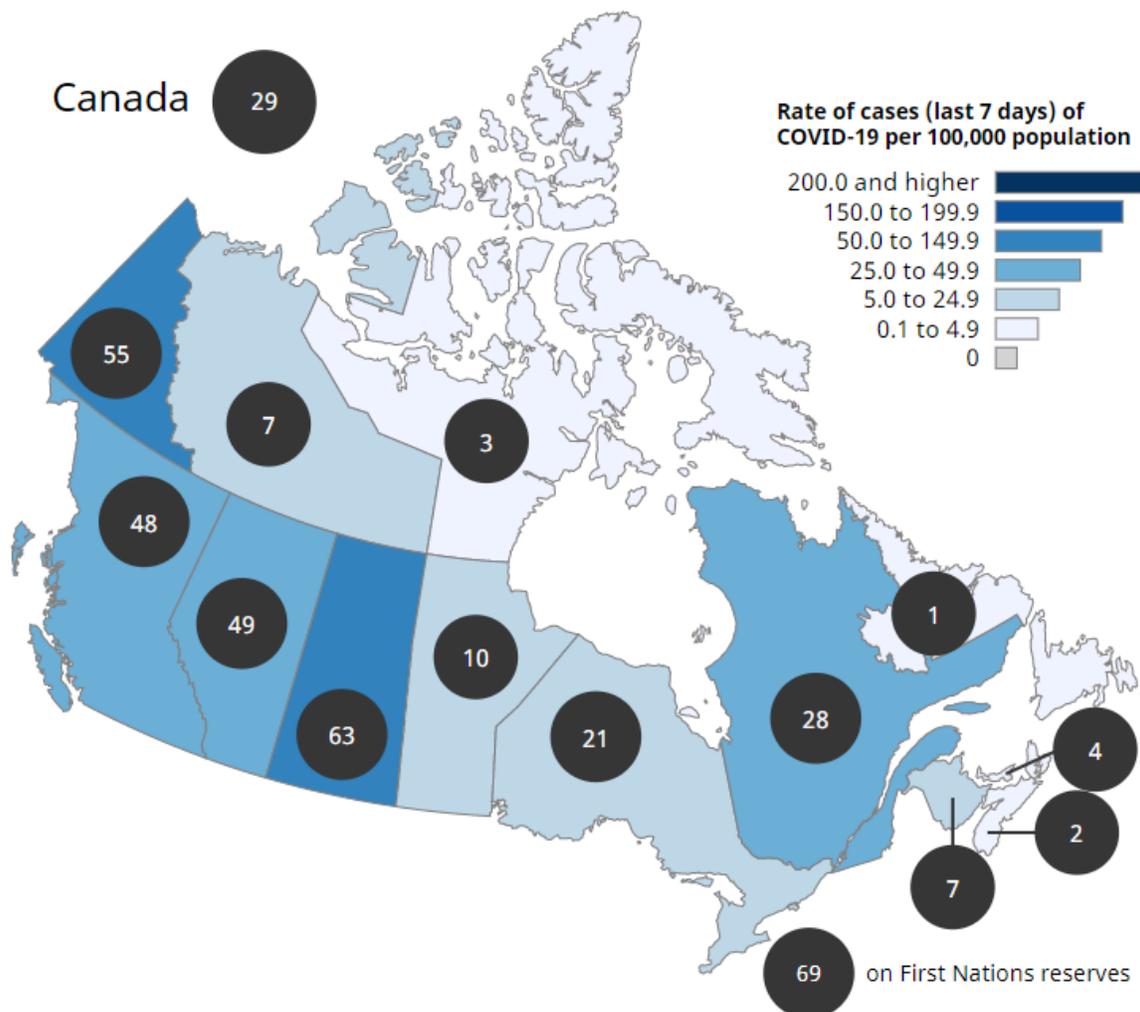
The political element of this sentiment is clear. Strong language from both Liberal leader Justin Trudeau and NDP leader Jagmeet Singh about mandatory vaccinations is being received positively by most of their current supporters, while CPC leader Erin O'Toole appears to have a more difficult line to walk with his support base, especially as he tries to reach the centre-left and grow the party's vote. His messaging may play more effectively among those who currently say they will support the Bloc Quebecois, as one-quarter among that group are still sympathetic to unvaccinated Canadians:

**Agree vs Disagree: "I don't have a lot of sympathy for people who chose not to be vaccinated and then got COVID-19"**



**Part Three: Most still committed to masks, but one-in-five abstain**

While cases of the Delta variant are spiking across the country, the worst outbreaks have been out west. Saskatchewan, B.C., and Alberta have had the highest rates of cases per capita over the last seven days. None of those provinces have provincewide mask mandates. But neither does Manitoba, nor three out of four of the Atlantic provinces, where cases have been the lowest over the last week. Meanwhile, Ontario and Quebec, both with provincewide mask mandates, have seen their rate of infection rise at a slower rate in recent days.



