

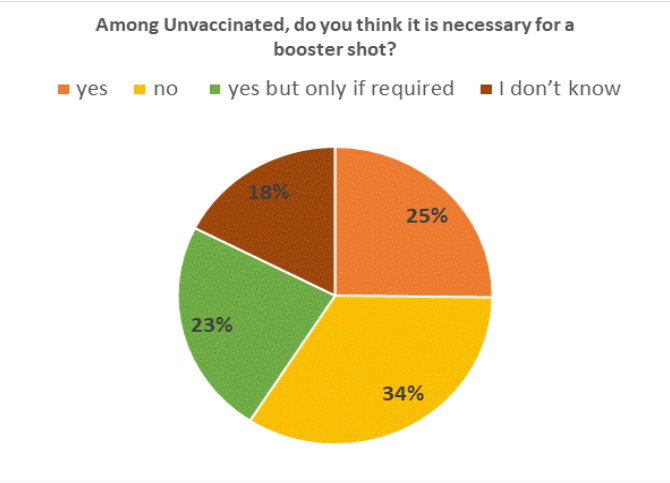


Characteristics of Unboosted Canadians

With the emerging variants of Omicron, coronavirus infection rates in Canada have been soaring, even among the vaccinated. Estimates in BC and Ontario suggest that as many as 40% of the population has already been infected (Miller 2022). One of the ways to end the pandemic is to encourage more eligible people to get the booster shot. Vaccine coverage in Canada has been good. As of April 19, 84.8% of the population has received 2 vaccinations (Government of Canada, 2022). However, the uptake in booster shots has not been as good. In Canada, 54.2% of the population over the age of 12 has had the recommended three doses of the COVID-19 vaccination (Health Canada 2022). In our panel study of 2,608 participants in Canada, 59.5% of the participants have had their booster shots as of March 25, 2022. Another 27% had two vaccinations and 1.5% had one vaccination. Eleven percent had not yet been vaccinated, making our results fairly close to the Canadian averages among adults to date. As there is an active campaign to encourage more Canadians to take their third booster shot, we decided to share our results about the reasons why Canadians with two vaccinations have not received their booster shot. The goal is to assist health care providers, public health officials and others with targeted educational campaigns to increase the booster rate across Canada.

Among unvaccinated Canadians, how many think the booster shot is necessary?

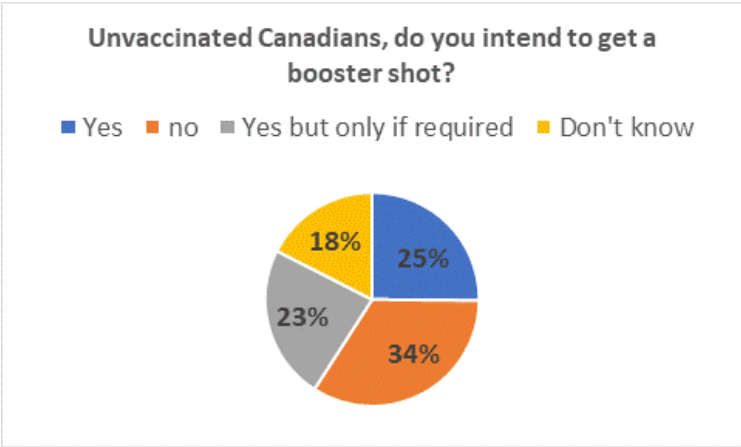
Before we discuss the information that unboosted Canadians might require in order to increase the booster rate, it's necessary to understand their mindset about vaccines. We asked the question "do you think a third/booster shot is necessary for COVID-19?" Our data shows that 25% of the unboosted think that a booster shot is necessary. Another 23% will arrange to get their booster but only if required. Of the remainder, 34% do



not think a booster shot is necessary and 18% do not know.

Among unvaccinated Canadians, how many intend to arrange for a booster?

