

# Why we fear Covid too much

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After more than a year living with Covid, it is time Canadians faced the truth: We fear it too much.

- Most of us aren't going to get it.
- Most of us who do get it will get over it: Younger, healthy people have a 99.6 per recovery rate.
- It is easy to protect yourself.

So how big a threat is it? You be the judge.

According to an end-of-year statement from Canada's Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, there were 572,982 Canadians infected in 2020, or 1.5% of a 38.1 million population. Of those infected, 2.7% died.

Nor were deaths random: More than 90% of Canada's 15,472 Covid deaths were above the age of 70. Of all deaths, roughly 80% were in long-term care homes.

All deaths are tragic. We do not value one life over another, on the basis of age. However, the vulnerability of the elderly and infirm to the Covid virus, and their geographic concentration, point to a rather obvious mitigation strategy. Rather than locking down healthy people everywhere, our efforts should be focused on

protecting a relatively small population of unhealthy, and largely immobile people, in the readily accessible places where they live. In Canada, after a year observing this, we continue to do the exact opposite.

Risk is a part of life. Calculating our exposure to risk is something we do all the time. For example there are 160,000 vehicle accidents on Canada's roads every year, and around 2,000 people die in them, not to mention a far larger number of Canadians who will suffer harms including emotional distress and quadriplegia. But individually, millions of Canadians still make the daily decision to drive, or to be a passenger in a motor vehicle.

- So what of the young woman walking her dog on a footpath who already masked up, buries her face in her elbow as you approach?
- Or the mask-wearing married couple swimming laps in a pool of which they are the sole occupants?
- Then there is your neighbor, shoveling snow outside alone, wearing a mask.

This is not to mock any person following public health advice. Often, at least inside a public place, it is the order of the day or the condition of doing business. And we acknowledge some people have well-founded fears for their own vulnerability.

But, elected and unelected government officials, assisted by media, have allowed a deep, corrosive and above all needless societal angst to take hold of Canadians. The level of fear is not justified by the facts and as anxiety, mental illness and depression soar, we are only now starting to understand how much harm they have caused.

We need instead to bring the drivers' risk-calculation to everyday choices. And we need to bring Canadian society back to life, and start living again.

Stress shortens lives, too.

**For more information, see the JCCF report:**

***Flying Blind:*** Governments' hasty decisions to lock down Canadians while damaging public health and the economy  
<https://www.jccf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-12-03-Flying-Blind.pdf>