

All in this Together?

CANADIANS' VIEWS ON MASKS,
VACCINES AND LOCKDOWNS DURING
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A REPORT FROM
THE CONFEDERATION
OF TOMORROW
2021 SURVEY OF CANADIANS

Final Report

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Institute**
For Survey Research

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The **Confederation of Tomorrow** surveys are annual studies conducted by an association of the country's leading public policy organizations: the **Environics Institute for Survey Research**, the **Canada West Foundation**, the **Centre D'Analyse Politique – Constitution et Fédéralisme**, the **Institute for Research on Public Policy**, the **Brian Mulroney Institute of Government** and the **Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy**. The surveys give voice to Canadians about the major issues shaping the future of the federation and their political communities. The 2021 study consists of a survey of 5,814 adults, conducted online in the provinces between January 25 and February 17; and online and by telephone in the territories between January 25 and March 1. Survey results are weighted by region, gender, age, language, education, immigrant background and Indigenous identity to ensure they are representative of the country as a whole. When results are reported for the territories (individually or combined), these are weighted separately to ensure they are representative of that region.

Executive summary

A year into the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to limit the spread of the virus continue to depend in large part on the willingness of citizens to modify their behaviours to conform with public health guidelines, notably those relating to physical distancing and wearing masks. More recently, the focus has turned to ensuring that citizens will agree to get vaccinated once a vaccine becomes available to them. The Confederation of Tomorrow 2021 survey of Canadians finds that there is widespread agreement across the country on key aspects of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the requirement to wear masks in public, the importance of getting vaccinated, and the need for a prudent approach to reopening the economy. One reason for this agreement is that, in the midst of a public health crisis, the public continues to place a high degree of confidence in scientists and medical experts.

Wearing masks in public

Canadians are not only complying with the requirement to wear masks in public, they also are generally accepting of the fact that they need to do so. Nine in ten Canadians say that, in the past month, they have worn a mask or face covering all or most of the time when in stores or other businesses. And relatively few Canadians say they are bothered by the need to do so. More than three in four say they are *not* bothered when stores and businesses require customers to wear a mask for service; while four in five *are* bothered when people around them in public do not wear masks. These behaviours and attitudes vary somewhat by age: younger Canadians are less likely than their older counterparts to wear masks in public all or most of the time, and more likely to be bothered by mask-wearing requirements.

Canadians are somewhat less likely than Americans to be bothered by the requirement to wear masks in stores and businesses, and somewhat more likely to be bothered when people around them in public do not wear a mask. The main difference between the two countries, however, is that there is stronger cross-party agreement on this issue in Canada.

Intention to be vaccinated

Three in four Canadians say that they would definitely or probably get vaccinated to prevent COVID-19, if a vaccine were available to them. Fewer than one in five would probably or definitely not choose to get vaccinated (including fewer than one in ten who are definite that they would not). Younger Canadians, racialized Canadians, Indigenous Peoples and Canadians who did not continue their education past high school are less likely to say they will definitely get the vaccine. Even among these groups, however, relatively few say they definitely would not.

There are modest differences among supporters of the main federal political parties: supporters of the Bloc Québécois, the Liberal Party and the NDP are more likely than average to say they will definitely get the vaccine, whereas supporters of the Green Party and the Conservative Party are slightly less likely than average to be this certain. But fewer than one in four supporters of any of these parties say they probably or definitely would not get the vaccine.

Canadians are much more certain about their intention to get vaccinated than are Americans. And the gap in intention to be vaccinated between Democrats and Republicans in the U.S. is currently twice as large as that between Liberals and Conservatives in Canada.

Reopening the economy

Most Canadians support a cautious approach to reopening the economy. Nearly three in four prefer that governments keep people as safe as possible from the spread of COVID-19, even if that means reopening the economy more slowly, compared to one in five who prefer a faster reopening of the economy, even if that means that more people might end up getting sick. Two in three residents of each province favour the more cautious approach. There is also strong support in the country's largest cities for the option of reopening the economy more slowly to keep people as safe as possible.

While majorities in every age group favour the more cautious approach to reopening the economy, the views of younger Canadians are somewhat less one-sided. Support for a faster reopening is especially strong among younger men: men between the ages of 18 and 24 are in fact evenly split between the two options of a faster and slower reopening. Conservative Party supporters are more supportive of a faster reopening of the economy than supporters of any other the other main parties; at the same time, fewer than one in three of the supporters of *any* of the main parties favour this option, while more than three in five favour the more prudent option of a slower reopening.

Restrictions on movement between communities

Most Canadians are supportive of restrictions on mobility to limit the spread of COVID-19, but this support is much stronger in the case of international travel than of local travel between communities. Almost nine in ten support allowing the government to stop people from moving across the international border between Canada and the United States; more than three in four support allowing the government to stop people from moving between provinces and territories within Canada; and three in five support allowing the government to stop people from moving between different cities or towns within each province or territory.

Strong support for restrictions on movement between provinces and territories is highest in Quebec and Atlantic Canada, and lowest in the territories and in Alberta. Among supporters of the main federal political parties, Conservative supporters stand out as the least supportive of each of these restrictions on mobility.

Confidence in scientists and medical experts

Large majorities of Canadians have confidence in scientists, and trust the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada. Confidence in scientists is much higher than confidence in governments; confidence in scientists also varies much less across the country than does confidence in governments.