*Image from Health Canada*

Against this backdrop, the majority of Canadians are proceeding with caution in terms of their daily habits. Nine-in-ten continue to regularly sanitize their hands, four-in-five are most often social distancing, and mask wearing continues to be a regular behaviour. More than half continue to stay away from public

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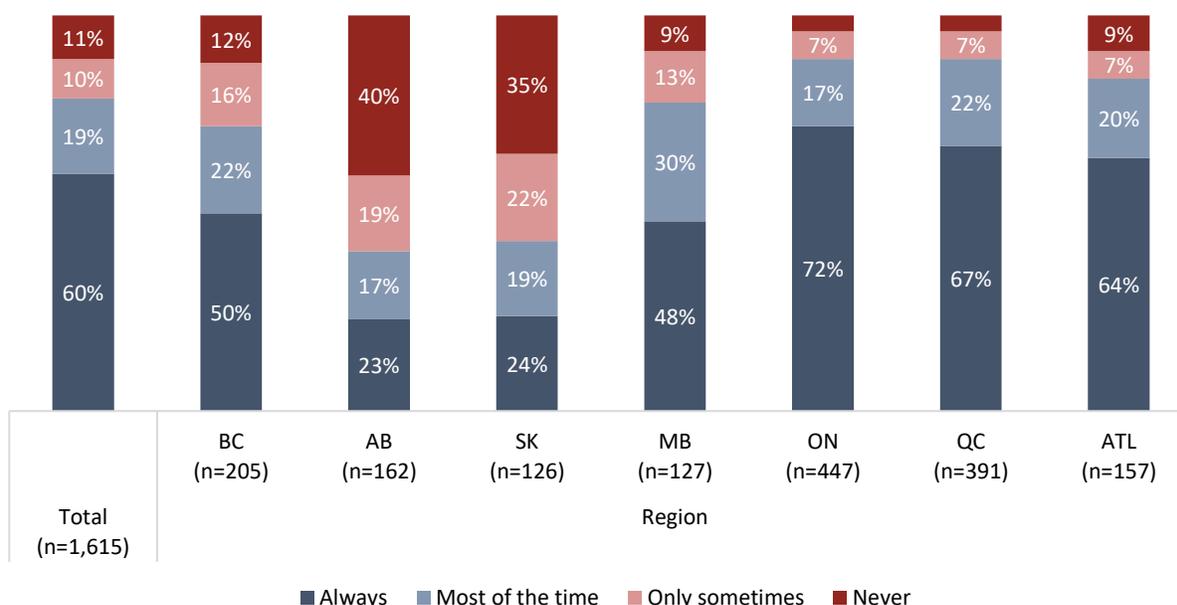
spaces always or most of the time, while six-in-ten say they “always” wear a mask when indoors or when social distance isn’t possible. Another one-in-five (19%) say they do this most of the time.

How often have you been doing each over the past week or so? (All respondents, n=1,615)					
	Washing hands/ sanitizing	Social distancing	Not shaking hands or hugging people in your life	Staying away from public spaces	Wearing a mask when I'm indoors or can't keep distance from others
Always	58%	36%	38%	13%	60%
Most of the time	33%	44%	34%	45%	19%
Only sometimes	8%	14%	18%	24%	10%
Never	1%	6%	10%	18%	11%

### **Mask use shows stark regional difference**

Mask use in Canada varies significantly by region. While three-in-five say they are wearing masks all the time when they’re close to other people indoors, only one-quarter in Alberta and Saskatchewan (homes to the highest levels of [vaccine hesitancy](#) in the country) are doing so. In Ontario and Quebec, where mask mandates are still in place for indoor spaces, uptake is much higher than on the prairies:

**How often have you been wearing a mask when indoors/when you can't keep distance from others over the past week or so?**

