

# Perspectives: COVID-19 Vaccinations for Kids Under 5

## Project Overview

Manitoba was seeking perspectives from Manitobans about the next stages of the COVID-19 vaccine campaign, particularly because a vaccine was expected to be approved for children aged 6 months to 4 years old.

The responses to this survey helped inform the next phases of the vaccine campaign in the province.

## Engagement Overview

Public engagement consisted of an open, online survey that was available from June 22, 2022 to July 27, 2022. The objective of this survey was to better understand the perspectives, questions and preferences of Manitobans, particularly parents and caregivers, on COVID-19 vaccinations for children under the age of five.

1,445 participants responded to this survey. Participants reported living in all five regional health authorities:

- 50.6% (725) Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
- 31.7% (454) Southern Health-Santé Sud
- 9.1% (131) Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority
- 7.7% (111) Prairie Mountain Health
- 0.9% (13) Northern Health Region.

The majority (71%) of respondents were between 30 to 49 years old and female (68%).

One-third (30%) of respondents indicated they will not be vaccinated with a COVID vaccine, 63% indicated they are fully vaccinated (16.5% have received their primary series, 46% had received primary plus at least one booster), less than 1% had only received 1 dose of the vaccine and less than 1% indicated they had not been vaccinated but are considering it. Among those who had received a COVID-19 vaccine, most received their vaccine from a supersite (763) or pharmacy (354).

Among survey respondents:

- 59% (854) were parents/caregivers of a child aged 6 months to 4 years
- 42% (609) were parents/caregivers of a child aged 5-11 years
- 23% (275) were parents/caregivers of a child aged 12-17 years

## What We Heard

Several themes were identified in the analysis of survey responses, including perceptions about COVID-19 and perspectives on COVID-19 vaccines for children in three age groups (6 months to 4 years, 5 to 11 years, and 12 to 17 years). Feedback in the general comments largely reflected three themes, including support for continued emphasis on preventative measures, vaccine safety concerns, and concerns regarding the vaccine's efficacy.

### **Perceptions about COVID-19**

The survey results indicate that most respondents are less concerned about the likelihood of contracting COVID-19, experiencing severe symptoms, and the effect of COVID-19 on the province as a whole than they were one year ago. However, there is a notable minority of respondents who feel more concerned about the effect of COVID-19 on children and the economy than they were one year ago.

Respondents indicated that ProtectMB.ca and Health Canada are the most frequently accessed sources of information about COVID-19 over the past six months.

### **Perspective on COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 6 months to 4 years**

Respondents were asked about their perspectives on COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 6 months to 4 years

Half (50.5% or 432) of respondents indicated their child will receive the vaccine as soon as it's available, 39% (336) indicated their child will not receive the vaccine, 6% (52) indicated they are undecided and 4% (35) said their child will receive the vaccine at some point.

A number of participants expressed a desire for access to the vaccine for children under 5. Some respondents wrote that they were looking forward to the vaccine's approval. Others indicated that they would have their children vaccinated as soon as possible.

Some participants noted that their families have curtailed social activities because their young children have been unable to be vaccinated. Others noted that young, unvaccinated children have been unable to see their grandparents. Some respondents wrote that sending their unvaccinated children to daycare or pre-school is stressful because their children are unprotected.

Among participants who were undecided, or if their child will not receive the vaccine, the primary influences on that decision are safety of the vaccine (321), effectiveness of the vaccine (277), and the likelihood of their child experiencing severe symptoms (186).

Respondents felt that the most persuasive statement by public health was, "Public health strongly recommends that your child gets the vaccine."

Participants' preferred locations for getting children under 5 vaccinated are a family doctor's office / community clinic / Nurse Practitioner's office (368), a pediatrician's office (364), and a vaccine clinic run by public health (330). Fewer participants (216) selected the pharmacy option.

The factors respondents found very important in supporting their choice to vaccinate their child are information about vaccine safety (445), information about vaccine effectiveness (370), online booking options (368), information about COVID spread and severity (296),

conversations with their health care provider (269), and accommodations for children with special needs (266).