There is no significant variation among regions in the level of trust in the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada. Trust in this advice is also expressed by at least seven in ten Canadians, regardless of which of the main federal political parties they support.

What is most striking, however, is that two in three of those who lack confidence in governments in general nonetheless say that they trust the medical and health advice that the Government of Canada gives. Reassuringly, this suggests that confidence in medical experts generally outweighs doubts about governments.

Wearing masks in public

Canadians are not only complying with the requirement to wear masks in public, they also are generally accepting of the fact that they need to do so; relatively few are bothered by the requirements for them to wear a mask in order to be served in store, and a majority are bothered when others around them do not follow the rules. Younger Canadians are less likely than their older counterparts to wear masks in public all or most of the time; and more likely to be bothered by the requirement to wear masks in stores and businesses.

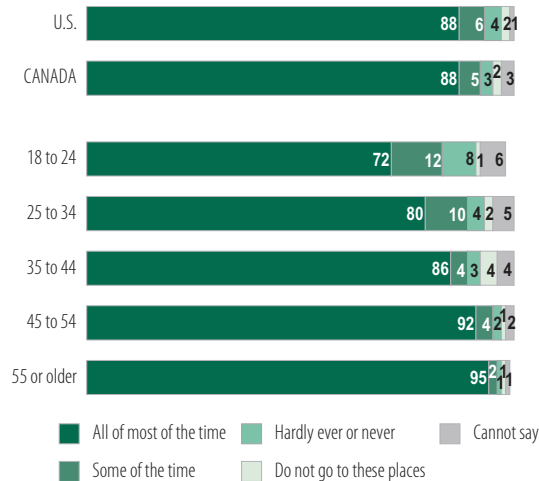
Wearing masks in public to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Nine in ten (88%) Canadians say that, in the past month, they have worn a mask or face covering all or most of the time when in stores or other businesses (which remains mandatory in most communities). An additional five percent have done so some of the time. Only three percent say they hardly ever or have never worn a mask (two percent say that have not been going out to stores, and three percent do not answer).

Large majorities in every province say they have been wearing masks all or most of the time when they have visiting stores or businesses. Mask-wearing is less frequent in the three territories: in Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut (combined), 57 percent say they wear masks all or most of the time, and an additional 26 percent say they have been doing so some of the time. (The requirement to wear masks in public has not been in place for as long, or as uniformly, in the territories compared to the provinces.)

Across the country as a whole, the main difference in behaviour is between younger and older Canadians: the proportion wearing masks all or most of the time when they are in stores ranges from 72 percent among those age 18 to 24, to 95 percent among those age 55 and older. That said, even among 18 to 24-year-olds, fewer than one in ten (8%) say they are hardly ever or never wearing masks when out in public.

How often have you worn a mask or face covering when in stores or other businesses?

U.S. and Canada totals, Canada by age



Q.COV-5

In the past month, how often, if ever, have you worn a mask or face covering when in stores or other businesses? (U.S. data from the Pew Research Center [February 2021])

The frequency of mask-wearing in stores or businesses does not vary significantly by gender, educational attainment, household income or immigrant background, but it does differ somewhat between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people: 72 percent of those identifying as Indigenous, compared to 89 percent of non-Indigenous Canadians, say they have been wearing masks all or most of the time when they are in stores (a difference which may relate to variations in regulations and in incidences of the disease in different areas of the country). But only about one in ten Indigenous Peoples (9%) say they are hardly ever or never wearing masks when in stores or businesses.

Acceptance of the requirement to wear masks in public places.

Relatively few Canadians say they are bothered by the requirement to wear a mask in order to shop in stores or businesses.

- More than three in four (77%) are bothered either not at all (68%) or not too much (9%) when stores and businesses require customers to wear a mask for service; one in five (20%) are bothered either some (7%) or a lot (13%).
- What does bother Canadians, however, is when people around them in public do not wear masks: four in five (79%) are bothered a lot (61%) or some (19%) when this happens, compared to fewer than one in five (18%) who are bothered not too much (8%) or not at all (10%).

Notably, most of those who say they are bothered by the requirement to wear masks nonetheless say that they've been wearing masks all (70%) or most of the time (18%) when they visit stores or businesses. Only one in ten of those who are bothered by the requirement say they hardly ever (6%) or never (4%) wear masks when shopping.

Across the country, a majority in each province say they are *not at all* bothered when stores and businesses require customers to wear a mask; and at least two in three say they are either *not at all* or *not much* bothered (the proportion ranges from 68% in Saskatchewan, to 79% in Alberta). Similarly, at least 50 percent in each province (with the exception of PEI: 44%) say they are bothered *a lot* when people around them in public places do not wear masks; and over 70 percent in each province say they are either bothered *a lot* or *some* (the proportion ranges from 71% in PEI, to 85% in Quebec).

Views are somewhat more divided in the three territories, however, where there have been far fewer cases of the disease: 37 percent of residents of the territories are bothered a lot or some by the requirement to wear masks, compared to the Canadian average of 20 percent; 34 percent of territory residents are not much or not at all bothered when people around them in public places do not wear masks, compared to the Canadian average of 18 percent.

Younger Canadians are more likely to be bothered when stores and businesses require customers to wear a mask: one in three (33%) 18 to 24-year-olds are bothered a lot or some by the requirement to wear masks, compared to 13 percent of those age 55 or older.

