

Cultivating Resilience in a Post-COVID World

HOW TO SAFELY RETURN YOUR TEAM BACK INTO THE WORKPLACE IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD



WHITE PAPER 2 (OF 3)

Why it's critical to return team members
back to the workplace to support
collaboration, engagement and
productivity





-  RESILIENCY
-  WELL-BEING
-  THRIVE
-  FUTURE PROOF WORKFORCE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from Innovation Health Group	3
Introduction	4
Executive Summary	8
Act 1: Mandate vaccination	9
Act 2: Conduct antigen and antibodies testing	12
Act 3: Implement an Immunity Passport	16
Our Recommendations	18
White Paper #3	21
White Paper #1	22
IHG Team	23
References	24



WHITE PAPER 2

Why it's critical to return team members back to the workplace to support collaboration, engagement and productivity

Wave 4 of the pandemic is upon us. However, that does not mean we should go back into hiding and resume the same mitigation measures of the past. As the vaccination rate continues to climb above 80%, we need to start living again, go back to school and return to the workplace in a hybrid fashion.

In the second of a series of three white papers, we provide scientific reasons why business leaders should begin to welcome back team members, fully vaccinated, into their workplaces to improve engagement, productivity and well-being.

The pandemic has created a series of micro-traumas that have begun to rupture social cohesion among work teams and impacted everyone's physical health and mental stamina.

The Delta variant, and other variants to follow, are the critical reason why all organizations must mandate vaccinations for all employees. This bold but necessary action is the only safe choice. It can also prevent tension between those who are vaccinated versus those on the sideline who choose to be unvaccinated.

Technology must be implemented to streamline the ongoing need to track and trace all employees to ensure their current vaccination and booster status. Furthermore, as variants evolve, we will continue to require regular testing in the workplace to screen for COVID-19 and consider monitoring for immunity status with antibodies testing. Our Innovation Health Group medical team, supported by our Immunity Passport app, can determine the team members and guests who can safely enter your workplace.

As we rebound from the pandemic, organizations need to regain a sense of control and team members need to reclaim their health resiliency.



Innovation Health

At Innovation Health Group, we recognize the debate around mandating vaccines and masks in the workplace. The scientific data is clear that those who are unvaccinated pose a real threat to the health and safety of our communities and threaten the speed of our economic recovery.

We advocate for those who have been vaccinated. They've earned the right to feel safe in their workplace and should not needlessly worry that unvaccinated colleagues or clients will infect them. The fear for many is they will bring COVID-19 home to their children and immunocompromised family members.

Our second white paper presents scientific reasons why organizations must update their health and safety policies to mandate vaccinations. Furthermore, we offer technology and laboratory diagnostics solutions to support a safe re-entry into the workplace.

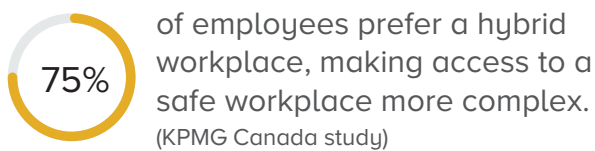
Our experienced team of senior thought leaders across medical wellness, mental health, people and culture, change management and communications are supporting organizations and their senior leadership teams with strategies to help get them to a safer, more secure place.

It's time for businesses to take the lead.



INTRODUCTION

As we approach September 2021, most organizations are discussing plans to return some, if not most, employees to their workplaces for fall. It's time to get back to normal. But employers and employees alike recognize that we're building a different work-life cadence.



Many organizations need to focus on rebuilding their team culture, including fully integrating new employees who were hired during the pandemic.

“3,000 employees have never stepped into our buildings since they were hired during the pandemic.”

- C-suite executive, national employer of 25,000+ team members

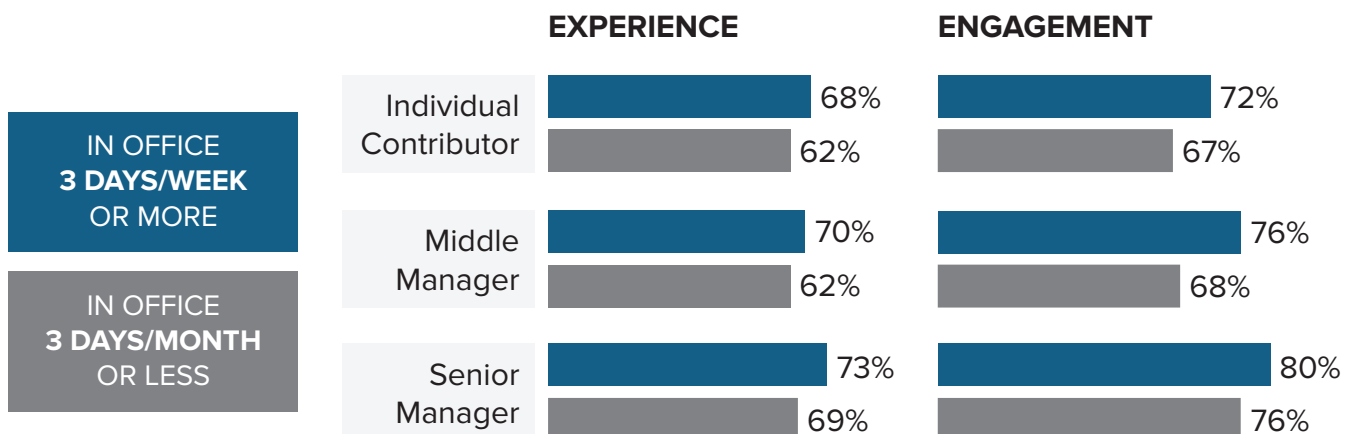
Studies demonstrate it's important to return to the workplace at least three times per week to improve experience and engagement at work.

Remote work may have begun to rupture social cohesion among work teams.

“There's been great research done on social networks... over the course of the pandemic. What we've seen is that within your immediate team, communication and connectivity have gone up. But linkages across teams have gone down significantly.”

