

**For Immediate Release**

## **Poll: Eight in ten Canadians feel travelling outside of Canada puts them at risk for a number of vaccine preventable diseases**

*Pharmacists urge travellers to get current on vaccinations before leaving the country*

**May 23, 2019, Richmond, B.C.** – The majority (78%) of Canadians believe that travelling outside of Canada puts them at risk for a number of vaccine-preventable diseases. Despite this, only half (52%) of those who have previously travelled overseas say they have ever received a vaccination for travel. Just three in ten (31%) are aware that the Government of Canada recommends that Canadians visit a travel clinic before travelling. The findings are part of a survey conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs.

With the summer holiday travel season approaching, London Drugs pharmacists are urging Canadians to make sure they and their family members are up to date on all age-appropriate vaccinations – particularly measles due to reported outbreaks throughout North America – as well as destination-specific immunizations before they leave the country.

"The measles vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of this highly contagious virus. If you're planning an international trip, or if you are unsure of your immunization status, get vaccinated before travelling," Lily Liang, a Travel Clinic Pharmacist at London Drugs.

More than a quarter (28%) of survey respondents say they did not receive vaccination for travel because they did not feel it was necessary. Despite this, nine in ten (89%) Canadians say they strongly believe that travel vaccinations and medications protect themselves and others when travelling and six in ten (61%) agree that it is important to review their immunization history before travelling.

"The results seem contradictory but the reemergence of vaccine-preventable diseases has caused some concern and confusion about vaccination. It is particularly important for those planning to travel internationally to get vaccinated," advises Liang. "Beyond the serious health threats of not being vaccinated, travelling without them can really ruin a holiday if you or your loved ones become sick. No one wants to spend their vacation at a doctor's clinic or hospital in a foreign country."

Many warmer climate countries are home to diseases that aren't prevalent in Canada and some travel vaccines take time to kick in, meaning it's best for people to inquire as early as possible about vaccines before departure.

Travel Clinics are offered at select London Drugs locations and Certified Injection Pharmacists can administer common travel vaccinations such as hepatitis A and B, yellow fever, typhoid, and traveller's diarrhea as well other recommended vaccinations like rabies, Japanese encephalitis, meningitis, pneumonia, shingles, diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, and rubella.

"Travel vaccinations can be administered by pharmacists and this can be a more convenient, time-saving option for Canadians," says Liang.

According to the survey, more than three quarters (79%) of Canadians say they are likely to visit their personal doctor to learn about vaccinations before travelling overseas, with pharmacies being the next most popular choice (61%).

London Drugs' Travel Clinic Pharmacists have obtained specialized training from the International Society of Travel Medicine and have their Travel Health® designation. They can provide advice about medications, vaccinations and health supplies needed for travel as well as the following services:

- Comprehensive destination consults.
- Personalized travel health advice and record keeping.
- Administration of vaccines and boosters.
- Direct insurance billing.

For a complete list of London Drugs Travel Clinics or to book an appointment visit [LDTravelClinics.ca](http://LDTravelClinics.ca). London Drugs also offers many resources and tools on its [travel clinic website](#). Topics covered on the site include travel vaccinations, medical insurance for travellers, travel first aid, travellers with diabetes, and tips for safe and healthy travel.

#### **About the Survey / Other Survey Highlights:**

Results are based on an online study conducted by Insights West from February 13 – February 28, 2019 among a representative sample of 2,249 English speaking Canadian adults. The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region. The margin of error—which measures sample variability—is +/- 2.07 percentage points. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding.

- The majority of Canadians are aware of several facts concerning travelling and medication:
  - Travelling outside of Canada puts them at risk for a number of vaccine-preventable diseases (78%);
  - Travellers' diarrhea can be prevented with oral medication or vaccination (67%);
  - It's important to review their immunization history before travelling (61%); and
  - It is easier to prevent travellers' diarrhea than treat it (61%).
- Travel destinations play a big role in influencing whether Canadians get travel vaccinations. Canadians who have travelled to Africa/the Middle East (81%) and South or Southeast Asian (80%) are the most likely to have ever received travel vaccinations, followed by those who have travelled to Australia/New Zealand (73%) and Northeast Asia (71%). Those who have travelled to Europe (55%) and Caribbean/Central/South America (59%) are significantly less likely to have ever received them.
  - Those who have travelled overseas within the past 5 years are significantly more likely than those who travelled longer ago to have ever received a vaccine: 55% vs 45% 5 or more years ago.
  - Ontario residents (34%) are the most likely to have not gotten a vaccine because they didn't think it was necessary.
- When it comes to different travel aspects, Canadians are most likely to consider aspects such as booking flights (96%) and hotels (95%); purchasing/packing travel essentials (92%), getting travel insurance (88%); and researching travel activities (87%) important.
- More than eight-in-ten Canadians also consider it important to:
  - Refill prescriptions and get health supplies needed for their trip (87%);
  - Research destination-specific travel health advice (86%); and
  - Get travel vaccinations and oral medications (82%).
- Canadians strongly believe that travel vaccinations and medications protect themselves and others.
  - 89% agree that getting vaccinated is an important part of keeping safe and healthy while travelling, including 62% who strongly agree.
  - 89% agree that getting vaccinated helps make sure that serious diseases aren't brought home to families, friends, and communities, including 62% who strongly agree.
- Close to half of Canadians are aware that:
  - Most travel vaccines can take up to two weeks to take effect (49%).

- You should visit a travel health clinic or consult a health care provider preferably six weeks before you travel (45%).
- However, less than half of Canadians are aware that:
  - Travel clinics are offered by some pharmacies (19%);
  - Travel clinics review your immunization history to make sure your vaccination schedule is up-to-date and assess your need for additional vaccines (29%);
  - The Government of Canada recommends visiting a travel clinic before you travel (31%);
  - Travel vaccinations can be administered by pharmacists (35%); and
  - Many countries require proof of vaccination before entry (36%).
- More than three-quarters (79%) of Canadians say they are likely to visit their personal doctor to learn about vaccinations before travelling overseas. Pharmacies were the second most popular choice (61%), followed distantly by travel clinics (34%).
- Six in ten (61%) Canadians say they are likely to travel overseas within the next two years, including 39% who say they are very likely.
  - Those who have previously received a travel vaccination are significantly more likely to say they are likely to do so: 81%, vs. 63% haven't received a vaccination.
  - Those aged 18 to 54 years are also significantly more likely to do so: 66%, vs. 54% 55+.
  - Residents in Manitoba (54%) and the Maritimes (52%) are significantly less likely than those in other areas to indicate that they will travel overseas within the next two years: 62 to 64%.

## **ABOUT LONDON DRUGS**

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 81 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store [www.LondonDrugs.com](http://www.LondonDrugs.com). London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,500 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development.

– 30 –

Pharmacists are available for interviews about the poll results and the importance of travel vaccinations.

For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

**Angela Joyce, Media Relations – Alberta & Saskatchewan**

403-681-9286

[aj@whiterabbitcommunications.com](mailto:aj@whiterabbitcommunications.com)

**Cynnamon Schreinert, Media Relations – British Columbia**

604-802-2733

[cynnamon@hartleypr.com](mailto:cynnamon@hartleypr.com)