



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Poll: Four in Ten Canadians Don't Plan to Get a Flu Shot This Year

Flu shot misconceptions and reluctance putting vulnerable Canadians at risk

SEPTEMBER 23, 2019, VANCOUVER, BC – Four in ten (37%) Canadians say they won't get vaccinated for influenza this year – the majority of them citing common misconceptions about the vaccine to explain why. One third (33%) of those who don't plan to get the flu shot say it's because they don't think it is effective or that it only works for previous strains of the virus. Other misconceptions among this group include the belief that healthy people do not need a flu shot (29%), that it can have negative side effects (20%), or that they don't need it because they are not around many people or vulnerable people (16%).

"Unfortunately, many Canadians might not get a flu shot this year due to misconceptions about the benefits of receiving a flu shot and concerns about the safety and efficacy of the vaccines. The reality is that the flu shot is safe and it is the most effective tool we have in protecting against the flu, preventing its spread and ultimately it saves lives," says Gianni Del Negro, Pharmacist at London Drugs.

While there are lingering misconceptions about the flu shot, eight in ten (79%) Canadians surveyed say they recognize the importance of getting one every year to help protect those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness – like babies, young children, the elderly and people with certain health conditions. Around the same number (84%) say that they are aware that the flu vaccine helps prevent hospitalizations and save lives. Last flu season there were 3,657 influenza-associated hospitalizations and 223 deaths in Canada¹.

"Flu shots are especially important for the elderly and young children, who are more susceptible to flu-related complications that can lead to serious health problems or death. Even healthy individuals should get a flu shot because the higher the rate of vaccination, the greater the protection for the most vulnerable individuals," explains Del Negro.

Despite the reluctance of some, more Canadian adults might be becoming convinced that getting a flu shot is a good idea. Over fifteen per cent (16%) of those who have never had a flu shot said they plan on getting one this year.

"The awful flu seasons experienced over the last few years may have had a silver lining: flu vaccine uptake among those who haven't been vaccinated in the past. Skepticism sometimes declines following a year where the vaccine is a good match. Last year's vaccine provided good protection against the circulating strains," says Del Negro.

Nearly all (98%) of those who got a flu shot last year plan to get one this season, according to the survey.

As in previous years, the standard-dose, which most people receive, typically includes immunization against both the H1N1 and H3N2 influenza A virus strains and either one or two influenza B viruses. The Fluzone High-Dose, which is recommended for people over 65, provides immunization against H1N1 and H3N2 influenza A as well as an influenza B. According to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, there is good evidence that Fluzone High-Dose provides superior protection to seniors compared with the standard dose.²

Pharmacists at London Drugs are preparing for what could be a difficult flu season due to potential vaccine delays coupled with the early start and large number of flu cases in Australia, which is often an indicator of the severity of flu in Canada.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results are based on an online study conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs from August 22nd to 28th, 2019 among a representative sample of 2,492 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 +/- 1.96 percentage points. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding.

ABOUT LONDON DRUGS

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 82 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store 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.

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Pharmacists are available for interviews. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Image inclusions:

Caption: A pharmacist at London Drugs administers a flu shot. To help increase vaccination rates, pharmacists are working to dispel common misconceptions about the flu shot and raise awareness about the importance of getting one every year to help protect those who are most vulnerable.

Video inclusions:

A video of a pharmacist administering a flu shot is available for download [here](#).

¹ <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fluwatch/2018-2019/week30-34-july-21-august-24-2019.html#a6>

² <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2019-2020/NACI Stmt on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine 2019-2020 v12.3 EN.pdf>