- Bryan Hancock, *Culture in the hybrid workplace*
June 11, 2021 McKinsey podcast

Therefore, it's critical to return members back to the workplace as teams to support engagement and productivity. However, it must be done with bold, proactive planning. Avoiding more COVID-19 workplace scares and infections is a critical next step. It starts with maximizing vaccination rates. But it doesn't end there. It's only the beginning to support a safe workplace and improve performance.



SOURCE: Cushman & Wakefield – Experience per Square Foot Survey 6/28/2021 <https://www.cushmanwakefield.com/en/united-states/insights/us-articles/encourage-the-in-office-experience-boost-infographic>

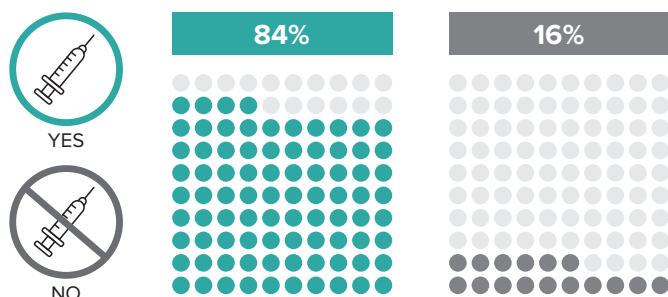
VACCINATION RATES AND OFFICE HERD IMMUNITY

As of August 7, 2021, 62.1% of Canadians are fully vaccinated compared to 50.7% of Americans.

Ideally, the vaccination rate should at least be 90% to achieve herd immunity to end the pandemic.

Unfortunately, it appears that this may not be achievable in many communities.

In our first white paper, we shared our Innovation Health Group; vaccination survey results completed in the spring of 2021 with more than 800 employees from 12 diverse organizations.



84% of employees plan to get vaccinated, leaving 16% more vulnerable and at higher risk.

Some scientists believe that it might be possible to eliminate COVID-19 from some regions, while it continues to circulate in others at one given point in time.¹ ***This is the definition of an endemic.***

These same scientists say we have every reason to believe this coronavirus will become less dangerous as it evolves, but only if we can get to a high vaccination rate around the world. The laws of nature will rule. With more viral transmission, we will get more mutations.



Those who are not vaccinated are factories of new variants.

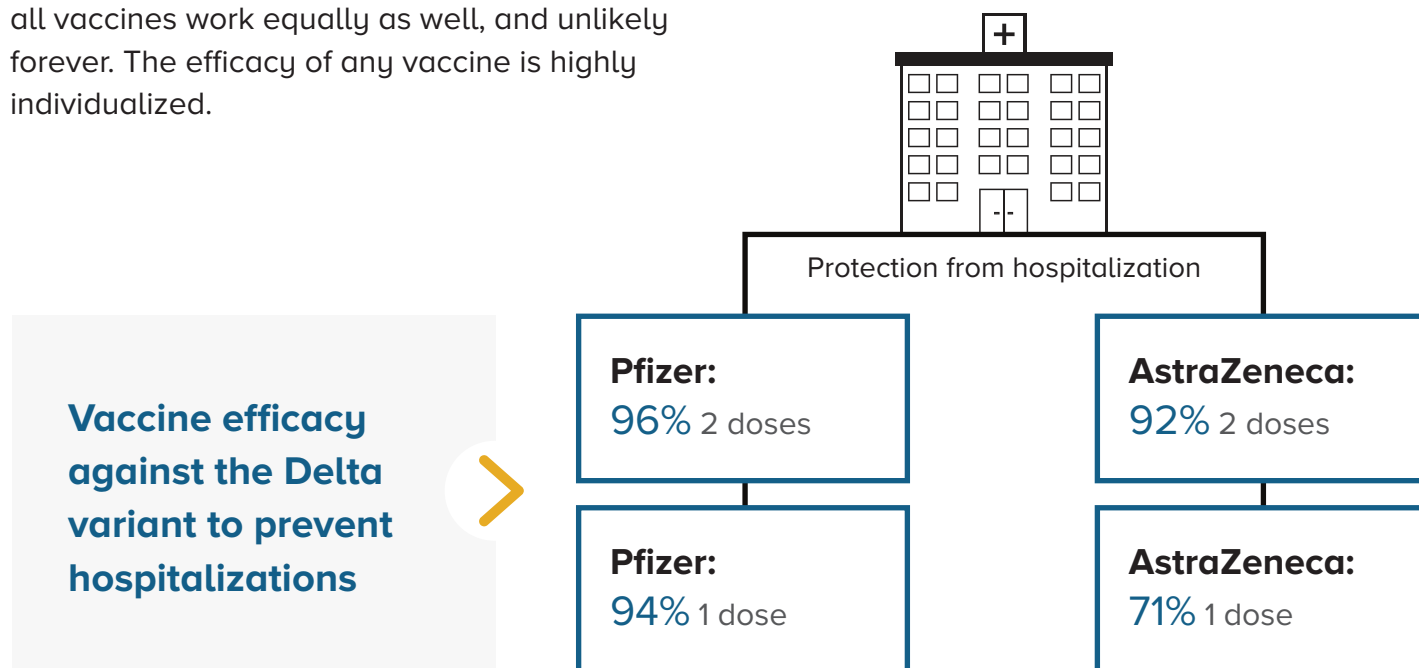
Only over time can we hope that the COVID-19 virus mutates into less transmissible and less contagious variants. In the near term, the Delta variant is a ***thousand times*** more transmissible than the original viral strain first identified in China.

“High viral loads suggest an increased risk of transmission and raised concern that, unlike with other variants, vaccinated people infected with Delta can transmit the virus.”