Canada and the U.S. compared: wearing masks in stores

Requirements to wear masks in public are more uniform across Canada than in the U.S. Nonetheless, Canadians and Americans are just as likely to say that, in the past month, they have been wearing a mask or face covering all or most of the time when in stores or other businesses. However, Americans are slightly more likely to be bothered by the requirement to wear masks in stores and businesses, and somewhat less bothered when people around them in public do not wear a mask.

The main difference between the two countries, however, is that there is a stronger cross-party agreement on this issue in Canada. Four in five (80%) Americans who support the Democratic Party say they are either bothered not too much or not at all when stores and businesses require customers to wear a mask for service, compared to 64 percent of those who support the Republican Party. There is much less of a gap between supporters of Canada's two largest political parties, with 78 percent of Liberals and 74 percent to Conservatives saying they are either bothered not too much or not at all by this requirement.

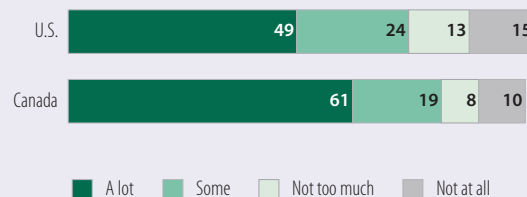
There is a wider gap between supporters of the Conservative Party in Canada, and supporters of other main parties (other than the Liberal Party): 80 percent of Green Party supporters, 86 percent of Bloc Québécois supporters and 87 percent of NDP supporters are bothered not too much or not at all when stores and businesses require customers to wear a mask for service. In this case, however, the differences indicate greater acceptance of mask-wearing, rather than greater discomfort. The only group of federal partisans that expresses significant discomfort with the requirement to wear masks is People's Party of Canada supporters (52% are bothered by the requirement); but this group represents only two percent of voters.

Data for the United States is from the *Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel, Wave 79*, conducted in November 2020 with a sample of 12,648 adults.

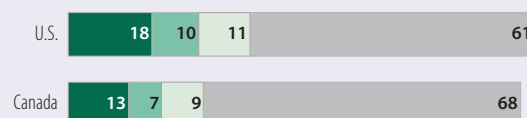
Feelings about the requirement to wear masks in public places

U.S. and Canada

Does it bother you when:
People around you in public places do not wear masks?



Stores/businesses require customers to wear a mask for service?



Q.COV-6

How much, if at all, does it bother you when ... ? (U.S. data the Pew Research Center [November 2020])

Intention to be vaccinated

Most Canadians say that they will get vaccinated to prevent COVID-19, and fewer than one in ten say they definitely will not get vaccinated. Younger Canadians, racialized Canadians, Indigenous Peoples and Canadians who did not continue their education past high school are less likely to say they will definitely get the vaccine. Even among these groups, however, relatively few say they definitely will *not* get vaccinated.

Intention to be vaccinated. Three in four Canadians say that they would definitely or probably get vaccinated, if a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available to them. Only 17 percent would probably or definitely not choose to get vaccinated.

Those who intend to get vaccinated are more likely than not to feel certain about their choice: overall, 52 percent of Canadians say they *definitely* will get the vaccine, while 23 percent say they *probably* will. The remainder of the population is split between those who say they will *probably not* get the vaccine (8%), those who say they will *definitely not* get the vaccine (8%), and those who do not provide an answer (8%). At the time of the survey earlier this year, one percent said they had already been vaccinated.

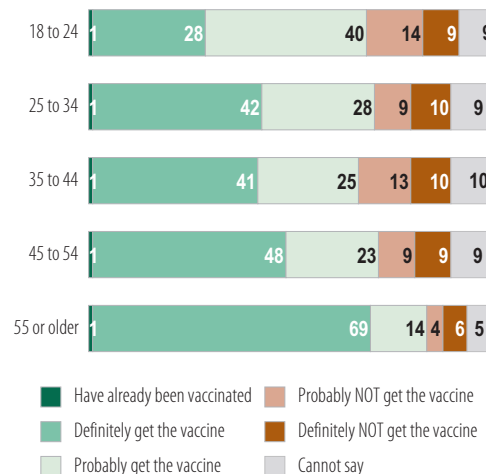
The proportion saying they *definitely* will get the vaccine varies somewhat across the country, from a low of 33 percent in Prince Edward Island, to a high of 63 percent in Quebec. There is less variation, however, in the proportion saying they either *definitely* or *probably* will get the vaccine: only in PEI (56%) and Nunavut (69%) does this figure fall below 70 percent. The proportion saying they will *definitely not* get the vaccine is highest in the Prairies (11%) and in PEI (16%).

There is some variation in how certain Canadians feel about their intention to get vaccinated by age, identity and socio-economic background.

- Younger Canadians are much less certain than older Canadians. Among those between the ages of 18 and 24, 28 percent say they *definitely* will get the vaccine; this figure reaches 69 percent among those age 55 and older. However, younger Canadians are more likely to say they

Intention to be vaccinated against COVID-19

By Age



Q.COV-7

If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available today, would you...?

will *probably* get the vaccine. In no age group does the proportion saying they will *definitely not* get the vaccine rise above 10 percent.