The most commonly cited preferred source of information about the vaccine for children under 5 were health care providers. Participants also selected government websites (390) and press conferences or news releases (382) as preferred sources of information.

The vast majority (90.2% or 765) indicated their child within this age group is up to date on their regular childhood immunizations.

### **Perspective on COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5 to 11 years**

Most participants (297) indicated that their children aged 5 to 11 years will not be vaccinated, and 170 participants reported that their children have received two doses.

Participants were asked about the likelihood that their child would receive a booster dose, if one were recommended. Most respondents indicated that it was very unlikely (318) or somewhat unlikely (7). Others responded very likely (150) or somewhat likely (15).

The preferred locations for a booster dose were a vaccine clinic (139), family doctor / community clinic / Nurse Practitioner's office (129), pediatrician's office (106), and pharmacy (103).

The majority (83.7% or 412) indicated their child within this age group is up to date on their regular childhood immunizations.

### **Perspective on COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 12-17 years**

Survey questions for this age group were answered by a small number of participants, with more than 1,000 skipping these questions.

The survey results show that most participants (211) will not have their child vaccinated, 102 have already fully immunized their child, and 31 have already fully immunized their child with a booster dose as well.

Among those whose children have been vaccinated, 98 were vaccinated at a supersite, 45 at a pharmacy, 23 at a regional or pop-up clinic, 19 at a medical clinic, and 7 at an urban Indigenous clinic.

The majority (83.3% or 299) indicated their child within this age group is up to date on their regular childhood immunizations.

### **General comments**

#### **Support for Continued Emphasis on Preventative Measures**

Several participants commented that they would like masks to be worn indoors in public spaces, seeing this as an important part of controlling transmission and reducing risk for those who cannot be vaccinated or are more likely to experience severe illness. Some asked for outdoor vaccination clinics, to minimize risk when bringing their family for vaccinations. Participants shared their perception that the public acts as if COVID-19 is no longer a problem and asked for more education about the risk of illness and the importance of vaccination.

#### **Vaccine Safety Concerns**

A number of participants expressed their fears that the vaccine is unsafe. Many of these responses included concerns about myocarditis in young people. Some respondents felt that the vaccine was rushed into use without proper clinical testing. Others wanted more information, noting that seeing successful results of clinical trials would provide peace of mind.

### **Concerns Regarding the Vaccine's Efficacy**

Several respondents expressed concern that the vaccine is ineffective. Some respondents felt that the vaccine is unnecessary because children are not susceptible or unsusceptible to COVID-19. Others believed that there is a lack of evidence supporting vaccinations as a way to prevent transmission and illness.

### **Next Steps**

The findings of this engagement will help to shape Manitoba's ongoing vaccination efforts. Additional engagements are expected in future on related immunization issues.

### **Active Offer Statement**

This information is available in an alternate format on request. Please contact [COVID@gov.mb.ca](mailto:COVID@gov.mb.ca).