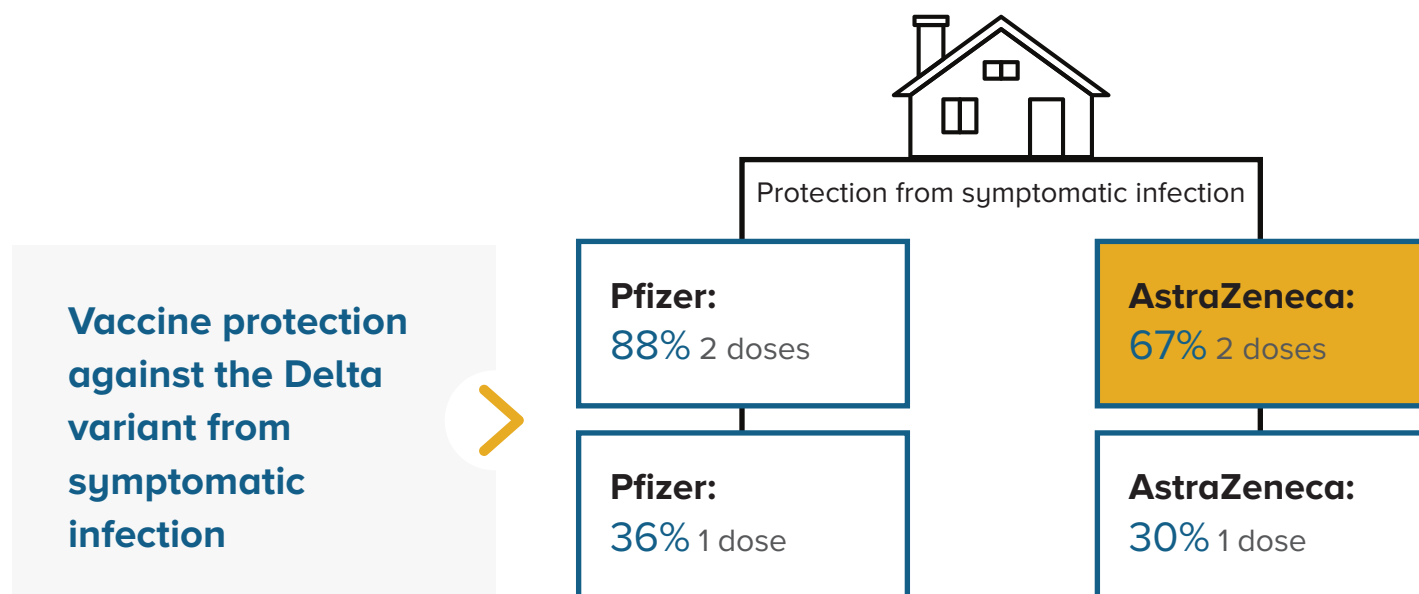
- CDC Director, Dr. Rochelle Walensky

A July 30, 2021 CDC study shows the Delta variant produced similar amounts of virus in vaccinated and unvaccinated people if they get infected which has led to new U.S. federal guidance that now recommends most fully vaccinated Americans wear masks indoors again.²

In general, the vaccines authorized for use in Canada and the U.S. are presently working well to prevent hospitalization and death caused by the known variants of concern. However, not all vaccines work equally as well, and unlikely forever. The efficacy of any vaccine is highly individualized.



SOURCE: Public Health England Published 14 June 2021



SOURCE: Jamie Lopez Bernal, et al. Effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines against the B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant. 2021.07.21.21257658;

NOTE: Both Moderna and Pfizer are interchangeable as they are essentially the same mRNA vaccine and therefore should perform in the same manner.

THE NEED FOR MORE BOOSTERS

0.001%

death rate due to
COVID-19 breakthrough
cases for the fully
vaccinated
(Pfizer or Moderna)

74%

of breakthrough
cases occurred among
adults 65 or older

SOURCE: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/31/health/fully-vaccinated-people-breakthrough-hospitalization-death/index.html>

We're beginning to transition from a pandemic to an endemic, with small and larger waves of infection at home and abroad.

“The endpoint of this virus is that we will just start to live with it.”³

- Steven M. Jones

Inevitably, there will be ‘vaccine escape’ where existing vaccines will not be effective in protecting us for illness and/or death from new variants. Therefore, we will need boosters to deal with the evolving variants. Perhaps, boosters every six months will be a reality for the foreseeable future.

“A likely scenario is that there will be a need for a third dose, somewhere between 6 and 12 months and then from there, there will be an annual revaccination, but all of that needs to be confirmed. And again, the variants will play a key role.”⁴

- Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla

Antibodies produced from the vaccine declined by an average of 6% every two months, and that the vaccine was most effective between one week and two months after receiving the second dose of the shot and that efficacy of the (Pfizer) vaccine dropped to around 84% four to six months after the second dose.⁵

Israel's Ministry of Health started mRNA vaccine boosters in July 2021, for citizens 60 years and older who received their first two Pfizer vaccines more than five months ago. Their research cites that immunity weakens after six months, which begins impacting protection against hospitalization and severe disease.



Contributing vaccine efficacy variables include:



Age



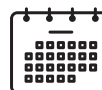
Health and nutritional status



Pre-existing illness



Type of vaccine received



Frequency between shots and boosters

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To safely return your team to the workplace in a post-pandemic world will require **three bold acts** that must be done in sequence.



ACT 1

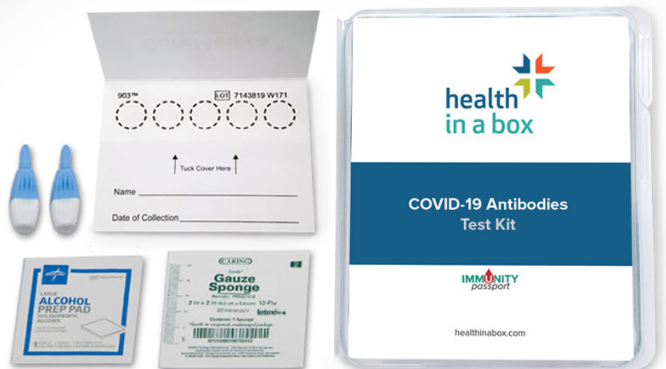
Mandate vaccination

The responsible thing to do as employers is to mandate vaccination for all team members who work in a physical space with others.