- Racialized Canadians are less certain than non-racialized Canadians. Two in five (39%) of those who identify as racialized say they *definitely* will get the vaccine, compared to three in five (57%) of those who identify as white. There is also considerable variation among racialized groups, with the proportion saying they *definitely* will get the vaccine ranging from 50 percent among those identifying as South Asian and 48 percent among those identifying as Chinese, to 25 percent among those identifying as Black.¹ Once again, however, those who are less definite about their intention to get vaccinated are more likely to say they probably will, while relatively few say they definitely will not. Only 12 percent of Black Canadians say they *definitely will not* get vaccinated, which is only slightly higher than the national average of eight percent.

¹ The sample size for Canadians who identify as Black is very small (N=82) and should be treated with caution.

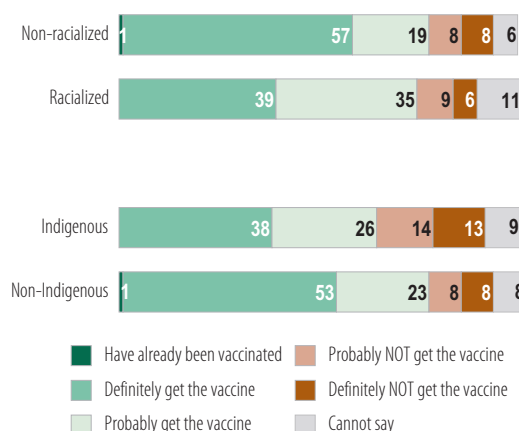
- Indigenous Canadians are somewhat less certain about their intention to get vaccinated than non-Indigenous Canadians: 38 percent of those who identify as Indigenous say they *definitely* will get the vaccine, compared to 53 percent of non-Indigenous Canadians. In this case, however, there is little difference between the two groups in the proportion saying they will *probably* get the vaccine, and a greater difference between the proportion expressing some hesitancy: 27 percent of those who identify as Indigenous say they will *probably* or *definitely not* get the vaccine, compared to 16 percent of non-Indigenous Canadians. Within the Indigenous population, there is little difference among those who identify as First Nations, Métis and Inuit.
- Certainty about the intention to be vaccinated increases with both educational attainment and household income. Four in five (82%) of those with a university degree say they would definitely or probably get the vaccine, compared to two in three (68%) of those who did not continue their education after high school. The proportion holding this view is also lower among those with household incomes of \$30,000 or less; 67 percent of Canadians in these households say they would definitely or probably get the vaccine, which is somewhat lower than the average of 75 percent.

There are also some modest differences among supporters of the main federal political parties. Supporters of the Bloc Québécois (72%), the Liberal Party (60%) and the NDP (58%) are all more likely than average to say they will definitely get the vaccine; whereas supporters of the Green Party (50%) and the Conservative Party (47%) are slightly less likely than average to be this certain. Among each of these groups of partisans, however, at least seven in ten say they will definitely or probably get the vaccine; this is the case for 87 percent of Bloc Québécois supporters, 85 percent of Liberal supporters, 81 percent of NDP supporters, 79 percent of Green Party supporters, and 71 percent of Conservative supporters.

The proportion saying that they will probably or definitely not get the vaccine ranges from 23 percent among Conservative supporters and 17 percent among Green Party supporters, to 13 percent among NDP supporters, 10 percent among supporters of the Bloc and nine percent among Liberal supporters.²

Intention to be vaccinated against COVID-19

By identity



Q.COV-7

If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available today, would you...?

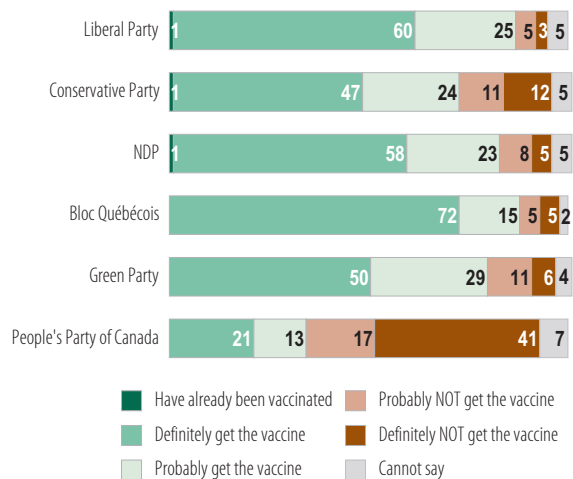
² A much larger group of supporters of the People's Party of Canada (59%) say they will probably or definitely not get the vaccine. However, support of this party currently comprise only two percent of voters.

Much more significant than these variations among demographic groups and party supporters, however, are variations among those with different views of governments and experts.

- 27 percent of those who agree that “the government should not tell average citizens like me what we can and cannot do” say they *probably or definitely will not* get the vaccine, compared to nine percent of those who disagree with that statement.
- 30 percent of those who feel that governments have a negative impact on most people’s lives say they *probably or definitely will not* get the vaccine, compared to seven percent who see governments as having a positive impact, and 14 percent of those who feel that governments don’t have much impact on most people’s lives.
- 52 percent of those who have little or no trust in scientists say they *probably or definitely will not* get the vaccine, compared to 11 percent of those who have a lot or some trust in scientists (note that only 12% of Canadians fall into the former group, having little or no trust in scientists [see the further discussion of this question in the *Confidence in scientists and medical experts* section]).

