



Key Messages on the Final Results of the COVID-19 Seroprevalence Study

Issue statement: On September 8, 2020, [Canadian Blood Services](#) and Canada's [COVID-19 Immunity Task Force \(CITF\)](#) released the final results of Canada's first SARS-CoV-2 seroprevalence study. The results are consistent with preliminary analyses done in British Columbia and Ontario.

Key messages

- On September 8, 2020, [Canadian Blood Services](#) and Canada's [COVID-19 Immunity Task Force](#) released the results of an analysis aimed at detecting SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in all blood donor samples across nine provinces.
- According to the results, under 1% of the 37,373 blood samples collected between May 9 and June 18, 2020, contained antibodies against the novel coronavirus.
- These results suggest that only 0.7% of healthy Canadians had been exposed to SARS-CoV-2. The results are consistent with preliminary analyses done in British Columbia and Ontario.
- Antibody positivity indicates that a person has been infected with SARS-CoV-2. Population studies of this type help determine how many people have likely been exposed to the virus.
- These initial results suggest that the public has been following public health measures overall, but also indicate that the majority of Canadians are still susceptible to infection.
- With COVID-19 cases on the rise in several areas of the country, the results also highlight the importance of remaining vigilant and following public health best practices.
- Health Canada has approved serological tests, which are used to detect virus-specific antibodies and identify past exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Using validated and effective serological tests for COVID-19 is an important step in Canada's public health response.
- Serological studies of the overall population and at-risk subgroups may also guide important public health decisions once a vaccine becomes available.

Key messages on the Immunity Task Force

- On April 23, 2020, the Government of Canada created the [COVID-19 Immunity Task Force](#) to unify nationwide efforts to test blood samples for signs of COVID-19 infection.



- The Task Force catalyzes, supports and harmonizes the design and rapid implementation of population-based studies that generate reliable first estimates of SARS-CoV-2 antibody positivity both overall and in priority populations across Canada.
- Rapid, representative national surveys provide a snapshot of where we stand now and what to expect in the event of a second wave of the virus. They can also shed light on the immunity status of vulnerable populations such as Indigenous communities and residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Conducting large-scale serological (blood test) surveys of the Canadian public helps us measure the scope and scale of COVID-19 infections across the country.
- These surveys must be meticulously coordinated and executed to provide the best results for informing policy decisions.
- The Government has created a Task Force of organizations that work together under the direction of a Governing Board charged with setting priorities and recommending projects for funding to the Government of Canada. The Leadership Group is made up of three individuals who are renowned for their contributions to research, academia and innovation in public health and health care in Canada and internationally.
- The Governing Board is co-chaired by:
 - Dr. David Naylor, who is known for his scientific and academic leadership and successful management of large and complex organizations.
 - Dr. Catherine Hankins, who has domestic and international experience leading large and complex research projects and creating partnerships to advance public health priorities.
 - Dr. Timothy Evans, Director, School of Population and Global Health at McGill University, who leads the secretariat responsible for the successful execution of this complex endeavour.
- The Immunity Task Force is working with an Indigenous Advisory Circle of representatives from Indigenous communities across the country to promote immunity testing in these communities.