

Dwindling group of unvaccinated cite 'personal freedom' and 'health concerns' as main reasons for dodging the jab

Three-quarters of Canada's unvaccinated say side effects from vaccine are more serious than virus itself

November 3, 2021 – The fourth wave of COVID-19 has been called a pandemic of the unvaccinated and while Canada's vaccination efforts have been very successful, there is still eight per cent of the population holding out.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds unvaccinated Canadians' top reasons for avoiding the jab are "personal freedom" and "health concerns". One-third also say the main reason they have not been vaccinated is because COVID-19 is not a serious health threat.

Indeed, nearly all (90%) of the unvaccinated believe the health risks of COVID-19 are overstated while 84 per cent believe their immune system alone is good enough to fight the infection.

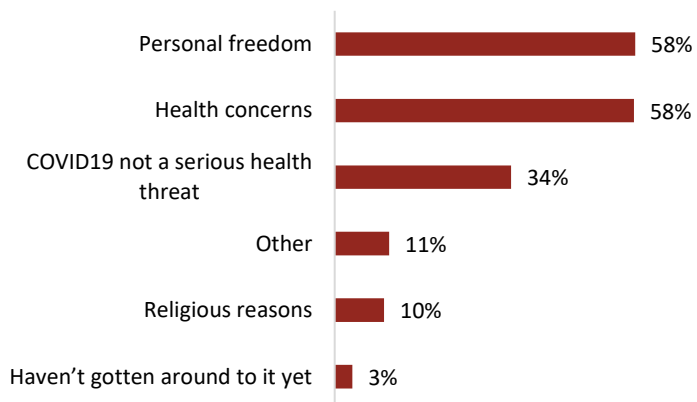
More Key Findings:

- Men – and in particular, those aged 18 to 34 – refuse to be vaccinated at a higher rate than women. One-in-ten (12%) young men say they will not get the vaccine.
- Misinformation appears to be playing a significant role among the unvaccinated as well. A majority (55%) agree with the statement "COVID-19 is a conspiracy that is all about government control."

You've said you have not been vaccinated, or that you are unsure if you will. What would you say are the main reasons for this?

Choose all that apply

(Unvaccinated, n=408, approximately eight per cent of adult population)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from Sept. 29 to Oct. 3, 2021, among a representative randomized sample of 5,011 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 +/- 2.0 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.

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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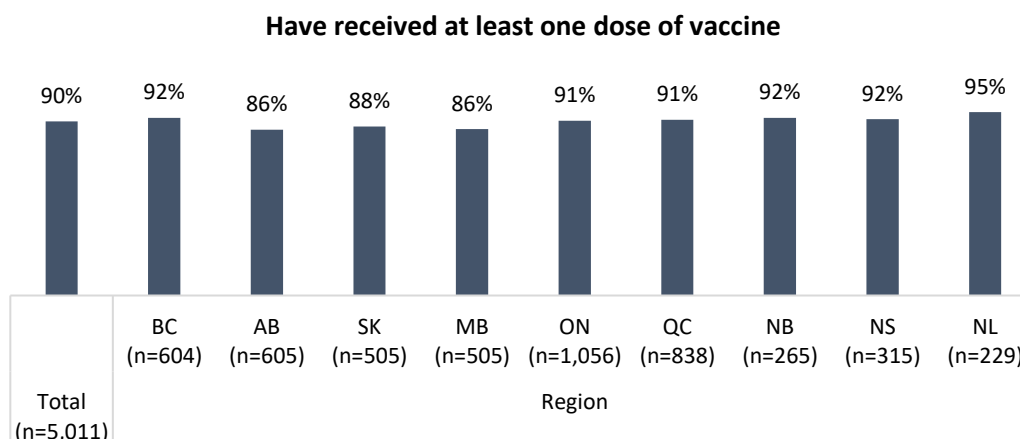
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Part One: Who are the unvaccinated?