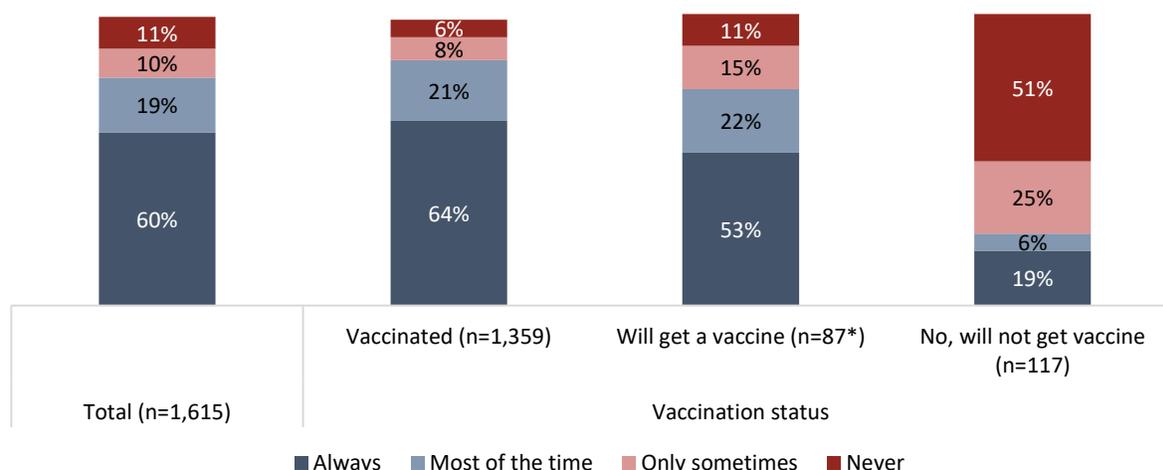


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Though they face much lower risk of COVID-19 infection, nearly two-thirds (64%) of those who are vaccinated say they always wear a mask indoors. Those who say they won't be getting vaccinated are less inclined to mask up. A majority of those who say they will not get a vaccine also say they never wear a mask indoors:

**How often have you been wearing a mask when indoors/when you can't keep distance from others over the past week or so?**



*\*Small sample size, interpret with caution*

**Part Four: Most feel the worst of the pandemic is over**

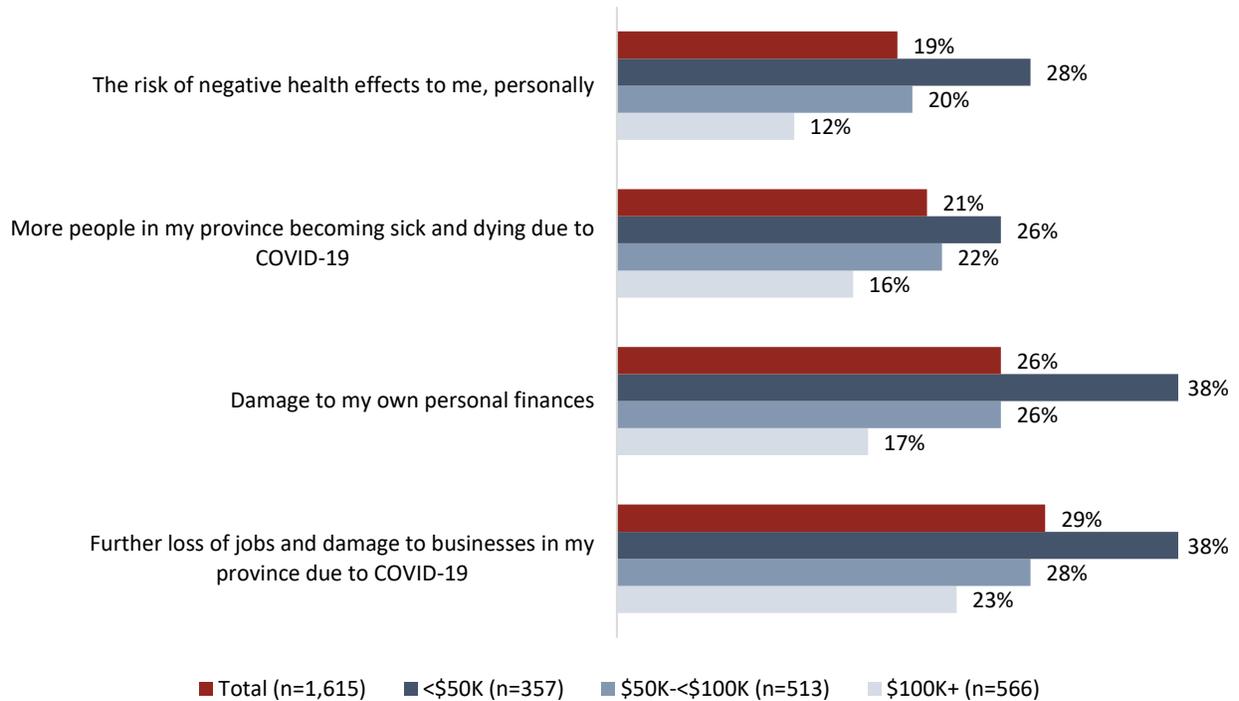
Despite a [rising fourth wave](#), most feel the worst is over when it comes to COVID-19. Concerning the virus' economic impacts, at least seven-in-ten say better days are ahead. That number rises when Canadians are asked about the health implications of the pandemic ([see detailed tables](#)).