Given that approximately 45% of eligible Canadians have not yet received a booster shot (Health Canada 2022), it is important from a public health and education perspective how many of them intend to eventually get a booster shot. According to our results, 25% of the unboosted indicated that they are going to receive a booster shot. They just have not arranged to do so just

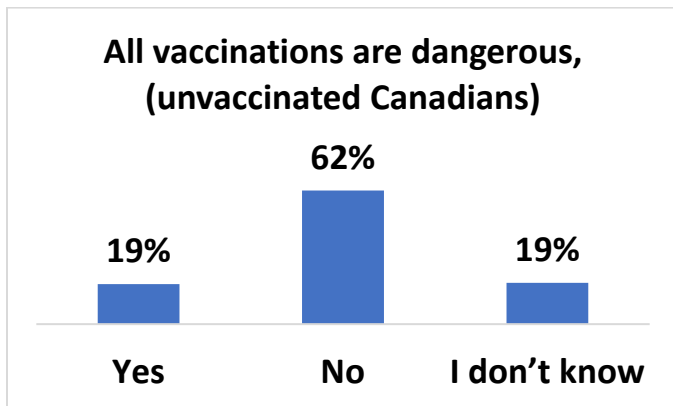


yet. Almost a quarter (23%) said they would only take a booster shot if absolutely required. Another 18% were unsure. One third (34%) of unboosted Canadians said they would not take a booster shot.

Pre-pandemic vaccination beliefs

In order to better understand why the unboosted are not getting their booster shot, we need to have some measure of vaccine acceptance prior to the pandemic. We asked participants, "prior to the development of the vaccines, how hesitant were you to receiving a vaccine?" Among the unboosted, 26% said they were very hesitant to get vaccinated while another 36% were somewhat hesitant to get the vaccine. The remaining third were not hesitant.

Another possible indicator regarding the resistance of receiving the booster shot may be due to beliefs that all vaccines are dangerous. In the figure below, we find that 19% of the unvaccinated believe that all vaccinations are dangerous. Another 19% are unsure. The good news is that 62% of the unboosted do not believe all vaccines are dangerous and this is a group that can be educated regarding the importance of receiving a booster.



Source: COVIDImpacts.ca study, April 2022.

We feel that the 62% of those indicating they do not believe vaccines are dangerous, along with some of the 19% of those who 'don't know', may be amenable to some education regarding the importance of being vaccinated and boosted against the coronavirus.

Myths that may affect COVID-19 booster uptake among the unboosted

There are many myths about coronavirus and the vaccine that are currently circulating. We wondered what myths the unboosted Canadians most believed and whether or not these beliefs were preventing them from getting their booster shot immediately.

The following are the most popular responses to the myths regarding COVID-19 and the vaccination. We believe that targeted education and outreach campaigns can address many of these concerns and hopefully increase the booster rate among unboosted Canadians.

- ▶ **36.7% believe that researchers rushed the development of the vaccine so its effectiveness and safety cannot be trusted.**
- ▶ **28.4% believe the side effects of the vaccine are dangerous (32% don't know).**
- ▶ **25.6% believe the new mRNA technology can be used to make vaccines for the common cold, HIV (42% don't know).**
- ▶ **21.3% believe the vaccine changes your DNA (29% don't know).**
- ▶ **21.3% believe that the messenger RNA technology is brand new and too early to use on humans (42% don't know).**
- ▶ **20.5% believe that a third shot is not needed if you have already contracted coronavirus (20.4% don't know).**
- ▶ **17% believe that the vaccination for COVID-19 causes infertility (19% don't know).**
- ▶ **15% believe that getting the coronavirus means we can stop taking precautions (11% don't know).**
- ▶ **10.4% believe that getting the vaccine gives you coronavirus (18.2% don't know).**
- ▶ **10% believe it was created using aborted fetuses (36% don't know).**
- ▶ **7.3% believe there is a microchip that the government uses to track you (22.2% don't know).**

Who are the unboosted?

There is much discussion about the population clusters who are not vaccinated, but who are the people who are not boosted? Our data reveals the following:



- **56.8% are women**
- **21% are between the ages of 45 and 54 years old**
- **The largest group are not affiliated with any religion (36.8%)**
- **29% have no political affiliation and another 23% are centrist leaning**

REFERENCES

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The researchers: A cross-national team of over 30 researchers led by Dr. Lori Wilkinson, Dr. Kiera Ladner (both of the University of Manitoba) and Dr. Jack Jedwab (Association for Canadian Studies) They have received funding from CIHR for this study *19's differential impact on Indigenous Peoples and Newcomers: A socioeconomic analysis of Canada, US and Mexico.*

The study: The team has been collecting data in Canada since March 9 2020 and the United States since March

27, 2020. Ongoing survey waves now include Mexico. Our goal is to measure and follow the changes in attitudes, behaviours, health and socioeconomic outcomes among persons living in all three countries using a mixed methodology of surveys and unstructured interviews. Data for this factsheet was collected March 25 2022.

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