Canada has run one of the most successful vaccination programs in the world. After [a slow start](#), Canada is the [14th most vaccinated country in the world](#). The uptake has not been even across the country, however. Respondents to the ARI survey in Alberta and Saskatchewan are less likely to report having received at least one dose although the vast majority in both provinces say they have. It should be noted, the Angus Reid Institute's sample reflects the reported behaviours of Canadians 18 years of age and older, not everyone aged 12-plus who are eligible for vaccination:

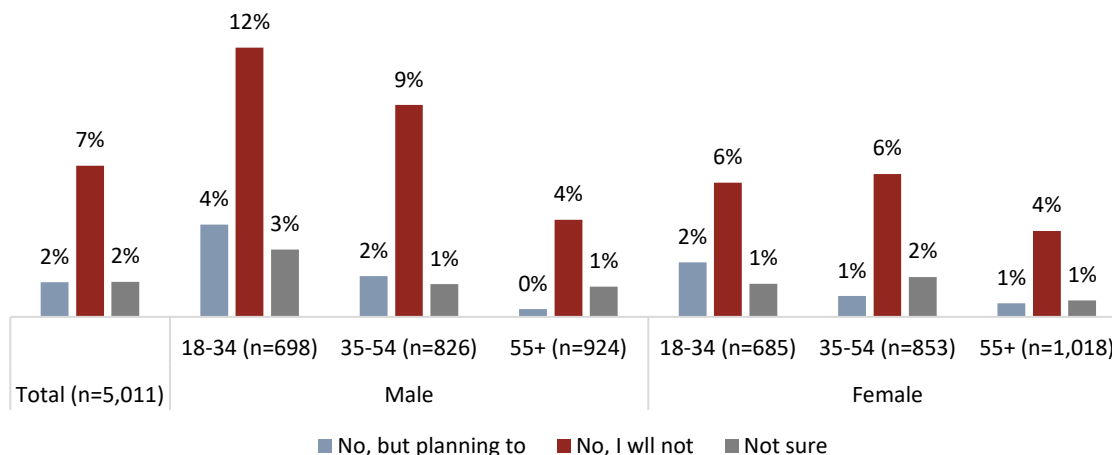


Regional disparities are one factor, but there is also variance in vaccination uptake among other demographics. Men are much more likely than women to have refused to get vaccinated, and 18- to 34-year-old men in particular say they will not get vaccinated at the highest rate, one-in-ten (12%):

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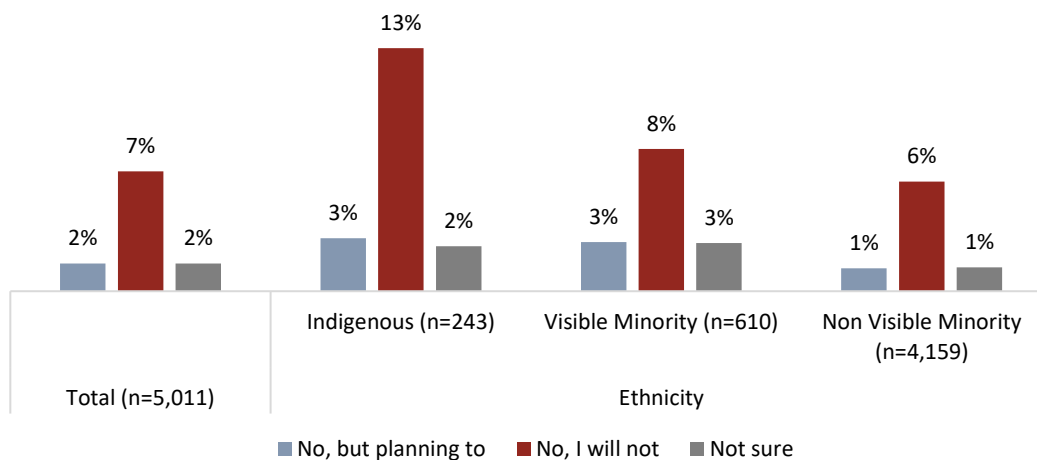
Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?



