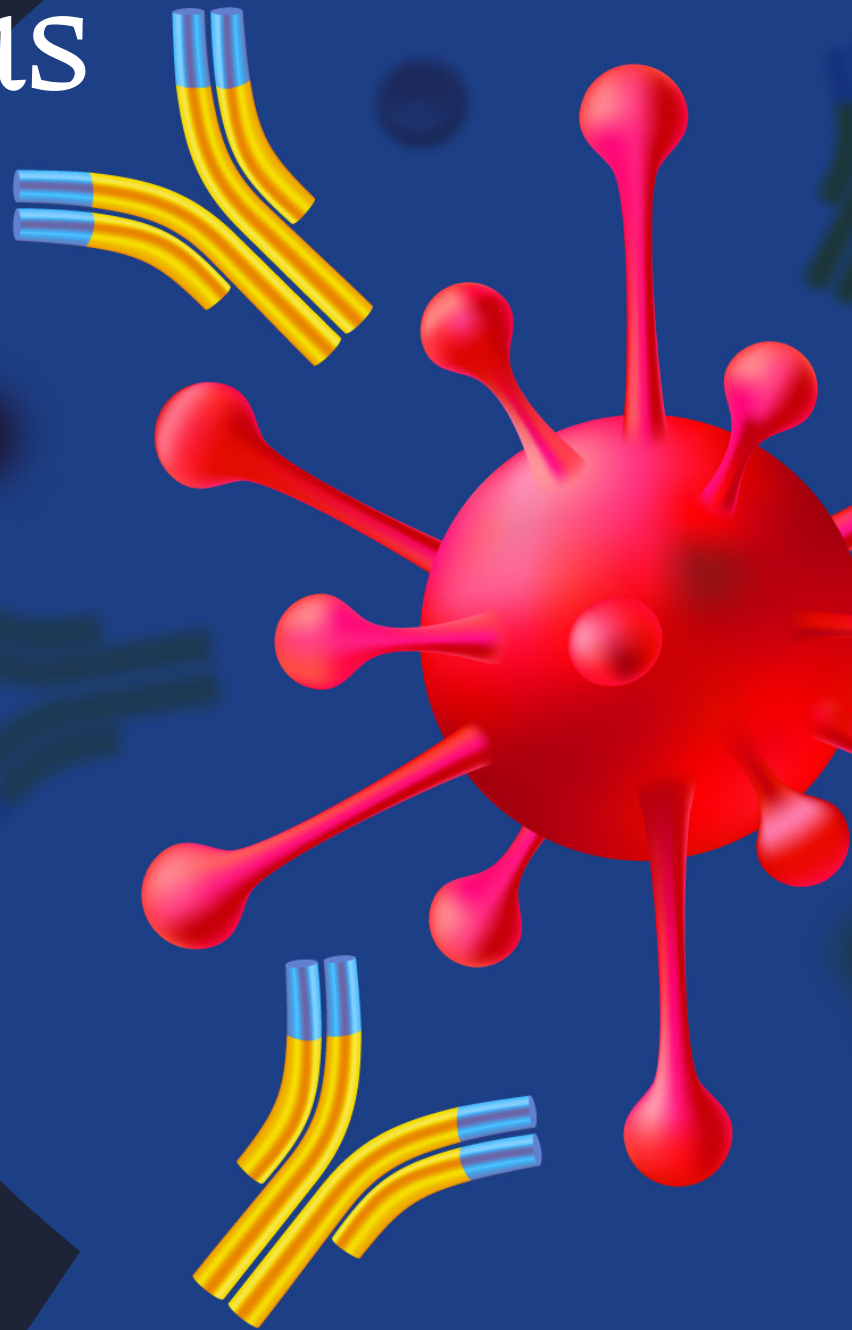


Action to Beat Coronavirus in Canada

THIRD
VIRAL WAVE
STUDY

August 2021



Thank you for staying with us on the Action to Beat Coronavirus — Ab-C — journey, unfolding in parallel with the coronavirus pandemic in Canada.

