



Understanding Vaccination Needs in the Asthma Community

Findings from Asthma Canada's National Vaccine Awareness Survey

Why we conducted this survey



Infectious Risk in People with Asthma

People living with asthma face higher risks from respiratory infections such as influenza, pneumococcal disease, COVID-19, RSV, and shingles. Through support from the Public Health Agency of Canada's Immunization Partnership Fund (IPF), Asthma Canada has been working to increase awareness of how vaccines support asthma management and to improve access to clear, trusted information in both English and French.

Understanding Community Needs and Barriers

To better understand the community's needs, experiences, and barriers, Asthma Canada conducted a national survey titled **Understanding Vaccination Needs in the Asthma Community**. The survey received 685 responses, with 94% identifying as individuals living with asthma.

Research Questions

Two questions guided this work:

- Do people with asthma feel confident making vaccination decisions?
- Do these people see vaccination as an important part of asthma management?

Key Findings: Impact of Resource Engagement

Without Asthma Canada resources:

- 81% confident in vaccination decisions
- 66% view vaccines as important for asthma management

With Asthma Canada resources:

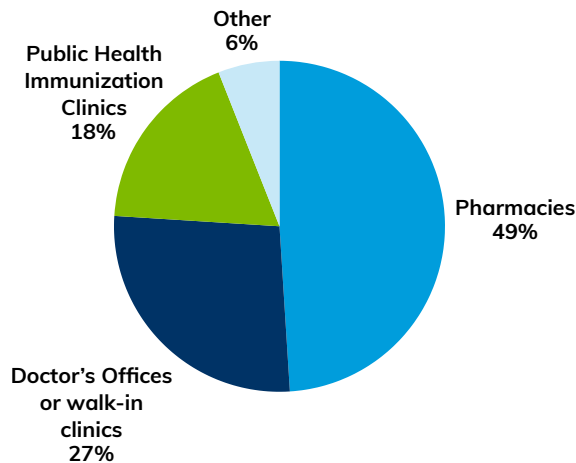
- 97% confident **(+16%)**
- 87% view vaccines as important **(+21%)**

Engagement with Asthma Canada resources is associated with higher confidence and stronger recognition of vaccines as part of asthma care.



Where people get vaccinated:

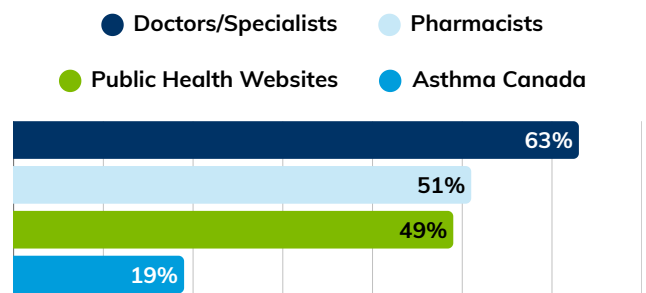
Most respondents receive vaccines in settings that are convenient and familiar:



Pharmacies play a particularly important role given their accessibility and frequent contact with people managing chronic conditions.

Where people get information about vaccines:

Respondents rely heavily on trusted health professionals and public health sources for vaccine information:



This pattern reinforces the importance of consistent messaging across clinical and community settings and highlights opportunities to expand the reach of asthma-specific information.

Vaccination intentions for the next 12 months:

Respondents reported high likelihood of receiving flu and COVID vaccines, with lower awareness and uptake for pneumococcal, RSV, and shingles. These vaccines are especially relevant for older adults with asthma.

Full intention breakdown:

Vaccine	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not likely	Unsure
Flu	78%	6%	13%	3%
COVID-19	61%	9%	25%	5%
Pneumococcal	42%	12%	30%	16%
RSV	31%	13%	32%	24%
Shingles	36%	11%	36%	16%

A common theme in open-ended responses was the impact of cost and eligibility. One participant shared:



For me it's just the cost. I would like to get the RSV and pneumococcal vaccines, but they are over \$200 per shot. So, until I am old enough for government supported vaccines, I will have to take my chances.

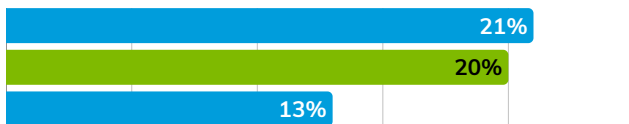




Barriers to vaccination:

Respondents identified several challenges that affect their ability to stay up to date on recommended vaccines:

- Cost/Financial concerns
- Concerns about side effects
- Lack of asthma specific information



Open-ended responses reinforced these themes. Many adults under 65 described being ineligible for publicly funded vaccines, which limited access to RSV, shingles, and pneumococcal vaccines. These age-based restrictions create a meaningful barrier for people with asthma, who may face higher risks from respiratory infections but do not qualify for coverage.