Vaccine refusal is lowest among those with university degrees, while those who stopped their education at a high school level are much more likely to say no to inoculation ([see detailed tables](#)).

Indigenous Canadians are twice as likely as those who don't identify as visible minorities to have refused to get vaccinated, and there is still much work for the government to do to overcome mistrust due to [generations of mistreatment](#) of Indigenous people at the hands of the medical system.

Have you been vaccinated against COVID-19?

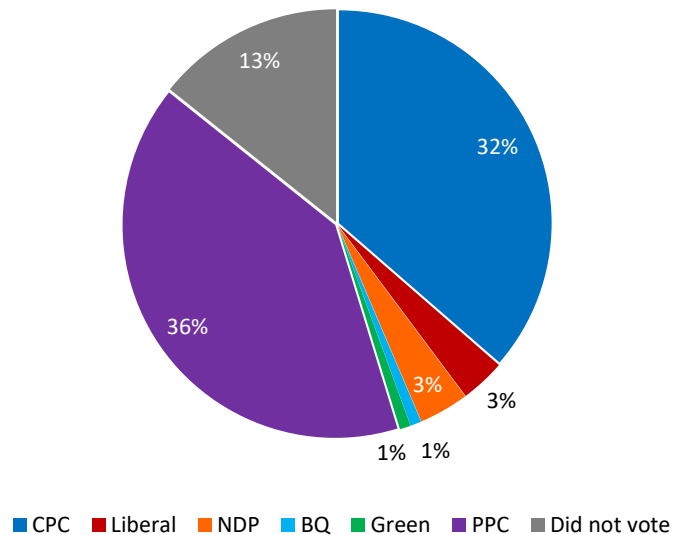


Seven-in-ten (68%) of all those who have not been vaccinated supported the CPC (32%) or PPC (36%) in the last federal election. The third largest segment of unvaccinated Canadians (13%) responded that they did not vote in the last election:

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Unvaccinated by federal vote 2021
(n=408, approximately eight per cent of adult population)



Part Two: The Vaccine Hesitant: What's stopping them?

As vaccination rates have slowed across the country, public health officials are making [emotional appeals](#) to Canadians to get vaccinated. What is behind vaccine hesitancy?

Researchers have suggested a ["5C model"](#) for explaining vaccine hesitancy in high-income countries which focuses on constraints to accessing a vaccine, confidence in the safety of the vaccine, complacency when the perceived risk is low, calculations based off of available (mis)information, and a sense of collective responsibility.

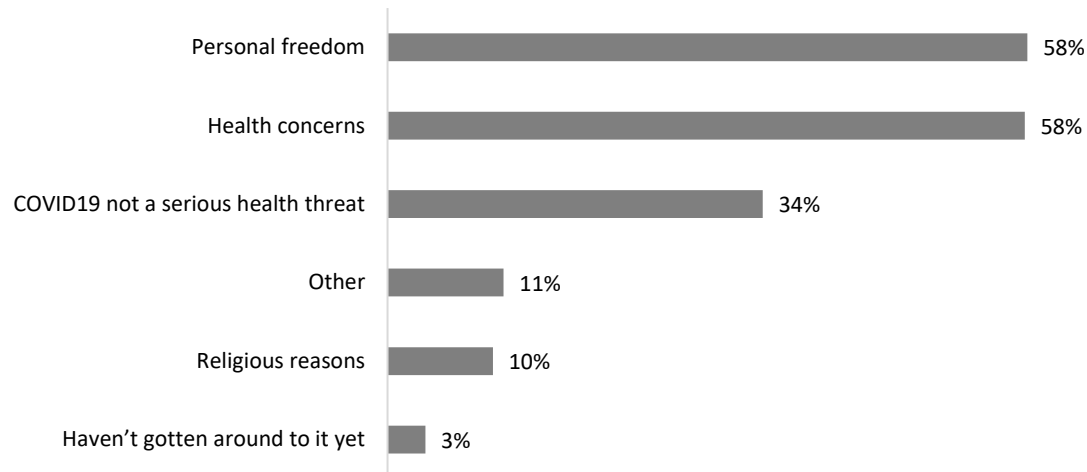
If the constraints on being able to access vaccines have largely been overcome in Canada, the data here suggests that there remains a lack of confidence in the safety of the vaccine, with three-in-five (58%) saying that they have on-going health concerns when it comes to vaccination.