Intention to be vaccinated against COVID-19

By federal vote intention



Q.COVID-7

If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available today, would you...?

Canada and the U.S. compared: intention to get vaccinated

Canadians are much more certain about their intention to get vaccinated than are Americans. In November 2020, only 29 percent of Americans said they would definitely get the vaccine against COVID-19, and 60 percent said they would definitely or probably get it, compared to 39 percent who said they would definitely or probably not the vaccine. More recently, in February 2021, a significant proportion of the America population (19%) reported they had already been vaccinated; however, three in ten (30%) at that time said they would probably or definitely not get the vaccine. This is about twice as many as the proportion of Canadians who held that view in the Confederation of Tomorrow 2021 survey conducted around the same time.

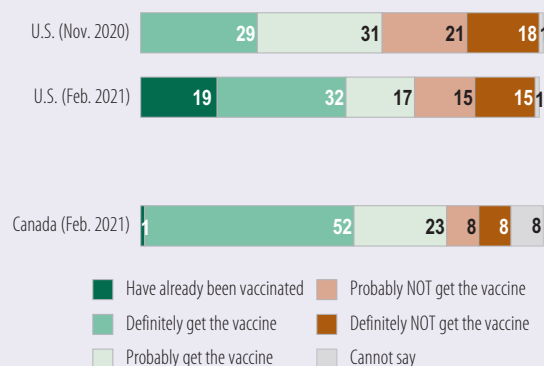
Moreover, there is greater hesitation among major components of the population within the United States than within Canada. For instance, in November 2020, 57 percent of Black Americans said they would probably or definitely not get the vaccine. This fell to 37 percent in February 2021, by which time 15 percent of Black Americans had received at least one dose of the vaccine. By comparison, in February 2021, only 15 percent of racialized Canadians, and 21 percent of Black Canadians, said they would probably or definitely not get the vaccine.³

In terms of supporters of major political parties, Republicans remain significantly less open to vaccination. In November 2020, Republican supporters were evenly split between those who definitely or probably intended to get the vaccine (50%), and those who definitely or probably would not (49%). By February 2021, after vaccinations had begun, the proportion of Republican supporters who either had been vaccinated or intended to had reached only 56 percent, compared to 83 percent among supporters of the Democratic Party (a gap of 27 points). This is twice as large as the 14-point difference in intention to be vaccinated between Liberals and Conservatives in Canada.

Data for the United States is from the Pew Research Center's American Trends Panel, **Wave 79** (conducted in November 2020 with a sample of 12,648 adults) and **Wave 83** (conducted in February 2021 with a sample of 10,121 adults).

Intention to be vaccinated against COVID-19

Canada and the United States



Q.COV-7

If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available today, would you...?
(U.S. data from the Pew Research Center)

³ The sample size for Canadians who identify as Black is very small (N=82) and should be treated with caution. The sample size for all racialized people in the Canadian survey is much larger (N=638).

Reopening the economy

Nearly three in four Canadians support a cautious approach to reopening the economy, preferring that governments reopen the economy more slowly in order to keep people as safe as possible from the spread of COVID-19. Two in three of residents of each province favour this more cautious approach, as do more than three in five supporters of each of the main federal political parties.

Since the start of the pandemic, provincial and territorial governments across the country have had the responsibility for imposing restrictions on economic activity within their jurisdictions in order to limit the spread of COVID-19. Finding the right balance between the need to bring the virus under control, and the desire of their citizens to return to work, shopping and their social lives, has been difficult. In a number of jurisdictions, restrictions have been lifted – allowing stores, gyms, and bars and restaurants to reopen – only to be reimposed again as the number of COVID-19 cases began to rise.

Approximately one year after the arrival of the pandemic in Canada, a strong majority of Canadians remain supportive of a more cautious approach to reopening the economy. Asked to choose between a faster or slower reopening:

- 73 percent of Canadians say that “governments should keep people as safe as possible from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, even if that means reopening the economy more slowly.”
- 19 percent think that “governments should reopen the economy faster than they are doing now, even if that means that more people might end up getting sick from COVID-19.”
- An additional nine percent did not choose between these two options.

Views on how quickly to reopen the economy By province/territory



Q.COVID-9

As you know, governments in Canada are trying to find the right balance between the need to keep people safe from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and the need to reopen the economy and get people back to work. Which of the following do you think is the best approach?

There is general agreement on the preference for a more prudent approach right across the country. Almost two-thirds of residents of each province say that government should reopen the economy more slowly to keep people as safe as possible, ranging from a low of 64 percent in Alberta, to a high of 79 percent in Quebec. Agreement in the northern territories is somewhat lower, but still a majority, at 61 percent. In no jurisdiction do more than one in three favour a faster reopening of the economy (when presented as an option that might mean more people could get sick from COVID-19).

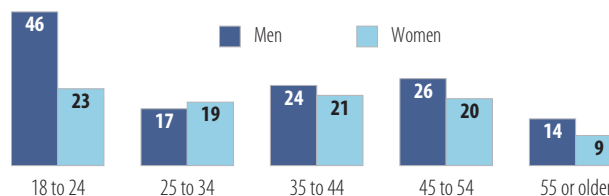
There is also strong support in the country's largest cities for the option of reopening the economy more slowly to keep people as safe as possible. In cities of one million or more residents, where the measures limiting economic activity have been the most restrictive, 72 percent favour a slower reopening. This ranges from 67 percent in B.C. (Vancouver) and 68 percent in Ontario (Toronto/Ottawa), to 72 percent in Alberta (Calgary/Edmonton), to 80 percent in Quebec (Montreal).