ACT 2

Conduct antigen and antibodies testing

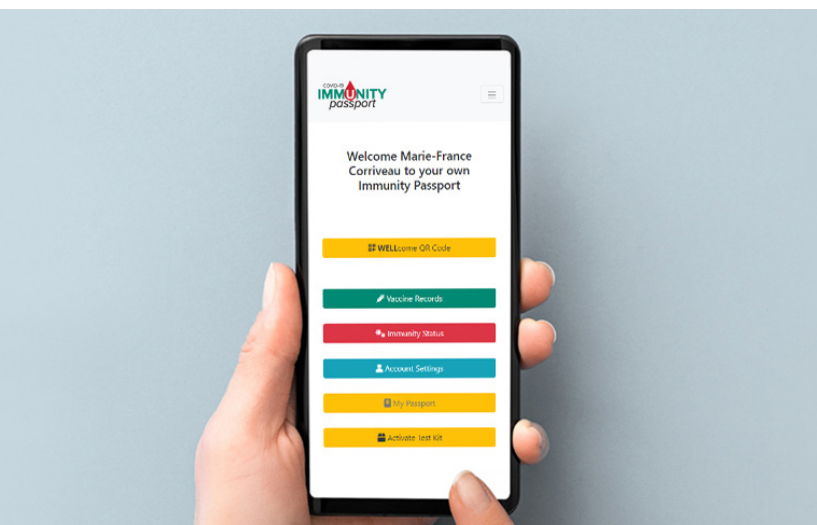
Regular screening for asymptomatic infections in the workplace will need to be re-instated, for team members and customers.



ACT 3

Implement an immunity passport

It's important to monitor and track the flow of team members in the workplace. There is a need for a technological solution to track all employees and visitors for their vaccination and booster status as well as their antigen screening and antibody status.



ACT 1: MANDATE VACCINATION

A vaccination policy that is grounded in ‘strongly recommend’ is the immediate minimum standard now. The responsible thing to do as employers is to mandate them for all team members who work in a physical space with others. Organizations can play a leading role, alongside many multi-national organizations.

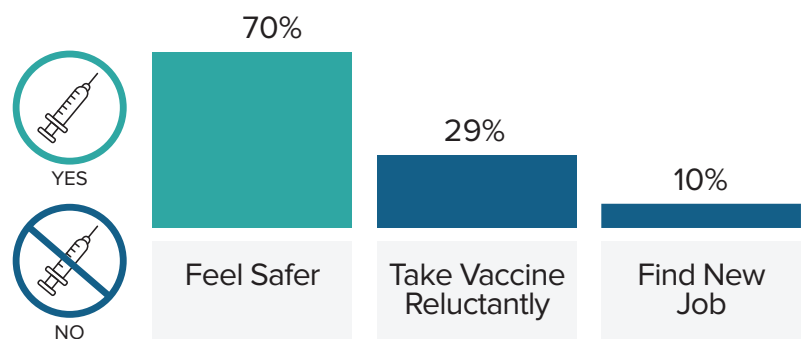
Boosters will be necessary to improve the immune response and protect against the Delta variant and other upcoming new variants.

Employers should avoid standardized policies that don’t take into consideration the specific circumstances of their workplace environments. A policy for a workplace where employees can’t work remotely and have challenges practicing physical distancing and other preventative measures should be vastly different than a policy for a setting where employees can work remotely at home.

We have no-smoking policies inside offices to protect others from the health hazards of second-hand smoke. We also mandate hard hats on construction sites to prevent injury, and legislate mandatory vaccinations at schools for many infections before children are allowed to attend school.

During these unprecedented times, certain employers, such as healthcare institutions, shelters, childcare centres, educational institutions, industrial settings (including factories), retail establishments, hospitality sector settings (including restaurants), grocery stores and some office settings all have significant risk factors to consider in determining if mandating vaccinations is essential to reducing infections, lengthy COVID-19 complications and even death.

Our Innovation Health Group survey found that most employees who planned to get vaccinated would feel safer to return to work with such a policy in place. More importantly, if an organization mandates vaccinations, most would get the vaccine, even reluctantly, as only a small minority of all respondents would find another job if their company adopted such a policy.





Employers should have a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy



Over the past several months, many organizations have been hesitant to mandate vaccinations, citing human rights concerns and employment law limitations.

Some employers feel that mandating vaccinations might trigger some employees to feel that their organization is rewarding unvaccinated employees by allowing them to stay home while penalizing those who did the right thing and cause them to come back to work.

However, employers also have a legal obligation under occupational health and safety legislation to provide their employees with safe workplaces and to take all reasonable precautions to protect them from getting a work-related illness.

Risk scenario

There could be legal exposure to companies where employees who are vaccinated get a COVID-19 re-infection from an unvaccinated colleague and later bring it home to a child who is too young to get vaccinated and later becomes gravely sick. Whose legal exposure would that be? Likely the employer who allowed unvaccinated employees back to the workplace.

For many employers, implementing a COVID-19 vaccination policy may be one of the most effective ways of meeting this legal obligation and providing a safe workplace for all staff in addition to clients and members of the public who may enter the workplace.

Not all workplaces pose the same level of risk of infection and transmission, either to employees or to others who enter the workplace. Therefore, employers should determine what type of vaccination policy is necessary or justified in their respective physical workplaces, based on the type of work being performed.

Many organizations are now taking the lead and making the science-based decision that a mandated vaccination policy is the only ethically correct decision to protect everyone around us.

“Getting vaccinated is one of the most important ways to keep ourselves and our communities healthy in the months ahead.”

- Google CEO, Sundar Pichai

Google’s vaccine mandate would apply to U.S. office locations “in the coming weeks” and to other regions “in the coming months”.