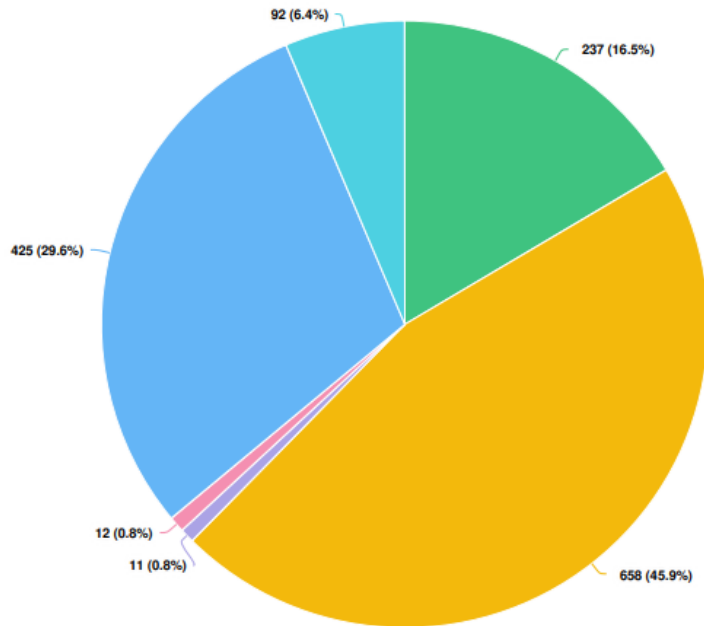
### **Questions?**

If you have any questions regarding the survey results, please contact [COVID@gov.mb.ca](mailto:COVID@gov.mb.ca).

# Appendix: Detailed Survey Responses

## General Perspectives

Q: Which of the following statements best reflects your experience with COVID-19 vaccines?



1,435 survey participants reported their vaccination status as:

- 45.9% (658) Received 2 doses / fully immunized and have received at least one booster dose
- 29.6% (425) Will not be vaccinated
- 16.5% (237) Received 2 doses / fully immunized
- 0.8% (12) Have not been vaccinated yet but am still considering it
- 0.8% (11) Received 1 dose
- 6.4% (92) Other

The survey results show that most participants have received at least 2 doses of the vaccine.

### Question options

- Received 2 doses / fully immunized
- Received 2 doses / fully immunized and have received at least one booster dose
- Received 1 dose
- Have not been vaccinated yet but am still considering it
- Will not be vaccinated
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (1435 response(s), 10 skipped)  
Question type: Radio Button Question

**Q. How have your perceptions about COVID-19 changed over the last 12 months?**



Optional question (1438 response(s), 7 skipped)  
 Question type: Likert Question

The survey results indicate that most respondents are less concerned about COVID-19 than they were one year ago.

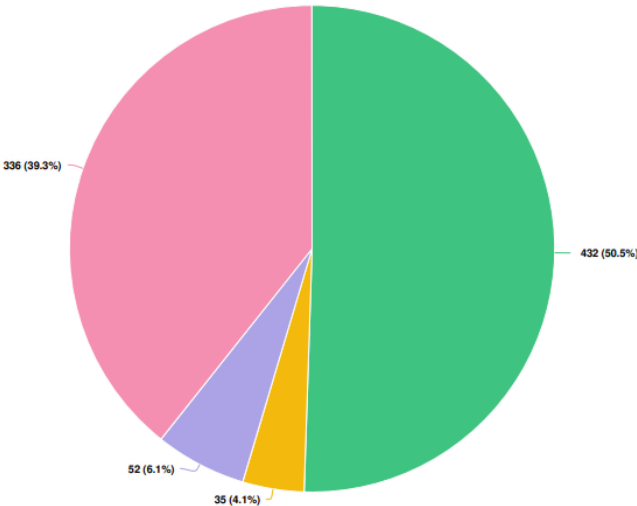
# Perspectives: COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 6 months- 4 years

**Q. Are you a parent/caregiver of a child aged 6 months to 4 years?**

- 59.1% (854) Yes
- 40.9% (591) No

Mandatory question (1,445 responses). The survey results show that most participants are parents / caregivers of a child aged 6 months to 4 years.

**Q. A COVID-19 vaccine for children aged six months to 4 may be approved for use as early as this summer. When it becomes available, what statement reflects your perspective on COVID-19 vaccines for this age group?**



- 50.5% (432) Child will receive the COVID vaccine as soon as it's available
- 39.3% (336) Child will not receive this vaccine
- 6.1% (52) Not sure / undecided at this time
- 4.1% (35) Child will receive the vaccine, but I'm in no rush

