



Close quarters Omicron

TORONTO, January 11, 2022—The results of a national survey released today by Maru Public Opinion finds four-in-ten (38%) Canadians who admit to knowing someone in their family or circle of friends who has contracted the COVID-19 virus in the last ten days. This compares to virtually the same number (37%) who said so a week ago, and one-in-ten (11%) who volunteered this knowledge just before Christmas. Putting this wildfire contagion in perspective, the number of Canadians who have acknowledged this awareness on a week over week basis since December 20, 2021, is up a whopping twenty-seven (27) percentage points.

Based on the latest sounding, those most likely to know someone who has recently acquired COVID (38%) (and compared to those of December 20, 2021) hail from Ontario (42% +31), followed by those living in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (39% +31), Québec (38% +23), Atlantic Canada (36% +30), Alberta (34% +29), and British Columbia (31% +21).

The results of an underlying extensive survey conducted just days before find six-in-ten (61%) Canadians alarmed about the Omicron COVID variant and reacting swiftly to the virus as it runs rampant throughout communities and households.

Compared to results produced on December 20, 2021, while it finds a majority (62% up six percentage points) of Canadians concerned they will contract the Omicron virus, there is a clear lack of national consensus as to how governments should be acting as pressure mounts on local healthcare networks and their community hospitals: one third (36% -10) believe that reducing capacity limits should be top response taken while one third (34% +5) are predisposed to imposing a full lockdown, and another three-in-ten (30% +4) who would leave things relatively unrestricted.

With a majority (61% +1) of Canadians worried about the virus and not going about life as usual, an even larger majority (69% +10) are staying home more, and two-thirds (64% +33) are cancelling/postponing travel. A majority (54% +13) also report their workplace/ability to work has been taking on new precautions because of virus.

Despite the heightened concerns and vigilance, a majority (71%) of Canadians are following the news very closely so perhaps it's also not surprising that the notion of the Omicron virus being "milder" in its impact compared to the previous Delta brand is bringing some relief: two-thirds (66% +11) believe that the vaccines/people's own immunity will protect them from any greater fate.

Finally, while there are some significant differences between provinces and regions, and some softening nationally as to how Canadians judge their political leaders in their response to the Omicron virus, a majority give both the Trudeau federal government (52% -5) and their provincial government (53% -7) fairly good marks.



Many of the findings in this report are tracked from previous soundings on December 6, 2021, and December 20, 2021. Please see the slide deck appended to this release for the most recent and tracked national results with regional/provincial breakouts.

Majority (61%) alarmed about the new COVID variant virus

Six-in-ten (61%) Canadians admit to being alarmed about the new COVID variant virus. Those who express the most alarm reside in the province of Québec (67%), followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (66%), Ontario (65%), British Columbia (57%), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (52%), and Alberta (45%).

Majority (62% +6) concerned they will contract the new virus

Almost two-thirds (62% +6) of Canadians are concerned that they will contract the new Omicron COVID virus. Those expressing the most concern reside in Atlantic Canada (71% +15), followed by those living in British Columbia (66% +6), Ontario (65% +8), Québec (64% +8), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (52% -4), and Alberta (43% n/c). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Majority (61% +1) worried about the virus and *not* going about life as usual

Six-in-ten (61% +1) Canadians are worried about this new strain of the COVID virus and not just going about their life as usual in their community. Those living in Ontario (67% +5) are most likely to hold this view, followed by those residing in Atlantic Canada (65% -7), Québec (63% +5), British Columbia (58% -2), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (53% -1), and Alberta (48% -3). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Majority (71%) following the news about the Omicron virus very closely

A majority (71%) of Canadians are following the news about the Omicron virus very closely. Those most likely to be following the news are from Québec (78%), followed by those living in Ontario (74%), Atlantic Canada (73%), British Columbia (73%), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (64%), and Alberta (48%).