That said, the belief the worst of the pandemic is behind us is not equal across income demographics. Studies [throughout](#) the [pandemic](#) have shown that the last 17 months were hardest on low income households. Indeed, those in households making less than \$50,000 annually harbour the most fear that there might still be dark times ahead. Nearly two-in-five in those households believe the worst is yet to come when it comes to damage to their personal finances (38%) as well as loss of jobs and businesses in their province (38%):

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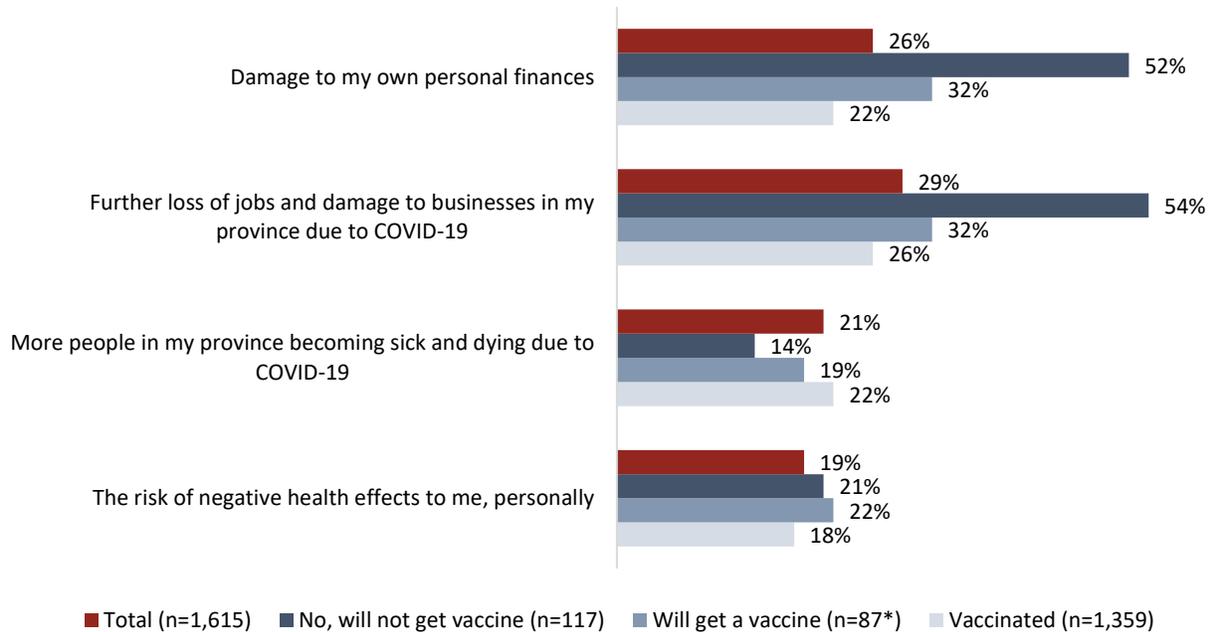
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**And, for each of the following, do you think that the worst is over, or yet to come? (Percentage choosing "the worst is yet to come" shown)**



The worry about further economic damage from the pandemic isn't limited to those in lower income brackets. A majority of those who don't want a vaccine believe the worst is yet to come when thinking of further job losses and their personal finances:

**And, for each of the following, do you think that the worst is over, or yet to come? (Percentage choosing "the worst is yet to come" shown)**



*\*Small sample size, interpret with caution*

Women are more pessimistic than men that the worst is yet to come, especially on the questions of personal and provincial health ramifications of the pandemic. Men over the age of 55 are the least worried about their personal health, while women over the age of 35 are the most fearful of further sickness and death in their province:

And, for each of the following, do you think that the worst is over, or yet to come? (Percentage choosing the worst is yet to come shown)							
	Total (n=1,615)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=175)	35-54 (n=283)	55+ (n=317)	18-34 (n=192)	35-54 (n=306)	55+ (n=342)
The risk of negative health effects to me, personally	19%	14%	17%	14%	28%	24%	20%
More people in my province becoming sick and dying due to COVID-19	21%	13%	19%	19%	20%	26%	27%
Further loss of jobs and damage to businesses in my province due to COVID-19	29%	31%	29%	25%	31%	33%	27%
Damage to my own personal finances	26%	23%	25%	27%	28%	29%	24%

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

*For detailed results by vaccination status, [click here](#).*

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