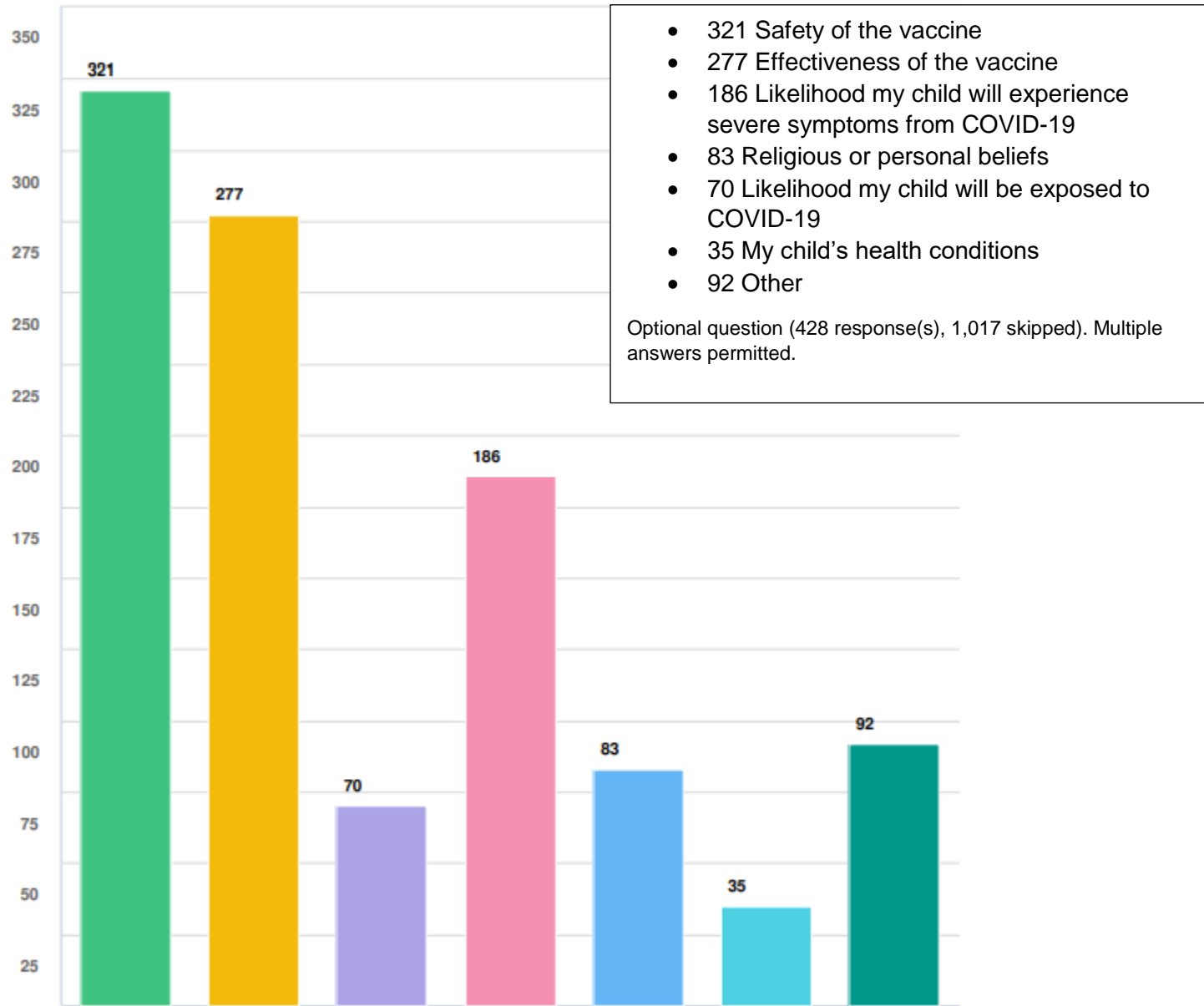
The survey results show that most parents will have their child vaccinated.