Majority (69% +10) staying home more because of the virus

Seven-in-ten (69% +10) Canadians indicate that they are staying home more because of the new COVID variant virus, including less shopping trips. This is most likely the case in Atlantic Canada (78% +9), followed by those living in Québec (72% +12), Ontario (72% +8), British Columbia (72% +20), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (56% +5) and Alberta (52% +9). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Two thirds (66% +11) believe vaccines/people's own immunity will protect them from the virus

Two thirds (66% +11) of Canadians believe that whatever this new COVID virus variant may be, the current vaccines or people's own immunity will protect them from what it could amount to. This view is most likely to be found in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (73% +13), followed by those living in Québec (69% +17), British Columbia (67% +9), Alberta (65% +4), Ontario (63% +8), and Atlantic Canada (63% +11). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Two thirds (64% +33) cancelling/postponing travel

Two thirds (64% +33) of Canadians are cancelling/postponing travel plans (business or pleasure) because of this new COVID variant virus. Those living in Ontario (69% +31) are most likely to be doing so, followed by those living in British Columbia (67% +33), Québec (66% +43), Atlantic Canada (60% +29), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (54% +27), and Alberta (48% +29). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Majority (54% +13) have their workplace/ability to work taking on new precautions because of virus

A majority (54% +13) of Canadians report that the new COVID variant viruses causing their workplace or their ability to work to take on new precautions. Those residing in both Ontario (57% +8) and British Columbia (57% +21) are most likely to be experiencing new precautions, followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (55% +13), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (53% +23), Québec (52% +11), and Alberta (46% +17). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Majority (53% -7) give their provincial governments good marks for responding to the virus

A majority (53% -7) of Canadians believe that their provincial government is responding effectively to the new Omicron variant. Those most likely to hold this view reside in the province of Québec (60% -3) followed by those living in British Columbia (63% -5), Atlantic Canada (59% -6), Ontario (48% -8), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (39% -10), and Alberta (34% -7). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Majority (52% -5) believe Trudeau government responding effectively to the virus

A majority (52% -5) believe the Trudeau federal government is responding effectively to the new Omicron variant. Those most likely to hold this view reside in the province of Québec (65% -5), followed by those living in British Columbia (59% -1), Atlantic Canada (56% -3), Ontario (50% -4), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (38% -7), and Alberta (30% -10). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Actions governments should take at present time to deal with the Omicron virus:

One third (36% -10) reduce capacity limits

- One third (36% -10) of Canadians believe that governments should be reducing capacity limits for businesses/retail outlets and personal contacts to fifty percent (50%) for the next two weeks. Those most likely to take this position live in British Columbia (45% -5), followed by those in both Atlantic Canada (37% -12) and Ontario (37% -6), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (34% -19), Alberta (32% -7), and Québec (31% -18). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

One third (34% +5) impose full lockdown

- One third (34% +5) of Canadians believe that governments should be imposing a full lockdown of residence for two weeks and only allow essential businesses and services to remain open in order to be a virus spread “circuit breaker”. Those most likely to hold this view live in Québec (40% +14) or Atlantic Canada (40% +13), followed by those living in Ontario (34% -2), Manitoba/Saskatchewan (28% +13) and Alberta (28% +4), and British Columbia (27% +5). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

Three-in-ten (30% +4) leave things relatively unrestricted

- Three-in-ten (30% +4) Canadians believe that their governments should leave things relatively unrestricted and allow people to use their best judgement as to what they want to do. This view is primarily held in the province of Alberta (40% +2), followed by those living in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (38% +6), both Québec (29% +3) and Ontario (29% +7), British Columbia (28% n/c), and Atlantic Canada (23% n/c). [Compared to December 20, 2021]

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Methodology

These are some of the findings released by [Maru Public Opinion](#) from a main survey undertaken January 5, 2022, by Maru/Blue of 1507 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Maru Voice Canada online panelists. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region (and in Quebec, language) to match the population according to Census data which ensures the sample is representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals when compared to the data tables are due to rounding.

The exception to the main survey was an update of the statement “Someone in my immediate family or circle of friends have contracted COVID in the past 10 days” undertaken on January 10, 2022, with a sample of 1510 Canadians using the same methodology and parameters noted above.

Panel and data services provider [Maru Blue](#) is deeply rooted in the Maru/HUB technology platform and offers on-demand, high quality, highly scalable online community samples of deeply engaged, known respondents. Respondents could answer the questionnaire in either English or French.

Excerpts from this release of findings should be properly attributed, with interpretation subject to clarification or correction. Maru Public Opinion does not do any work for any political party.

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