Ab-C, a collaboration of the Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR) at Unity Health Toronto, the University of Toronto, and the Angus Reid Forum, has provided one of the earliest records in Canada of the spread of SARS-CoV-2—the virus that causes COVID.

Ab-C Phase 1: The First Wave of Canada's COVID Epidemic

In Phase 1, we had a target of receiving 9,000 DBS samples. Thanks to our dedicated respondents, we surpassed our target, with **9,196 Phase 1 samples**.

WHAT WE FOUND IN PHASE 1



About 2% of the Forum members were positive for COVID-19 antibodies, signaling infection during the first viral wave.



Canada had among the lowest national rates early in the pandemic, which ranged from about 1% in Iceland to 9% in the US.



About 30% of those with positive blood antibody tests did not report symptoms—confirming that asymptomatic infections are common.

Ab-C Phase 2: The Second Wave of Canada's COVID Epidemic

In Phase 2, our target was 7,000 DBS samples and again exceeded it, with **7,173 samples**.

- 5-6% of Forum members were positive for COVID-19 antibodies, a sharp increase from the 2% in Phase 1.
- The prevalence was higher in Quebec, Ontario, the Prairies, and British Columbia (5-6%) than in the Atlantic Provinces (2-3%).
- No significant differences in prevalence between men and women.
- More COVID antibody positives among visible minorities than others.
- COVID symptoms were predictive of a positive blood antibody test.
- People in their 60s had a slightly higher rate of positive blood tests than others, but all age groups saw an increase from Phase 1 to Phase 2.
- In people who had antibodies in Phase 1, most retained them up to 7 months later.

5-6%

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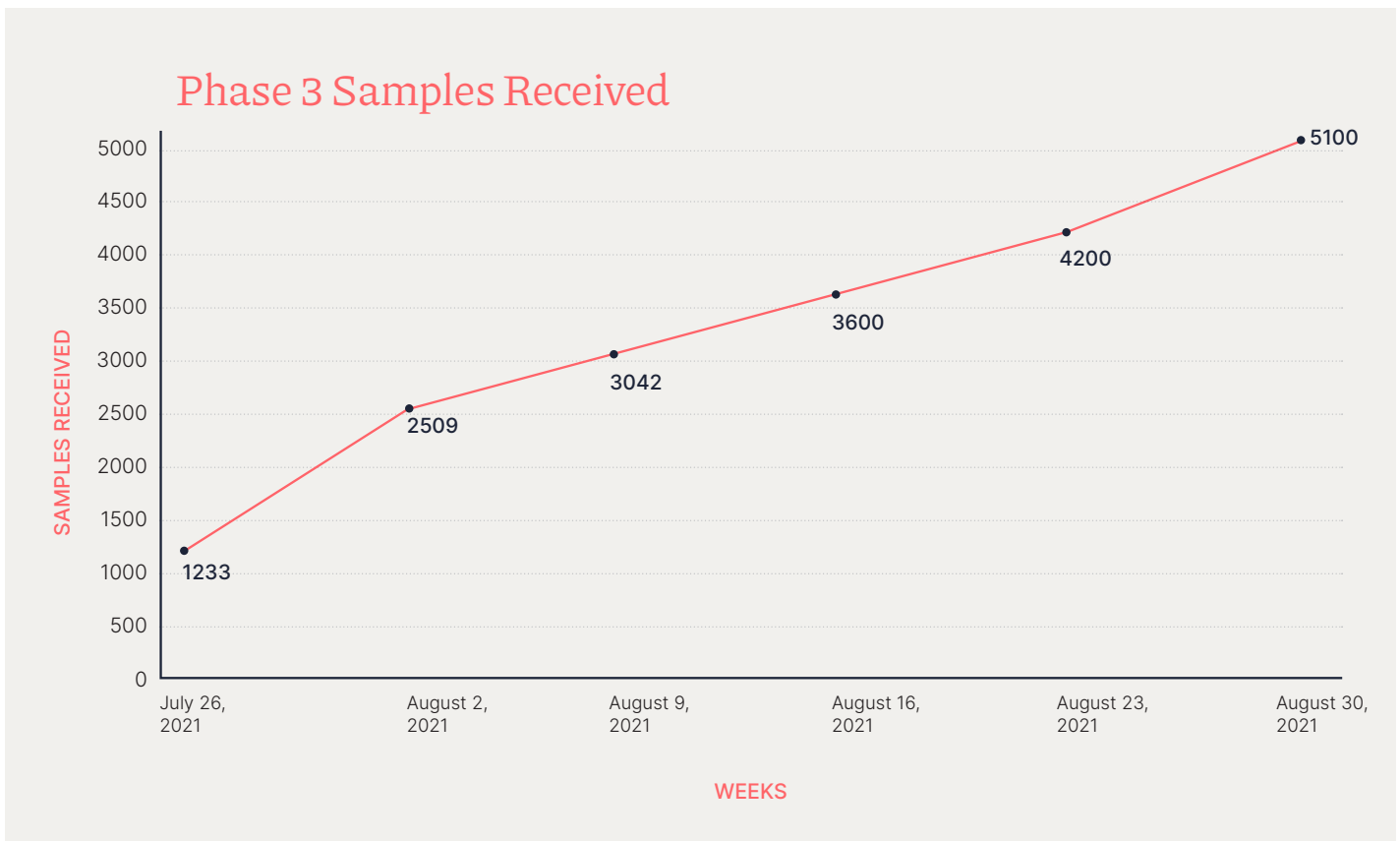
↑ INCREASE FROM 2%



