

For Immediate Release

Poll: Six in ten British Columbians plan to get a flu shot this year, common misconceptions prevent many from getting vaccinated

Flu vaccinations are now available at all London Drugs pharmacies

September 26, 2018 - An overwhelming majority (78%) of British Columbians believe that it is important to get the flu vaccination every year in order to help protect those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness. Despite this, only six in ten plan to get the flu shot this year.

The poll, conducted by Insights West on behalf of London Drugs, found that among those who are unlikely to get a flu shot, the most common reason is a belief that it is unnecessary because they are healthy (35%).

“There is a common misconception that if you are a healthy person then you don’t need a flu shot. But even if you are in good health, it’s important to get immunized to help prevent the spread of illness to high risk individuals such as newborns, young children, pregnant women, and adults with chronic medical conditions,” says Gianni Del Negro, a Pharmacist at London Drugs.

Those who don’t plan on being immunized also cited concerns about negative side effects (25%) and worries that the vaccine might make them sick with the flu (23%).

“It is impossible to contract the illness from the vaccine itself because they are made with viruses that have been inactivated and are therefore not infectious. Most people don’t have reactions to the flu vaccine; those who do may have soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site,” says Del Negro.

This year’s seasonal flu vaccine has been updated to protect against the viruses that health experts believe will be circulating during the upcoming season – both influenza A (H1N1 and H3N2) and influenza B. In advance of the publicly funded vaccine which will become available at London Drugs next month, the private flu shot is now available for those 5 years of age and older at a cost of \$20.

“It can take up to two weeks for the vaccine to become effective so we recommend patients get their flu shot annually as soon as it becomes available. Getting the vaccine early helps ensure patients are protected before flu season peaks,” says Del Negro.

While one in five (22%) British Columbians say they aren’t likely to get a flu shot because they tend to forget or don’t get around to it, flu shots are conveniently available seven days a week by appointment or on a walk-in basis at any London Drugs location. In recent years, longer hours, appointments, as well as flexibility for walk-in patients has allowed pharmacies to significantly improve ease of access to the flu vaccine. In fact, of the 57% of British Columbians who say they will get a flu shot this season, the largest number (41%) plan to visit a pharmacy to receive their shot, followed by work place (18%), doctor (18%) and public flu clinic (10%).

As an added incentive to get immunized, for every flu shot administered at London Drugs pharmacy, a lifesaving vaccine will be donated to UNICEF Canada to immunize children in another country. 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 in need around the world,” says Del Negro.

The poll showed that three quarters (76%) of British Columbians feel that getting the flu vaccination each year is a responsible way to take care of both their own health and the health of others.

Other poll highlights include:

- Nearly all (97%) of those who got a flu shot last year plan to get one this season.
- Older British Columbians, age 55 and over, are more likely to get a flu shot this season (65%), compared to those between the ages of 18 and 54 (52%).
- Eight in ten (82%) British Columbians are aware that the flu vaccine helps prevent hospitalizations and saves lives.
- Awareness among British Columbians about accessibility of flu shots is high. Nine in ten (88%) are aware that flu vaccinations are available free of charge for many Canadians (including children, seniors, pregnant women, aboriginal peoples, caregivers, and a number of other employment types). Nine in ten (89%) are aware that Health Canada recommends Canadians protect themselves from the flu by being vaccinated (getting a flu shot) each year in the fall.
- A strong majority (90%) are aware that flu vaccinations are available at most pharmacies, and can be administered by a pharmacist.
- One third (35%) of British Columbians believe that healthy people don't really need the flu vaccination and one-quarter (26%) believe you can catch the flu from the vaccine.
- A small majority (60%) also agree that the flu vaccination can have negative side effects. Those who are unlikely to get a flu shot this year are significantly more likely to agree that the flu vaccination can have negative side effects (73%).

ABOUT THE SURVEY

Results are based on an online study conducted by Insights West from September 14th to 18th, 2018 among a representative sample of 1,141 British Columbia 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 +/- 2.90 percentage points. Discrepancies between totals are due to rounding.

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. 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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London Drugs 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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