**Question options**

- Child will not receive this vaccine
- Not sure / undecided at this time
- Child will receive the vaccine, but I'm in no rush
- Child will receive the COVID vaccine as soon as it's available

Optional question (855 response(s), 590 skipped)  
Question type: Radio Button Question

**Q. If you are not sure, undecided, or if your child in this age group will not be receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, what is influencing that decision?**



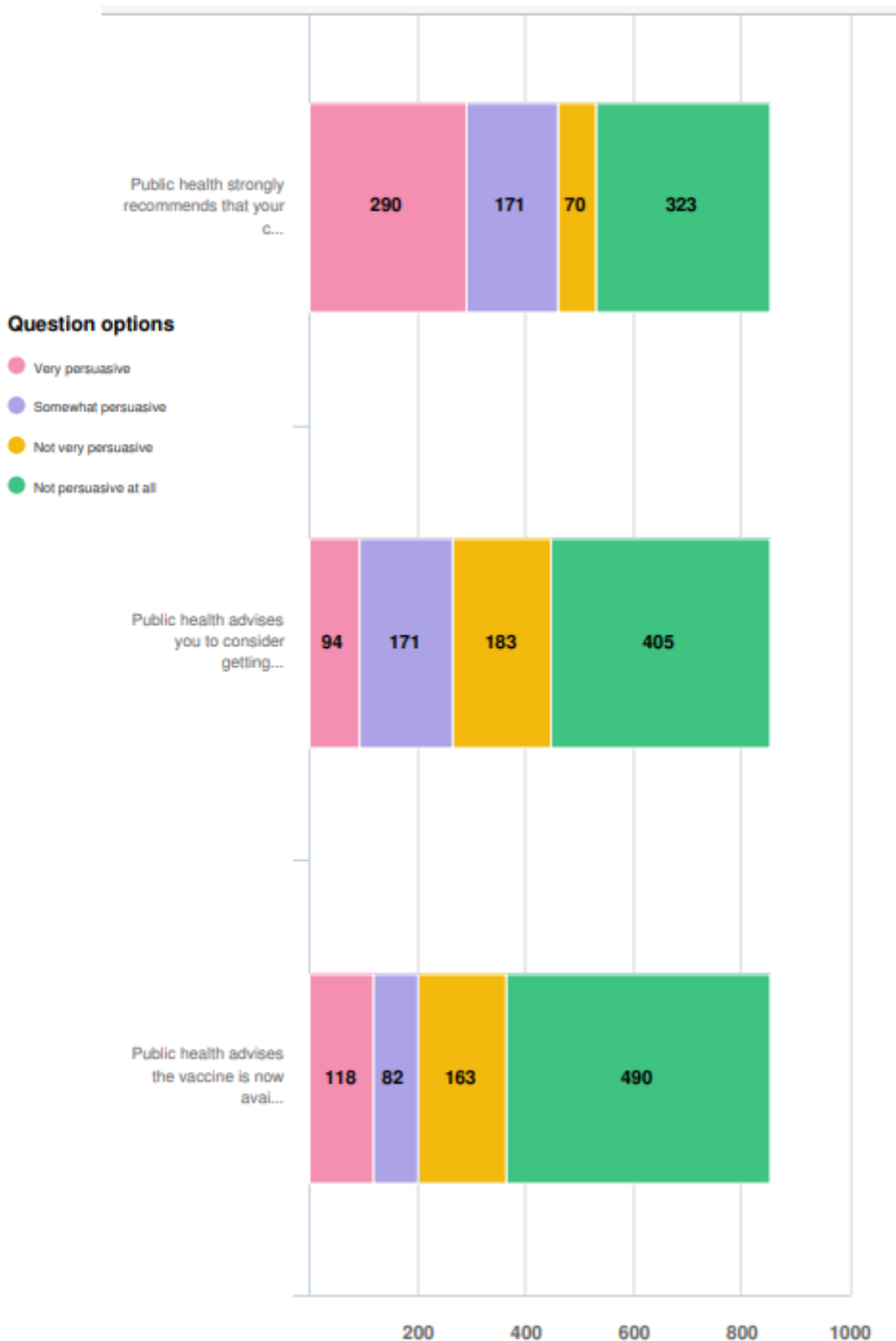
The survey results show that the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine are the most common influences on participants' decision not to vaccinate their children or their uncertainty about the choice.