An equal number say that one of the main reasons they are not vaccinated is a question of personal freedom. To what extent this is a prioritization of individual freedom over a sense of collective responsibility, or a reaction to perceived government overreach, or both, is unclear.

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**You've said you have not been vaccinated, or that you are unsure if you will.
What would you say are the main reasons for this?
(Unvaccinated, n=408, approximately eight per cent of adult population)**



In contrast with the concerns surrounding the safety of the vaccine, one-third (34%) of unvaccinated respondents reported that they did not consider COVID-19 a serious health threat. Echoing this, nine-in-ten (90%) among the unvaccinated agree with the statement that “the health risks of the disease are overstated.”

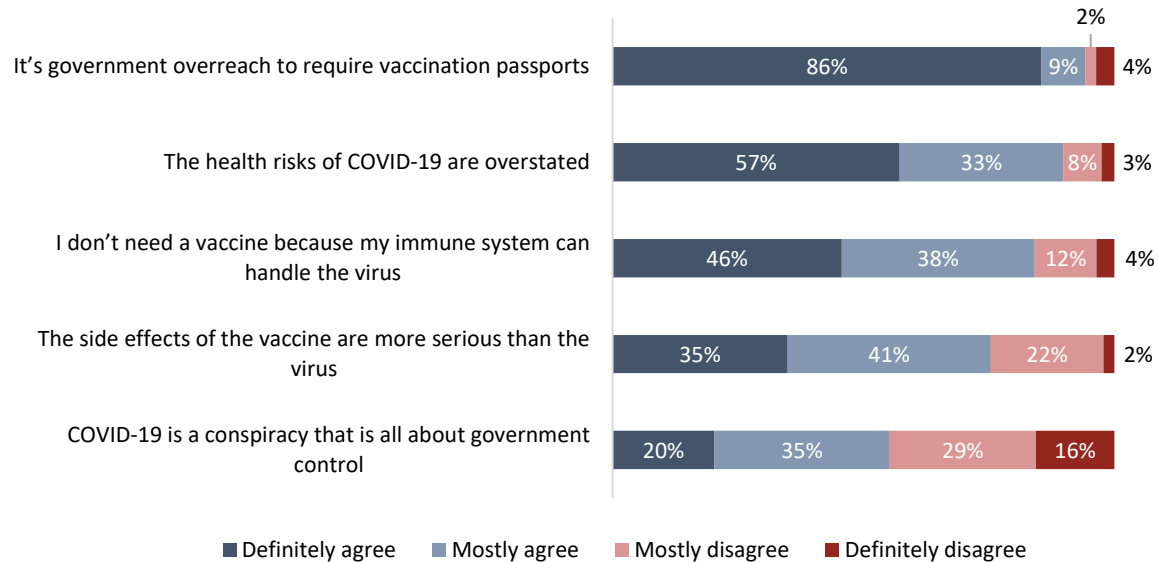
Perhaps this is explained by their calculation of risk. Four-in-five (84%) unvaccinated individuals also say their immune system could handle the virus – while three-quarters (76%) agree that the side effects of the vaccine are worse than the virus itself.