Once again, there is some variation in preference among age groups: while majorities in every age group favour the more cautious approach to reopening the economy, the views of younger Canadians are somewhat less one-sided: 32 percent of 18 to 24-year-olds say that governments should reopen the economy faster, even if that means that more people might get sick from COVID-19, compared to only 12 percent of those age 55 and older. Support for a faster reopening is especially strong among younger men: 46 percent of men between the ages of 18 and 24 favour reopening the economy faster, even if that means that more people might get sick from COVID-19. Men in this age group are in fact evenly split between this option and the option of a slower reopening – in contrast to men in every other age group, and to women in all age groups, among whom support for a slower reopening outweighs that for a faster reopening by a very large margin.

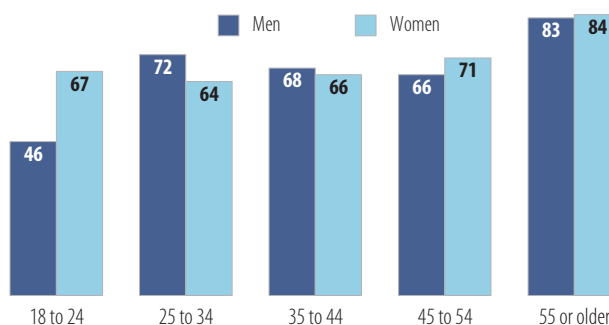
Views on how quickly to reopen the economy

By age and gender

Governments should re-open the economy faster than they are doing now, even if that means that more people might end up getting sick from COVID-19



Government should keep people as safe as possible from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, even if that means re-opening the economy more slowly.



Q.COV-9

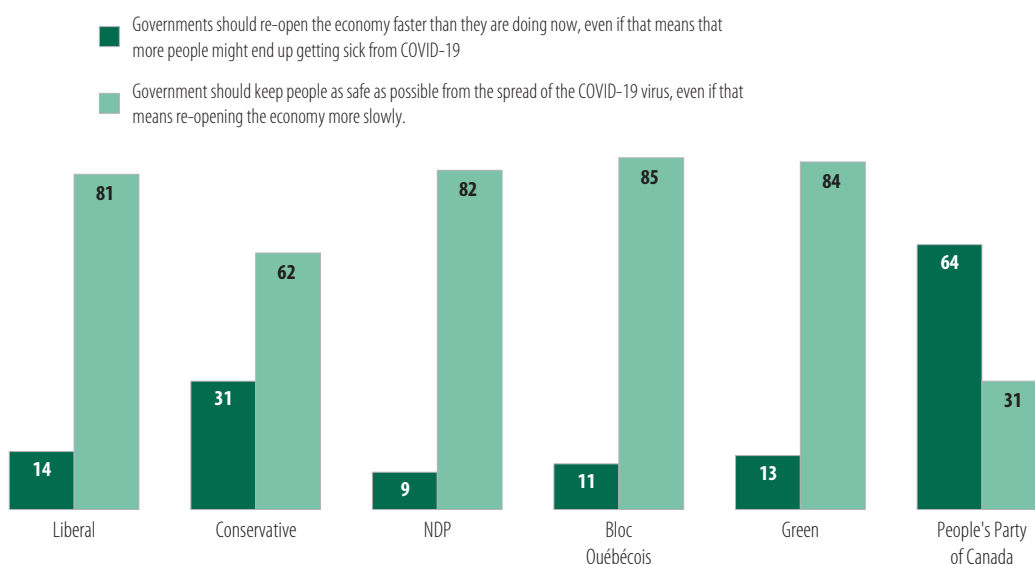
As you know, governments in Canada are trying to find the right balance between the need to keep people safe from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and the need to reopen the economy and get people back to work. Which of the following do you think is the best approach?

There are few other notable differences in view between different population groups. Opinions on this question, for instance, do not vary significantly between those with more or less education, or higher or lower household incomes. Nor do they vary that much between those who say they have been more or less affected by the pandemic. Seventy-six percent of those who say their day-to-day life has been greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic support a slower reopening, compared to 71 percent of those who say they haven't been affected very much or at all.

There is some variation between supporters of the different federal political parties, with Conservative Party supporters (31%) being more supportive of a faster reopening of the economy than supporters of any other the other main parties (14% of Liberals, 13% of Green Party supporters, 11% of Bloc Québécois supporters, and 9% of NDP supporters favour this option). This means, however, that fewer than one in three of the supporters of any of the main parties favour this option, while more that three in five favour the more prudent option of a slower reopening.⁴

Views on how quickly to reopen the economy

By federal vote intention



Q.COVID-9

As you know, governments in Canada are trying to find the right balance between the need to keep people safe from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, and the need to reopen the economy and get people back to work. Which of the following do you think is the best approach?

⁴ Supporters of the People's Party of Canada form an exception to this rule; a majority of these supporters (64%) favour a faster reopening, even if more people get sick, while only 31 percent favour a slower reopening to keep more people safe. People's Party of Canada supporters, however, currently comprise only two percent of voters.