- Other (please specify)
- My child's health conditions
- Religious or personal beliefs
- Likelihood my child will experience severe symptoms from COVID-19
- Likelihood my child will be exposed to COVID-19
- Effectiveness of the vaccine
- Safety of the vaccine

Optional question (428 response(s), 1017 skipped)  
Question type: Checkbox Question



**Q. Thinking of your child aged 6 months to 4 years, how persuasive would you find each of the following statements when considering whether to vaccinate your child?**



Public health **strongly recommends** that your child gets the vaccine.

- 290 Very persuasive
- 171 Somewhat persuasive
- 70 Not very persuasive
- 323 Not persuasive at all

Public health **advises** you to consider getting the vaccine for your child.

- 94 Very persuasive
- 171 Somewhat persuasive
- 183 Not very persuasive
- 405 Not persuasive at all

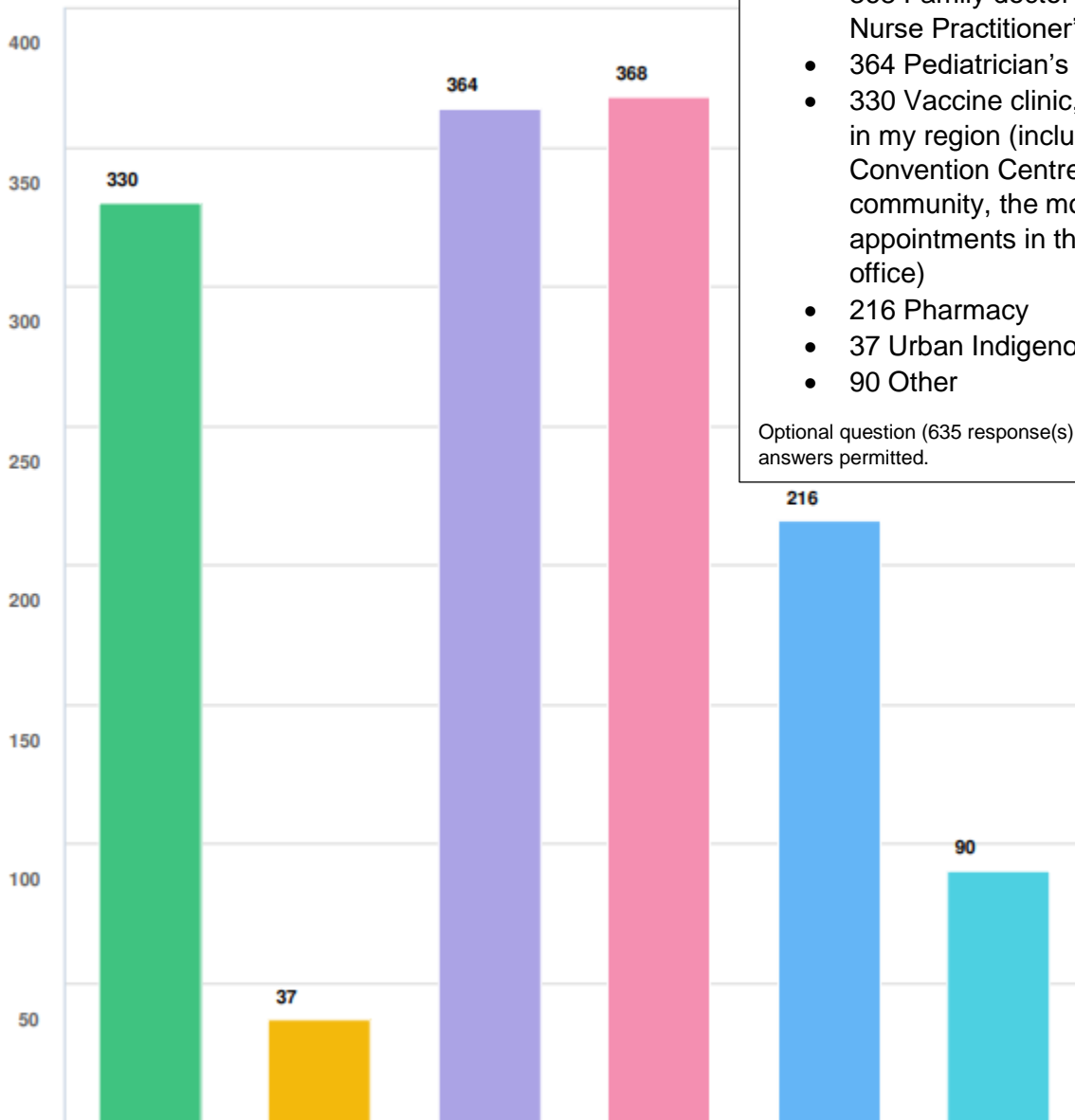
Public health advises the vaccine is **now available** for your child.