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Ab-C Phase 3: Studying the Third Viral Wave and Vaccinated Canadians

For Phase 3 so far, we have received 5,100 DBS samples and our target for the current phase is collecting at least **6,000 DBS samples**.



We need your help to continue to track the pandemic, to understand what happened during the third viral wave, and what the antibody response is among the many Canadians now vaccinated against COVID-19.

Why it is important to participate in the Ab-C study: Delta variant and the Ab-C study:



1

The original coronavirus causing COVID-19 has mutated, meaning that it has had changes in its structure and function. One mutated form, the “delta variant”, is of particular concern as it is more infectious than earlier forms of the virus. Delta is responsible for most new cases occurring in recent weeks in Canada (and indeed much of the world).



2

Delta variant infections are occurring predominantly among the unvaccinated population, and to a lesser extent in those who have had only one dose of vaccine. Infections among double vaccinated are uncommon, but with a lot more Canadians being vaccinated, more of these infections among vaccinated are now being reported.



3

Among the very few people who have been double vaccinated AND infected with delta, the risks of being hospitalized or dying are reduced by over 90% as compared to unvaccinated adults.



4

The Ab-C study is looking for COVID antibodies that can distinguish if you have had an infection even if you have been vaccinated. We can do this because we test for three different “antigens” of the virus, one of which arises only from natural infection (including delta) and not from vaccination.



5

The Ab-C study will study the spread of the delta variant in a planned “Phase 4” later this fall or early next winter. All Ab-C participants, including those who have not yet provided a home blood sample, will be eligible to participate.



6

The best public health advice for Canadians during the delta surge is to get doubly vaccinated (and get a booster if you are in the eligible group of immunocompromised adults), use a mask when you are indoors, apply physical distancing, and make sure you get tested quickly if you’ve been exposed to someone infected, or if you have symptoms.

Here is how you can help, whether or not you have been vaccinated:

- ✓ If you signed up for **Phase 3** to get a home sample collection kit but have not yet completed and returned the collection and **online consent form**, please do so. More instructions can be found **HERE**.
- ✓ If you have any questions, please call 1-833-TEST-ABC (837-8222) between 8 AM and 8 PM Eastern Time or write to us at abcstudy@unityhealth.to.

Thanks for being part of the fight against COVID.

Sincerely,
The Entire Ab-C and Angus Reid Forum Team

Unity Health Toronto

1-833-TEST-ABC (837-8222)
Available 8 am to 8 pm EST
AbCStudy@UnityHealth.to

Angus Reid Forum

www.angusreidforum.com/contact
support@angusreidforum.com