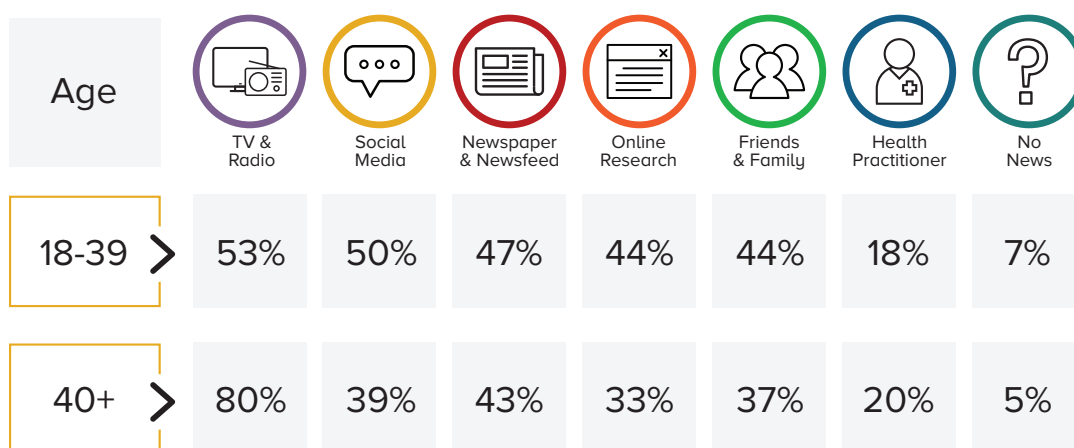
Facebook, Lyft, Netflix, Morgan Stanley, the Washington Post, Walmart, the City of New York and the U.S. federal government have also recently joined a long list of high-profile employers to state publicly they will require many employees to be vaccinated for COVID-19.⁶

Upgrading the source of health information with a Chief Wellness Officer

Beyond a bold vaccination policy, we need to support those who are vaccine hesitant. It's critical to provide this group with scientific medical information about the vaccines from a trusted source.

And yet our data found less than 20% of all employees get their medical information from a health practitioner. Those below age 40 are more vaccine hesitant and consume many sources of health information, making the argument to get vaccinated far more challenging.

Having access to an engaging session with a virtual Chief Wellness Officer that is viewed as unbiased is critical to education and motivating more people to get vaccinated to improve their well-being and begin to move on beyond the pandemic.



After completing our vaccination survey with Innovation Health Group (IHG), my senior partners and I realized we had a lot of work to do to improve our vaccination uptake rate. We had a town hall with Dr. Elaine Chin after discovering from the IHG research that 80% of people do not get their pandemic information from a healthcare practitioner.

Having our town hall with a trusted medical professional helped immensely to reduce vaccine hesitancy in our office and give people the confidence to openly have discussions focused on vaccination.

During the summer, our firm's management felt the correct action to take was to mandate the requirement of being fully vaccinated with two vaccines before anyone can return to the office after Thanksgiving Day.

This will give everyone who wants to be vaccinated an opportunity to become fully vaccinated and to give them the comfort of knowing that all of their colleagues are equally vaccinated. As the virus evolves, this will be our best course of action to keep our employees, their families, and our clients safe.

"What surprised me was that so many of our people confidentially thanked me for being bold by doing the right thing to ensure the office was safe as it could be."

- John Yiokaris, Partner, Commercial Group, Sotos LLP

ACT 2: CONDUCT ANTIGEN AND ANTIBODIES TESTING

While vaccines are presently very effective in reducing the incidence of death, hospitalization and severe re-infection symptoms, we recognize that new variants are more contagious.

Testing people is the only way to know whether individuals are presenting a hazard to other people and to understand how well the vaccines are suppressing infection.

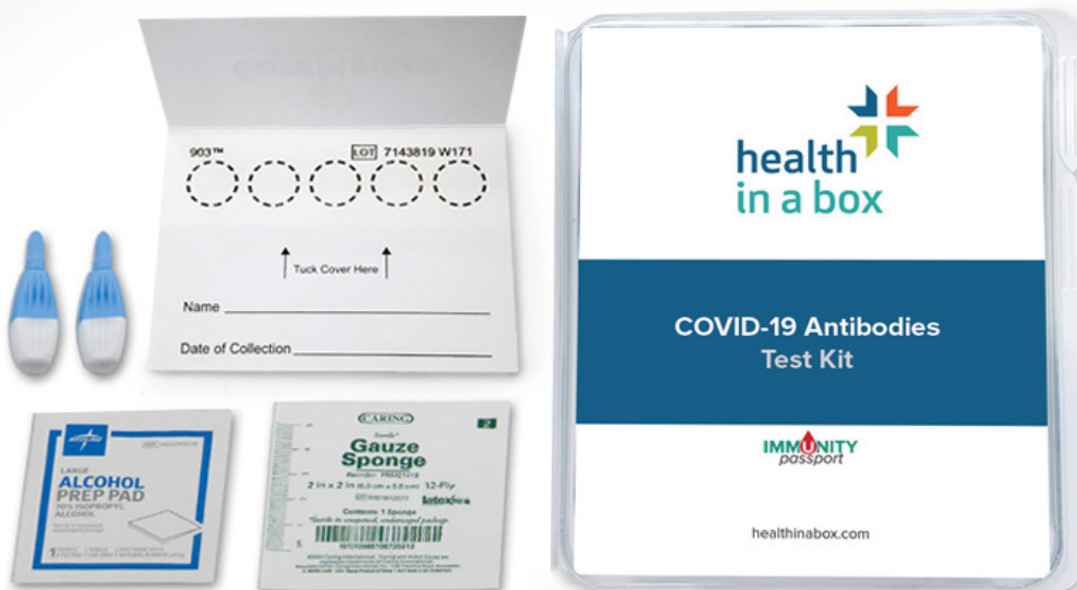
Regular screening for asymptomatic infections in the workplace will need to be re-instated along with good ventilation and indoor masking.

New laboratory science provides insights if any one person has mounted strong enough antibodies in response to vaccinations. This is determined by the quantity of antibodies (titers) and the strength of the antibodies to neutralize the various strains of COVID-19.