- 118 Very persuasive
- 82 Somewhat persuasive
- 163 Not very persuasive
- 490 Not persuasive at all

Optional question (854 response(s), 591 skipped). Likert scale question.

The survey results indicate that the most persuasive statement is “Public health strongly recommends that your child gets the vaccine.” The least persuasive statement is “Public health advises the vaccine is now available for your child.”

**Q. If you will or are considering having your child aged 6 months to 4 years immunized, where would you prefer to do so? Choose all that apply.**



- 368 Family doctor / Community clinic / Nurse Practitioner's office
  - 364 Pediatrician's office
  - 330 Vaccine clinic, run by public health in my region (including RBC Convention Centre, clinics in your community, the mobile clinic, or appointments in the local public health office)
  - 216 Pharmacy
  - 37 Urban Indigenous clinic
  - 90 Other
- Optional question (635 response(s), 810 skipped). Multiple answers permitted.

The survey results show that participants would like to access the vaccine in a variety of locations, but especially at medical professionals' offices.

- Other (please specify)
- Pharmacy
- Family doctor / Community clinic / Nurse Practitioner's office
- Pediatrician's office
- Urban Indigenous clinic
- Vaccine clinic, run by public health in my region (including RBC Convention Centre, clinics in your community, the mobile clinic, or appointments in the local public health office)

**Q. How important are each of the following items in supporting the choice to vaccinate your child aged 6 months to 4 years?**

The items that many participants felt **were important** in supporting the choice to vaccinate are:

- Information about **vaccine safety** (445 Very Important, 104 Important)
- Information about **vaccine effectiveness** (370 Very Important, 140 Important)
- Online **booking options** (368 Very Important, 132 Important)
- Conversations with my **health care provider** (269 Very Important, 231 Important)
- Information about **COVID spread and severity** (296 Very Important, 152 Important)
- Own **experience**, or experience of other children (176 Very Important, 202 Important)
- **Accommodations** for children with special needs (266 Very Important, 91 Important)

The items that many participants felt **were not important** in supporting the choice to vaccinate are:

- Financial incentives (613 Not Important At All, 86 Not Very Important)
- Language / translator services (566 Not Important At All, 62 Not Very Important)
- Transportation to vaccine appointments (513 Not Important At All, 61 Not Very Important)
- Child minding services for other children (476 Not Important At All, 76 Not Very Important)
- Booking by phone (352 Not Important At All, 128 Not Very Important)
- Culturally safe spaces (422 Not Important At All, 59 Not Very Important)
- Ability to walk in without an appointment (281 Not Important At All, 115 Not Very Important)

The survey responses indicate that the safety and efficacy of the vaccine are the most important considerations for parents choosing whether to vaccinate their children. The items that most participants felt were not important considerations in their decision **are still important to a number of respondents. The absence of these items could be a barrier to equitable access to the vaccine.**

Optional question (805 response(s), 640 skipped). Likert scale question.

**Q. Where would you prefer to get information about the COVID-19 vaccine for children aged six months to 4 years?**

- 502 **Health care provider**
- 390 **Government website**
- 382 **Government press conferences** or news releases
- 199 News media outlets
- 112 Government social media
- 102 Other web sites
- 86 Family members or friends
- 61 Other social media groups or accounts
- 28 Webinars

- 19 Workplace
- 117 Other

Optional question (783 response(s), 662 skipped). Multiple answers permitted.