Restrictions on movement between communities

Most Canadians are supportive of restrictions on mobility to limit the spread of COVID-19, but this support is much stronger in the case of international travel than of local travel between communities. Strong support for restrictions on movement between provinces and territories is highest in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

One of the biggest challenges facing governments in their efforts to control the spread of COVID-19 is the mobility of people. The virus spreads from country to country, and from town to town, because people travel. Shortly after the pandemic arrived in Canada, restrictions were imposed on non-essential international travel. Citizens were also urged to stay at home and refrain from moving from community to community, but limits on movement within Canada have been more controversial and harder to enforce. City-dwellers have still sought to enjoy visits to the countryside, and shoppers faced with closed stores in their own neighbourhoods have been tempted to drive to adjacent ones where stores remain open.

The survey finds that the public is supportive of restrictions on mobility to limit the spread of COVID-19, but this support is much stronger in the case of international travel than of local travel.

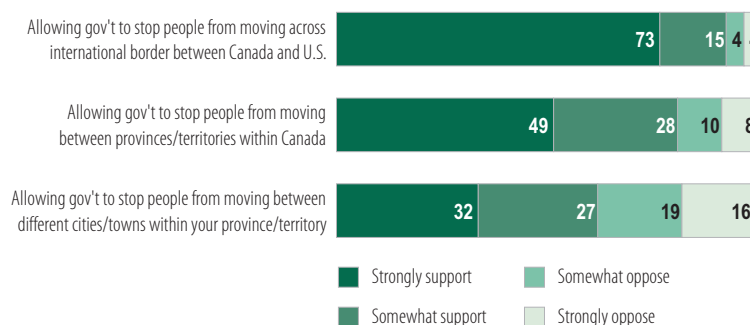
- 88 percent of Canadians support allowing the government to stop people from moving across the

international border between Canada and the United States (including 73% who strongly support this measure).

- 77 percent support allowing the government to stop people from moving between provinces and territories within Canada (including 49% who strongly support this measure).
- 60 percent support allowing the government to stop people from moving between different cities or towns within each province or territory (including 32% who strongly support this measure).

Strong support for restrictions on movement across **the Canada-U.S. border** is widespread across all provinces, though somewhat lower in the territories. Strong support for restrictions on movement **between provinces and territories** varies more; it is higher in Quebec (60%) and Atlantic Canada (56%); and lower in Ontario (49%), B.C. (42%), Saskatchewan (41%), the North (33%), and Alberta (31%). While a majority in every jurisdiction strongly or somewhat supports limits on movement between **cities and towns**, in no province or territory does a majority strongly support such limits; strong support ranges from a high of 42 percent in Quebec to a low of 20 percent in Alberta.

Support for limits on mobility to help control the spread of COVID-19



Q.COV-8

Do you support or oppose the following measures to help control the spread of the COVID-19 virus?

There are few other significant differences among different demographic groups (e.g., by gender, age, educational attainment, racial or Indigenous identity, or immigrant background). Among supporters of the main federal political parties, however, Conservatives stand out as the least supportive of these restrictions on movement. The proportion of the supporters of these parties *strongly supporting* each of the restrictions is as follows:

- Allowing the government to stop people from moving across the international border between Canada and the United States: Bloc Québécois (94%); NDP (82%); Liberal Party (80%); Green Party (77%); Conservative Party (64%).
- Allowing the government to stop people from moving between provinces and territories within Canada: Bloc Québécois (73%); Green Party (61%); Liberal Party (54%); NDP (53%); Conservative Party (38%).
- Allowing the government to stop people from moving between different cities or towns within each province or territory: Bloc Québécois (49%); Green Party (42%); Liberal Party (36%); NDP (34%); Conservative Party (24%).

In the case of measures to stop people from moving between cities or towns within each province or territory, supporters of the federal Conservative party are more or less evenly divided between those who are strongly or somewhat supportive (51%), and those who are strongly or somewhat opposed (46%).

Confidence in scientists and medical experts

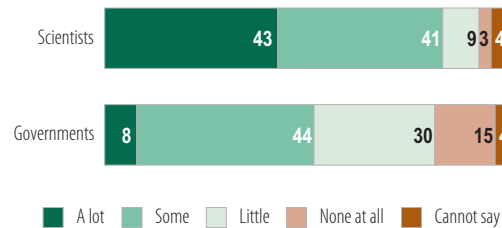
Large majorities of Canadians have confidence in scientists, and trust the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada. Fewer have confidence in governments in general, but even a majority of those who lack confidence in governments nonetheless say that they trust the Government of Canada's medical and health advice, suggesting that confidence in medical experts generally outweighs doubts about governments.

Confidence in scientists. This report has documented widespread agreement across the country on several fundamental aspects of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the requirement to wear masks in public, the necessity of getting vaccinated, and the need for a prudent approach to reopening the economy. One possible reason for this is the high degree of confidence that the public continues to place in scientists and medical experts.

Currently, 84 percent of Canadians say they have confidence in scientists, evenly divided between those who express a lot of confidence (43%) and some confidence (41%). This is almost identical to the findings of an earlier survey conducted in August 2020, when 81 percent of Canadians said they had confidence in scientists (including 39% who had a lot of confidence, and 43% who had some confidence).⁵ Thus confidence in scientists has remained relatively high following the arrival of the pandemic's second wave.