Part of this risk assessment could perhaps be explained by the prevalence of misinformation online and the ways in which it is [peddled by influencers](#). Another part of this equation may be a lack of trust in public institutions. Reflective of this, over half (55%) of unvaccinated respondents agree with the statement that COVID-19 is a conspiracy that is all about government control.

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**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Unvaccinated, n=408, approximately eight per cent of adult population)**

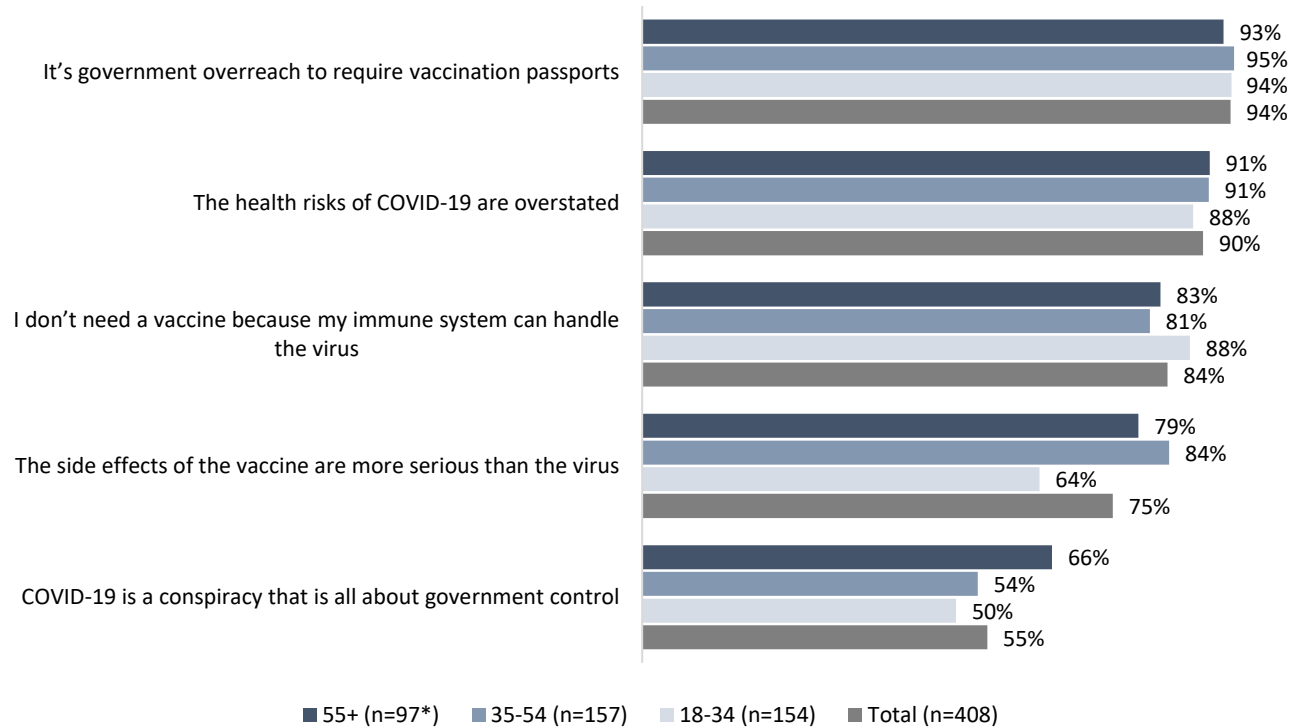


Similar numbers of all ages of the unvaccinated agree that “vaccination passports are an example of government overreach” and “the health risks of COVID-19 are overstated”, but there is divergence based on age on some of the other statements. Those 55 and older are more likely to believe misinformation about COVID-19 being a conspiracy theory, while 18- to 34-year-olds are the least likely to say the vaccine side effects are worse than the virus.

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**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(Unvaccinated, n=408, approximately eight per cent of adult population)
(Percentage selecting 'agree' shown)**



**Small sample size, interpret with caution*

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

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