Many nations are now experiencing a fourth wave of the pandemic. The summer of 2021 has proven that vaccinations prevent severe symptoms, hospitalizations and deaths, but they don't necessarily prevent recurrent infections, which may cause symptomatic illness. Furthermore, those who have been vaccinated may quite possibly become asymptomatic carriers of the virus, as we witnessed with the testing of athletes in advance and during the Tokyo Olympics. This can put younger children and adults who are unvaccinated at very high risk of getting infected.

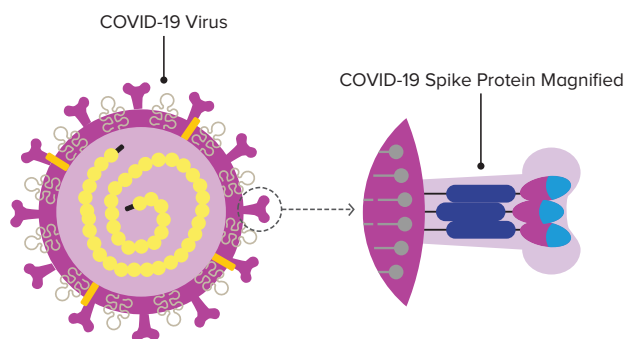
“Eradicating this virus right now from the world is a lot like trying to plan the construction of a stepping-stone pathway to the moon. It’s unrealistic.”

- Michael Osterholm, epidemiologist at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis



> Virus detection

PCR (viral molecular DNA testing) or rapid antigen (viral protein) testing to screen for COVID-19 remains an essential tool to fight against the spread of the virus, especially as more contagious variants evolve. Certainly, everyone who enters closed indoor spaces should be screened regularly, especially among the unvaccinated.



> Antibodies detection

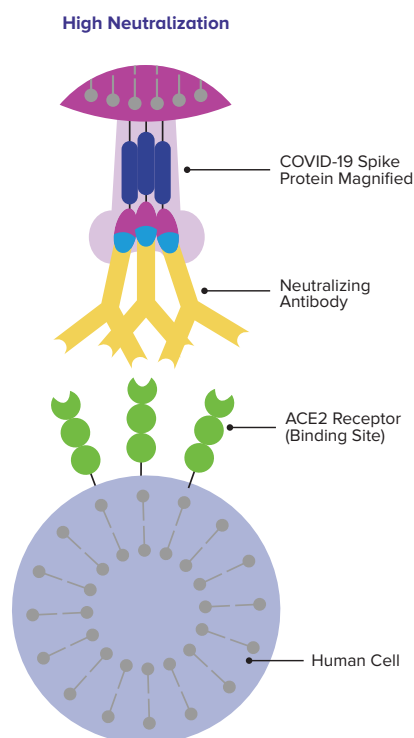
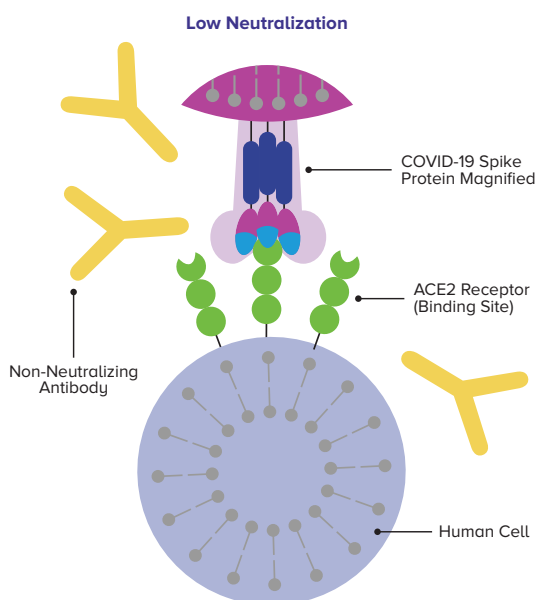
Antibodies testing to confirm immunity and vaccine efficacy will also be critical.

Specialized blood tests provide two key pieces of information:

- 1) **Quantity** – antibody titers
- 2) **Quality** – viral pseudo-neutralization

Knowing you have both a high level of antibodies and strong neutralizing power against the various existing and evolving variant strains can provide more peace of mind and reassurance that the vaccine is presently protecting you.

Specialized lab testing will detect antibodies against the spike protein introduced by vaccines to mount an immune response against this portion of the virus.



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Case Studies

The ongoing arrival and movement of variant strains means individuals and organizations need to be vigilant and ensure an ongoing monitoring of antibodies levels and their neutralization power, every three to six months, to ensure optimal protection provided by the vaccines.



1 Previously infected with COVID-19 One mRNA dose

FEMALE, MID 50s

This patient is generally healthy, received her first shot and completed her antibodies test just prior to her second shot, after waiting three months.

Takeaway: Vaccination does not become fully effective, and certainly not with only one shot.

Variant	Antibodies Level	Neutralization
Wild Type (Wuhan)	+	+
U.K.	+	+
Brazil	+	+
India	+	+
South Africa	+	+
Nucleocapsid (natural infection)	+	
Vaccine	mRNA (Pfizer)	
1 st Dose	2021-03-20	
2 nd Dose	-	
Collection Date	2021-06-29	
Infection Date	March 19, 2021	

2 Two mRNA doses

MALE, MID 30s

This patient is generally healthy. He represents the typical group of people who are getting vaccinated, developing antibodies and showing early neutralization after just one month of receiving the second vaccine.

Takeaway: Two vaccines is better than one! Based on the data, we know about waning immunity. Another antibodies test should be done three to six months after the second shot.

Variant	Antibodies Level	Neutralization
Wild Type (Wuhan)	++	+
U.K.	++	+
Brazil	++	+
India	++	+
South Africa	++	+
Nucleocapsid (natural infection)	—	
Vaccine	mRNA (Moderna)	
1 st Dose	2021-03-02	
2 nd Dose	2021-04-11	
Collection Date	2021-05-11	



Case Studies

3 Two AstraZeneca doses

MALE, MID 60s

Eats well, exercises and has good quality sleep. Recently completed two vaccines.