Confidence in scientists is much higher than confidence in governments: 52 percent of Canadians have confidence in governments, but this includes only eight percent who express a lot of confidence, and 44 percent who express some confidence. More than two in five (44%) Canadians express little or no confidence in governments, almost four times more than the 12 percent who have little or no confidence in scientists. As is the case with scientists, confidence in governments has not changed significantly since last August: at that time, 49 percent of Canadians said that they had a lot (7%) or some (42%) confidence in governments.

Confidence in scientists and governments



Q.CONF_1

In general, in Canada today, would you say you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, little confidence or no confidence at all in each of the following?

⁵ Environics Institute for Survey Research, *A Better Canada: Community, Citizenship and Engagement* (Toronto: Environics Institute for Survey Research, 2020); <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects/project-details/a-better-canada-community-citizenship-and-engagement>.

What is noticeable, however, is that confidence in governments varies much more across the country than does confidence in scientists. Quebecers (60%), for instance, are almost twice as likely to say they have confidence in governments than are Albertans (33%). While Quebecers (89%) are also more likely than Albertans (77%) to express confidence in scientists, in this case, it is a difference in the extent of agreement. In no province do more than one in five say they lack confidence in scientists. (Confidence in scientists is somewhat lower in the territory of Nunavut (61%) – see more below).

Notably, confidence in scientists also does not vary significantly by age, gender, educational attainment, household income, immigration background or racial

identity.⁶ Overall, it does not differ significantly between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians; however, trust in scientists is lower among those who identify as Inuk (Inuit): 65 percent of Inuit have confidence in scientists, compared to 80 percent of those identifying as First Nations and 84 percent of Métis.⁷ This difference accounts for the lower level of confidence in scientists in Nunavut, noted above.

Overall confidence in scientists also does not vary significantly among supporters of the main federal political parties, ranging from 81 percent among Conservative Party supporters, to 94 percent among Green Party supporters (while Conservative supporters are less likely than average to say they have a lot of confidence in scientists, they are more likely to express *some* confidence).⁸

⁶ Canadians with a university education are the most likely to have a lot of confidence in scientists, while those without a university education are more likely to have some confidence – but there is little difference by educational attainment in the proportion that combine a lot or some confidence. The same pattern occurs in the case of racial identity: those who identify as Chinese are less likely than others to say they have a lot of confidence in scientists, but no less likely to say they have either a lot or some confidence.

⁷ As the sample size for Inuit is very small (N=91), this result should be treated with caution, and can be taken as a suggested topic for further research.

⁸ Among supporters of the People's Party of Canada, confidence in scientists is lower (46%).

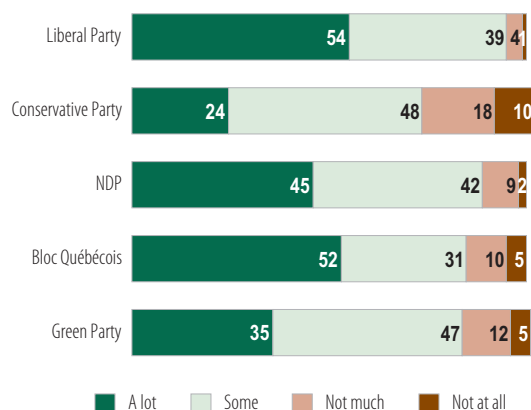
Trust in medical advice from the government. Prior to the pandemic, in 2018, an international study found that four in five Canadians (78%) had a lot or some trust in the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada.⁹ The Confederation of Tomorrow 2021 survey finds that, a year into the pandemic, this figure is unchanged: currently, 80 percent of Canadians have a lot or some trust in the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada (including 38% who have a *lot* of trust, and 43% who have *some* trust), compared to 17 percent who have not much (11%) or no trust at all (6%).

There is no significant variation among regions in the level of trust in the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada. There is also very little variation among demographic groups (e.g., by gender, age, educational attainment, immigrant background, or racial identity). Indigenous Peoples (74%) are slightly less likely than non-Indigenous people (81%) to have a lot or some trust in this advice, but even among those identifying as Indigenous, trust outweighs a lack of trust by a factor to three to one.

As might be expected, supporters of the political party currently forming government in Ottawa are the most likely to trust the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada: 94 percent of Liberal Party supporters have a lot or some trust in this advice, compared to 86 percent of NDP supporters, 84 percent of Bloc Québécois supporters, 82 percent of Green Party supporters, and 71 percent of Conservative supporters. What is notable, however, is that this level of trust is expressed by at least seven in ten Canadians, regardless of which of these parties they support. Liberal supporters are more than twice as likely as Conservative supporters to have a *lot* of trust in this advice; but the proportion of Conservative supporters that have not much or no trust at all in the medical and health advice given by the Government of Canada is less than three in ten (28%).

Trust in the Government of Canada's medical and health advice

By federal vote intention



Q.CONF_2

In general, how much do you trust medical and health advice that the Government of Canada gives?

What is most striking, however, is that two in three (66%) of those who lack confidence in governments nonetheless say that they trust the medical and health advice that the Government of Canada gives, suggesting that confidence in medical experts generally outweighs doubts about governments. This is the case even in Alberta, where lack of confidence in governments is more apparent than elsewhere in the country.

⁹ See the Wellcome Global Monitor 2018, available at https://wellcome.org/reports/wellcome-global-monitor/2018?utm_source=gallup&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=wgmrsr.

