

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

Canadians and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

Report

April 2003



1.0 Study Highlights

- Almost all Canadians have heard of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

Question: *Have you read or heard about the disease, known as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), that is currently affecting certain areas of Canada?*

n=1501	Yes	No
Canada	97%	3%

- More than one in four Canadians are worried about the disease.

Question: *Are you worried that you or someone close to you will contract the disease?*

n=1450 who heard about the disease	Yes	No	Don't know/Refusal
Canada	28%	70%	1%

- Prevention begins by washing ones hands according to a majority of Canadians.

Question: *Have you taken or are you planning to take any of the following measures to protect yourself from the disease?*

n=1450	
... Washing your hands more often for longer periods	58%
... Avoiding places that you associate with the epidemic	44%
... Avoiding crowds	28%
... Wearing a protective mask	7%
Other measures	2%
No measures	26%
Don't know	1%

Note: The total exceeds 100% because respondents were able to give up to 4 answers.

- One in three Canadians might change their travelling habits or travel projects within Canada.

Question: *Do you think this epidemic might lead you to change your travelling habits or any trips you may have planned in Canada?*

n=1450	Yes	No	Don't know
Canada	33%	65%	2%

2. Results

2.1 Almost all Canadians have heard of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

97% of Canadians have read or heard about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and only 3% of Canadians have not heard about the disease.

Canadians who are aged between 18 and 34 years of age (6%), who earn less than \$20 000 (8%), who have a primary level of education (9%) and who do not work (5%) are proportionally least likely to have heard about the virus.

Question: *Have you read or heard about the disease, known as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), that is currently affecting certain areas of Canada?*

n=1501	Yes	No
Canada	97%	3%

2.2 More than one in four Canadians is worried about the disease

More than a quarter of the Canadian population (28%) are worried that they or someone close to them will contract the disease. In contrast, the majority of Canadians (70%) claim that they are not worried about the disease.

More allophones (40%) than anglophones (27%) or francophones (23%) fear Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. The same applies to the residents of the Atlantic Provinces (39%) and Ontario (32%).

Question: *Are you worried that you or someone close to you will contract the disease?*

n=1450 who have
heard about the
disease

	Yes	No	Don't know
Mother tongue:			
French	23%	74%	3%
English	27%	72%	1%
Other	40%	59%	1%
Atlantic Provinces	39%	60%	1%
Quebec	23%	75%	3%
Ontario	32%	67%	1%
Prairies	26%	73%	2%
Alberta	25%	75%	-
British Columbia	25%	74%	1%
Canada	28%	70%	1%

2.3 Prevention begins by washing ones hands

The majority of Canadians (58%) believe that frequent washing of ones hands is the best preventive measure against the disease. Furthermore, 44% of Canadians claimed that they would avoid certain places or businesses that they associated with the virus. As far as other measures mentioned in the study are concerned, 28% would avoid crowds or densely occupied areas, while only 7% would wear a protective mask. 26% would take no preventive measures at all.

Although preventive measures are proportionally taken mainly by those who are worried about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, the majority of those who do not fear contracting the virus nevertheless take precautions compared to 32% who take none.

The highest proportion of respondents taking preventive measures against the spread of the virus is found in Ontario. In fact, 70% wash their hands more often, 53% avoid certain places or businesses that they associate with the disease and 36% avoid crowds. Only 16% of Ontarians claimed that they took no measures.

Conversely, Quebecers are the least likely (36%) to take preventive measures.

Question: *Have you taken or are you planning to take any of the following measures to protect yourself from the disease?*

n=1450	Canada	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	Alberta	British Columbia
... Washing your hands more often for longer periods	58%	58%	45%	70%	45%	47%	62%
... Avoiding places that you associate with the epidemic	44%	46%	28%	53%	45%	44%	45%
... Avoiding crowds	28%	25%	26%	36%	14%	21%	24%
... Wearing a protective mask	7%	3%	6%	8%	5%	6%	8%
Other measures	2%	-	5%	1%	1%	-	1%
No measures	26%	22%	36%	16%	30%	34%	26%
Don't know	1%	1%	2%	1%	-	-	1%

Note: The total exceeds 100% because respondents were able to give up to 4 answers.

2.4 One in three Canadians might change their travelling habits within Canada

The epidemic, which has afflicted Ontario, could have consequences for Canadian travel projects and travelling habits within Canada. In fact, 33% of respondents claimed that the virus could lead them to change their plans as opposed to 65% who stated the contrary. Considering that 26% of Canadians usually visit other Canadian provinces during their vacation, the proportion of Canadians who might change their plans could harm tourism within Canada.

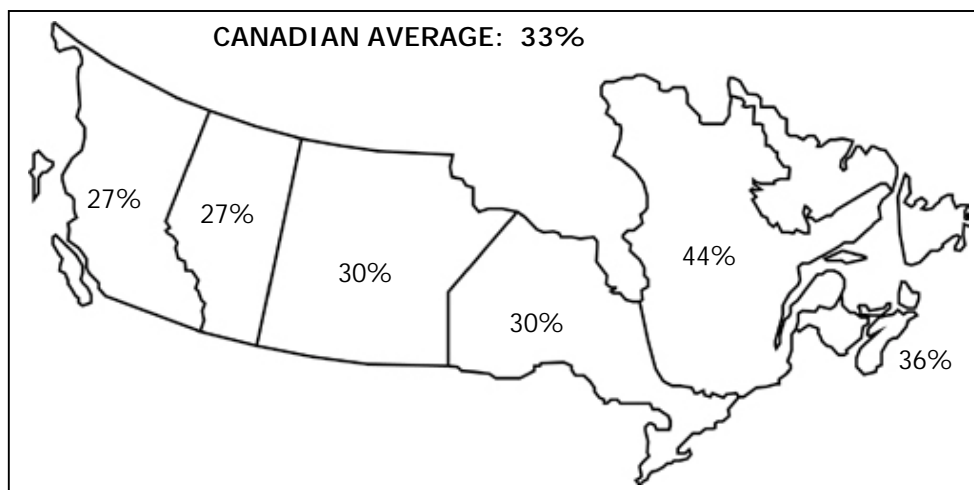
Although Quebecers are least likely to worry about contracting the virus, 44% of them might change their travel projects in Canada compared to 55% who claim the contrary.

On the other hand, 72% of British Columbians and 68% of Ontarians do not intend to change their plans.

Question: *Do you think this epidemic might lead you to change your travelling habits or any trips you may have planned in Canada?*

n=1450	Yes	No	Don't know/ Refusal
Atlantic Provinces	36%	58%	6%
Quebec	44%	55%	1%
Ontario	30%	68%	2%
Prairies	30%	66%	4%
Alberta	27%	73%	-
British Columbia	27%	72%	1%
Canada	33%	65%	2%

Distribution of Canadians who might not travel within Canada



3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1501 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between April 15 and April 20, 2003. Up to ten call-backs were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1501 respondents is of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.