Takeaway: Immunity response varies from person to person. The only way to know one's personal response to the vaccine is to get tested. Recall that age, health status and type and duration of the last vaccine can impact the antibody response.

Variant	Antibodies Level	Neutralization
Wild Type (Wuhan)	+	+
U.K.	+	+
Brazil	+	+
India	+	+
South Africa	+	+
Nucleocapsid (natural infection)	—	
Vaccine	AstraZeneca	
1 st Dose	2021-03-13	
2 nd Dose	2021-05-28	
Collection Date	2021-06-22	

4 Previously infected with COVID-19 Two mRNA doses

FEMALE, MID 40s

This patient received her first shot around the same time she became infected with COVID-19 and later required hospitalization. Upon discharge, she did receive her second dose three months later.

Takeaway: Vaccination doesn't take effect immediately, and certainly not with only one shot. Having a natural infection (presence of nucleocapsid antibodies) certainly boosts antibodies response.

Variant	Antibodies Level	Neutralization
Wild Type (Wuhan)	++++	+++
U.K.	++++	+++
Brazil	++++	+++
India	++++	+++
South Africa	++++	+++
Nucleocapsid (natural infection)	++	
Vaccine	mRNA (Pfizer) x2	
1 st Dose	2021-03-20	
2 nd Dose	2021-06-19	
Collection Date	2021-06-29	
Infection Date	Early April 2021	

ACT 3: IMPLEMENT AN IMMUNITY PASSPORT

Monitoring and tracking team members who have been fully vaccinated and noting their type of vaccines is not a human resource function. This should be done by licensed healthcare professionals who can review and medically adjudicate vaccination requirements.

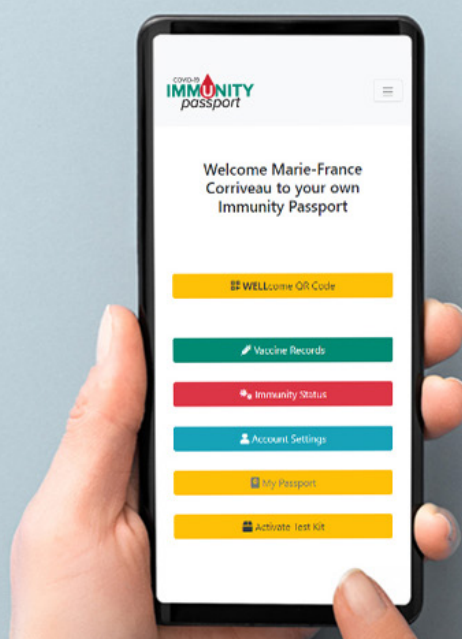
Furthermore, screening of asymptomatic people will be an ongoing process within all workplaces.

A technological solution supported by a licensed health team to track all employees and visitors for their vaccination and booster status as well as their antigen screening and antibody status can improve efficiency of this process.

Given the percentage of unvaccinated workers, the highly contagious variants and a general desire for a hybrid work environment, there is a real need for a comprehensive health and safety policy, which clearly defines who can come into the office, meet with clients and travel abroad to sales meetings and conferences.

WELLcome by the Innovation Health Group is an all-in-one, fully managed solution that allows organizations to safely welcome their employees back to the workplace. It includes:

- 1 App and dashboard** to document and store information on vaccinations, boosters, antigen and antibodies testing.
- 2 Integrated digital platform** to manage on-site access.
- 3 Medical support** for on-site rapid antigen testing and lab-based saliva PCR and antibodies testing.
- 4 Townhall sessions** with a virtual Chief Wellness Officer plus wellness challenges to support optimal mental and physical health.



OUR WELLcome SOLUTION

Track & Trace

Vaccines & testing documentation

- Medical electronic records administered and adjudicated by physicians

Integrated digital platform + app

- Manage on-site access based on IoT tech and e-documentation

75%

of employees prefer a hybrid workplace, making access to a safe workplace more complex.

(KPMG Canada study)

Screen & Test

Screen for COVID-19

- On-site rapid and lab-based antigen saliva testing (coming soon)

Post-vaccination antibodies status

- On-site rapid and lab-based antibodies testing

84%

of employees plan to get vaccinated, leaving 16% more vulnerable and at higher risk.

(Innovation Health Group White Paper)

Educate & Engage

Inform with townhalls with your virtual Chief Wellness Officer

App-based wellness challenges to promote teamwork, healthy living and engagement

76%

of employees feel their employer is directly responsible for their health and well-being.

(Sprout)



SECURITY
& SAFETY



INDUSTRY
LEADING
TECH



CANADIAN
ACCREDITED
LABORATORY

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

Safely welcome your team back to the workplace in a post-pandemic world.



1

Wear a mask

Unpublished data shows fully vaccinated people might spread the Delta variant at the same rate as unvaccinated people. It appears to spread as easily as chickenpox and cause more severe infection.

2

Improve ventilation

The virus is airborne and respiratory. Install HEPA filters throughout workplaces especially in meeting areas.

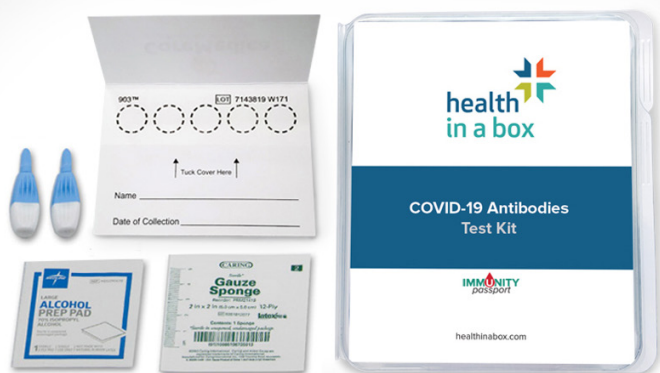


3

Mandate vaccination

Take a bold move and do the 'right thing' by creating a vaccination policy.