As one respondent noted:

“ **The cost of the RSV vaccine is high. It is not covered by my health plan, and I don't qualify as I am under 65 so I decided I would concentrate on getting the other vaccines.** ”

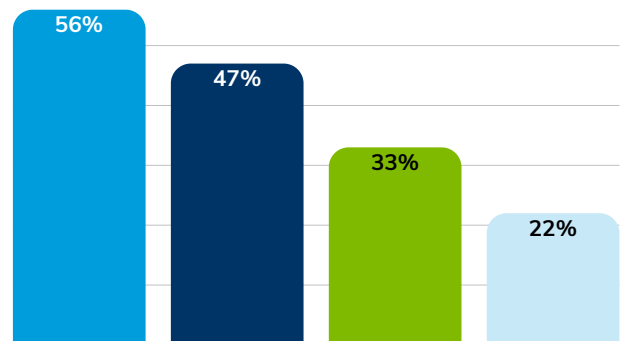


Program reach and impact:

To understand the effectiveness of Asthma Canada's vaccine education, we analyzed a subset of 199 respondents who reported engaging with Asthma Canada's vaccine-related resources, including social media, our website and Vaccine Hub, webinars, our community newsletter, and/or our Asthma and Allergy HelpLine.

Among this group:

- Accessed social media content
- Visited the website and/or Vaccine Hub
- Attended a webinar
- Received our newsletter



87% said Asthma Canada's information helped them somewhat or significantly better understand how vaccines support asthma management.

These respondents also reported higher confidence in making vaccination decisions and a greater likelihood of receiving recommended vaccines across flu, COVID-19, pneumococcal, RSV, and shingles.

This demonstrates that trusted, condition-specific information can meaningfully influence vaccine confidence and uptake.

What this means for future work

The survey findings highlight several opportunities to strengthen vaccine education, access, and support for people living with asthma:



Increase visibility of asthma-specific vaccine information in pharmacies, clinics, and other high-traffic community settings, where people with asthma most often receive care.



Equip pharmacists with clear, asthma-focused materials to support conversations at the point of care, particularly for vaccines recommended for adults with chronic respiratory conditions.



Address cost and eligibility barriers that limit access to RSV, shingles, and pneumococcal vaccines for adults under 65. These barriers were consistently identified as a major challenge and directly affect vaccine uptake.



Continue providing plain-language education about which vaccines are recommended for people with asthma and why, with an emphasis on safety, eligibility, and timing.



Increase public awareness of vaccine eligibility and coverage, especially for vaccines where respondents reported confusion or inconsistent access.



Highlight real-world patient experiences to help illustrate common barriers and support clearer communication across clinical and community settings.

Another respondent shared:



Please have information regarding asthma and vaccination posted or displays available in pharmacies or shopping centres, especially during flu season.



These opportunities reflect a clear message from the asthma community: accessible, tailored information and equitable access to vaccines are essential for supporting respiratory health.

Closing

People with asthma overwhelmingly see vaccination as an important part of staying healthy. This survey confirms strong support for immunization and highlights clear opportunities to reduce barriers, strengthen education, and ensure people living with asthma have access to the information and vaccines they need.

Additional Survey Quotes



I can't get the RSV because of cost. AISH doesn't pay for these, even though I have asthma and bronchiectasis.

Often asthma isn't listed priority or special access to vaccines so can't get coverage by government programs or even sometimes access to them.

I think asthmatics (if approved by family physician) should have all their vaccines covered by federal and provincial health care (i.e., RSV + Shingles).

The cost of the RSV vaccine is high. It is not covered by my health plan and I don't qualify as I am under 65 so I decided I would concentrate on getting the other vaccines. I did pay for the Pevnar 20 vaccine based on the information I learned on the Asthma and vaccines webinar. My old vaccine was 10 years ago and needed to be updated. My health plan covered 80% of it and I felt it was worth it for me to get it and paid the 20% cost.

In response to the Health Canada restrictions on eligibility for Covid-19 vaccination: as a person in my 70s with asthma, I would like to have a Covid-19 vaccination every 4 months, but sometimes have to argue with a retail pharmacist about eligibility.

I got the COVID vaccines, 3 shots and found amazing reduction in my everyday asthma symptoms... And I have not had a major attack since I have my last COVID shot. I'm very grateful for the access to that vaccine. I don't understand why it helped, but it did.

I believe vaccines have saved me from serious illness, from pneumonia, from RSV, in the last few years.





About Asthma Canada

Asthma Canada is the only national, patient-driven charity solely focused on improving the quality of life for the more than 4.8 million people in Canada living with asthma and respiratory allergies.

For over 50 years, we have proudly served as the national voice for people affected by asthma—empowering individuals through trusted, evidence-based resources, educational programs, and by supporting life-changing research and advocacy efforts across the country.

As a registered charity (BIN 89853-7048-RR0001), Asthma Canada is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Our national office, based in Toronto, works in close partnership with healthcare professionals and dedicated volunteers from coast to coast to advance our mission and reach communities nationwide.

- **Our vision is a future without asthma.**
- **Our mission is to help people living with asthma lead healthy lives through education, advocacy, and research.**

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