The survey results show that health care providers, government website, and government press conferences or news releases are the most preferred sources of information about the COVID-19 vaccine for children under 5.

**Q. Is your child in this age group up to date on their childhood immunizations?**

- 90.2% (765) Yes
- 9.8% (83) No

Optional question (848 response(s), 597 skipped).

The survey results show that most participants' children are up to date on their childhood immunizations.

## **Perspectives: COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5-11**

### **Q. Are you a parent / caregiver for a child aged 5 to 11?**

- 42.1% (609) Yes
- 57.9% (836) No

Mandatory question (1445 response(s)).

The survey results show that most participants are not parents / caregivers to a child aged 5 to 11.

### **Q. What statement reflects the experience of your child in the 5 to 11 age group?**

- 297 Will not be vaccinated
- 170 Received 2 doses / fully vaccinated
- 22 Received 1 dose
- 13 Have not been vaccinated yet, but still considering it

Optional question (498 response(s), 947 skipped). Checkbox question.

The survey results indicate that most respondents to this question will not have their child aged 5 to 11 vaccinated.

### **Q. A booster dose has not yet been recommended for children in this age group. If that was recommended, how likely is it that this child would receive it?**

- 318 Very Unlikely
- 7 Somewhat Unlikely
- 7 Not Sure
- 13 Somewhat Likely
- 150 Very Likely

Optional question (497 response(s), 948 skipped). Likert scale question.

The survey results indicate that most respondents' children aged 5 to 11 would not receive a booster dose.

### **Q. If a booster dose becomes available for this age group, where would you prefer they receive it? Check all that apply.**

- 139 Vaccine clinic, run by public health in my region (including RBC Convention Centre, clinics in your community, the mobile clinic, or appointments in the local public health office)
- 129 Family doctor / Community clinic / Nurse Practitioner's office
- 106 Pediatrician's office
- 103 Pharmacy

- 68 At school
- 14 Urban Indigenous clinic
- 108 Other

Optional question (336 response(s), 1,109 skipped). Multiple answers permitted.

The survey results indicate that most participants would prefer that their children aged 5 to 11 receive a booster dose at a vaccine clinic or a medical professional's office.

**Q. Is your child in this age group up to date on their other childhood immunizations?**

- 83.7% (412) Yes
- 16.3% (80) No

Optional question (492 response(s), 953 skipped).

The survey results indicate that most participants' children are up to date on other childhood immunizations.

## **Perspectives: COVID-19 vaccines for children aged 5-11**

### **Q. Are you a parent / caregiver for a child aged 12 to 17?**

- 22.9% (**275**) Yes
- 77.1% (925) No

Mandatory question (1,200 responses).

The survey results show that most participants are not parents / caregivers to children aged 12 to 17.

### **Q. What statement reflects the experience of your child in the 12 to 17 age group?**

- 211 Will not be vaccinated
- 102 Received 2 doses / fully immunized
- 31 Received 2 doses / fully immunized and have received a booster dose
- 15 Received 1 dose
- 4 Have not been vaccinated yet, but still considering it

Optional question (362 response(s), 1,083 skipped). Multiple answers permitted.

The survey results show that most respondents' children aged 12 to 17 will not be vaccinated. Among those who have been vaccinated, most have received 2 doses.

### **Q. Where did this young person receive their vaccines? Check any that apply.**

- 98 Supersite
- 45 Pharmacy
- 23 Regional or pop-up clinic
- 19 Medical clinic
- 7 Urban Indigenous clinic
- 58 Other

Optional question (206 response(s), 1,239 skipped). Multiple answers permitted.

The survey results show that most participants' children aged 12 to 17 were vaccinated at a supersite.

### **Q. Is your child in this age group up to date on their other childhood immunizations?**

- 83.3% (299) Yes
- 16.7% (60) No

Optional question (359 response(s), 1,086 skipped).

The survey results show that the majority of participants' children are up to date on other childhood immunizations.