4

Conduct tests

Proactively and regularly test for COVID-19 to identify asymptomatic people, as well as determine their immunity status through antibodies detection to determine the need for boosters.

5

Plan for boosters

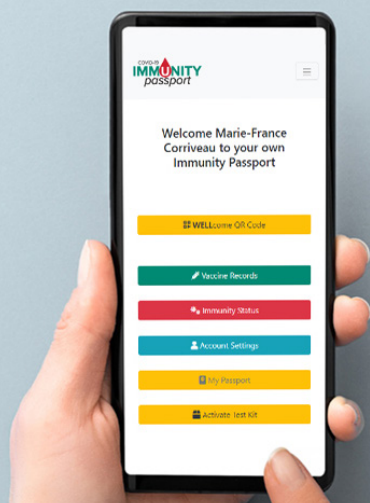
Variants will evolve and eventually the existing vaccines will not effectively protect the workplaces and communities around us.



6

Implement an immunity passport

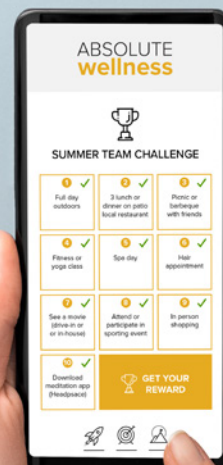
Team members entering your workplace should be in compliance with your policies and be healthy, fully vaccinated and have sufficient antibodies.



7

Activate personalized wellness

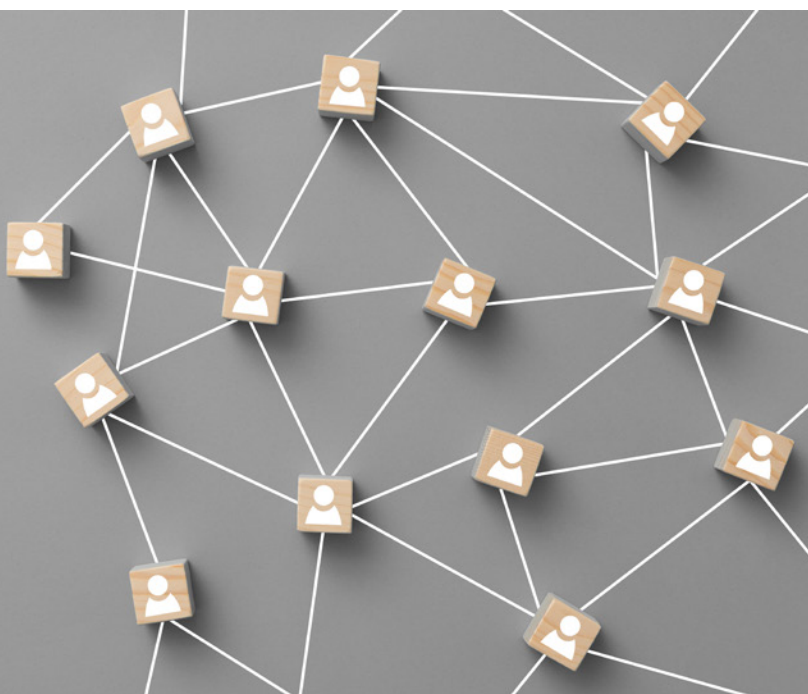
Implement robust programs that go beyond education and offer accredited self-test kits to determine physical and mental health status.



“As we attempt to vaccinate our way out of the pandemic, we need also to remember that we have other tools at our disposal, including masks; the use of ventilation improvements for this aerosol-transmitted disease; and testing, tracing and isolation of cases. Heading into the fall and a presumptive fourth wave, it is imperative we monitor breakthrough infections among vaccinated individuals to better characterize waning immunity and identify immune-evading variants.”

SOURCE: Ashleigh Tuite, David Fisman –The Globe and Mail (op-ed), Monday August 2, 2021. Ashleigh Tuite and David Fisman are epidemiologists and professors at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health.

No one is safe until
everyone is safe.



PREVIOUS WHITE PAPER

WHITE PAPER #1

HOW ORGANIZATIONS CAN REBOUND FROM THE PANDEMIC WITH BOLD WORKPLACE POLICIES

Why it's critical to develop a vaccination policy as part of your overall health and safety workplace strategy

This is the first in a series of three white papers that provide senior leadership with a bold path forward to future-proof their workforce. As we rebound from lockdown and enter a new post-pandemic world, we need our teams to regain their sense of physical and mental resilience, as well as their sense of inner strength, so that they may thrive again in the workplace.

In our first white paper, we share reasons why organizations of all types and sizes must update their health and safety policies to eventually include mandating COVID-19 vaccinations. This strategy is part of a holistic plan to bring employees back to work safely and support them to be their best.

 [Click here to request our previous white paper](#)



OUR TEAM

Innovation Health Group

AUTHOR:

Elaine Chin, Founder and Chief Wellness Officer

CONTRIBUTORS:

Piero Fusco, Chief Commercial Officer

Christine Stevens, Chief People and Operating Officer

Emma Pearce, Data Analytics, Copy Editor

EDITOR:

Michelle Gagné, Director of Communications

GRAPHICS & DESIGN:

Marie-France Corriveau, Creative Officer

MEDIA RELATIONS:

Jeff Silverstein, Chief Storyteller



Our experienced team of senior thought leaders across medical wellness, mental health, people and culture, change management and communications are supporting organizations and their senior leadership teams with strategies to help get them to a safer, more secure place. And we're open to hearing from you if you'd like to learn more about how we can help put in place the strategy set forth in this white paper.



innovationhealthgroup.com
consultingteam@innovationhealthgroup.com

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Innovation
Health

innovationhealthgroup.com
consultingteam@innovationhealthgroup.com

Toronto, Canada