



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Poll: Fewer Canadians plan to get their flu shots at public flu clinics,
more opting for pharmacies or doctors' offices**

***London Drugs aims to increase flu vaccination rates with increased convenience,
vaccination donation campaign and new 'ouchless' flu shot option***

October 18, 2019, VANCOUVER, BC – With extended hours at pharmacies and locations in virtually every community, the flu shot has never been more convenient or accessible for Canadians. According to a recent survey conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs, among those who plan to get their annual flu shot this year, four in 10 (43%, +2 points from last year) say they plan to get immunized at a pharmacy. Public flu clinics may be falling slightly out of favour as fewer than one in 10 (7%) say they plan to get their flu shot at a government-hosted flu clinic, a five-point decrease compared to last year. Significantly more Canadians plan to get their flu shot at their doctor's office (26%, +11 points since last year), while about one in 10 plan to get it at their place of work (10%, -4 points).

"We're trying to reduce any hindrances so that more people will get their flu shot this year. Online appointment booking and walk-in options at the pharmacy make it easy for people to get immunized just down the street from where they live and while they are out doing other errands or picking up prescriptions," says Gianni Del Negro, a Pharmacist at London Drugs.

While a strong majority of Canadians are now aware that pharmacists can administer the flu vaccine (86%) and that flu vaccinations are available at most pharmacies (90%), some Canadians still cite a lack of convenience as a deterrent to getting the flu shot. Among those Canadians who said they don't plan to get vaccinated this year, the poll found that one in 10 (12%) say it is too much hassle and two in 10 (19%) indicated that they just won't get around to it.

"The inconvenience of missed school or work days, doctor's visits or even flu-related hospitalizations is reason enough to take the time to get vaccinated. Getting the flu vaccine is the simplest and single most important thing you can do to protect yourself, your family and your community against the flu," advises Del Negro.

The flu vaccine for the 2019-20 season is now available at all London Drugs pharmacies. It includes immunization against both the H1N1 and H3N2 influenza A virus strains and either one or two influenza B viruses. Patients can call the pharmacy or [book online](#) to make an appointment or receive the flu shot on a walk-in basis at some locations during certain hours.

Nervous About Needles? New 'ouchless' flu shot option now available at London Drugs

With news that the flu vaccine won't be available in nasal spray form for Canadians this year, London Drugs pharmacists hope that won't deter people – especially children – from rolling up their sleeves.

To help reduce flu shot anxiety, London Drugs is offering an 'ouchless' option with a free application of Zensa Numbing Cream prior to administering the vaccination. Zensa is a Health Canada approved topical anaesthetic that desensitizes the skin in as little as 10 minutes, lessening any potential pain experienced from a flu shot injection.

Among those who say they are unlikely to get a flu shot this season, about one in 10 say it is because they are afraid of needles (7%) or they have a bad experience with a previous flu shot (12%). The goal of the 'ouchless' option at London Drugs is to increase flu shot uptake within this group.



"If you or your children have anxiety about needles that may deter you or them from getting the flu shot, this 'ouchless' option available at London Drugs is a far better alternative than forgoing the protection of the vaccination," says Del Negro.

In BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan, children ages five years and older can receive their flu shot at a pharmacy from a Certified Injection Pharmacist. In Manitoba, the flu shot can be administered to children seven years and older at the pharmacy. Zensa is safe for use on children ages 2 and up.

Need more reasons to get immunized? For every flu shot given at London Drugs, a lifesaving vaccine is donated to UNICEF

Simply by getting a flu shot at London Drugs this year, Canadians can play an active role in helping to protect tens of thousands of children in other parts of the world from deadly, vaccine-preventable diseases. For every flu shot administered at London Drugs this year, a lifesaving vaccine will be donated to UNICEF Canada to immunize children in other countries from illnesses such as tetanus, polio and measles. The vaccination donation campaign is in partnership with I Boost Immunity (IBI), an online immunization advocacy network.

"Patients who receive a flu vaccine at London Drugs will not only be protecting themselves and their local community but will be making a global impact as well, by providing a life-saving vaccination to children around the world," says Del Negro.

London Drugs hopes this initiative will help more people make the right decision to get vaccinated – particularly healthy individuals who might not otherwise consider getting a flu shot.

"We want to drive home the message that getting the flu shot is not just about your own health; it's about protecting those who are most at risk. It's about building herd immunity," says Del Negro.

To learn more about getting the flu shot at London Drugs, visit: LondonDrugs.com/flu

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results are based on an online study conducted by Insights West 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.

Pharmacists are available to speak to the media about the seasonal flu shot, flu prevention and symptom treatment. For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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Image inclusions:



Caption: London Drugs pharmacist, Vaneet Chahal, administers a flu shot. London Drugs hopes to increase flu immunization rates this year with increased convenience, vaccination donation campaign and a new 'ouchless' flu shot option.

Video inclusions:

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