

Canadian Community Health Survey, 2011

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In 2011, 1 in 5 Canadians aged 12 and older (19.9%), or nearly 5.8 million people, smoked on an occasional or a daily basis, down from 25.9% in 2001.

In addition to smoking trends, new survey data show other important shifts in the health and behaviour of the population.

For example, fruit and vegetable consumption has declined for two consecutive years. More people were at least moderately active during their leisure time. The proportion of Canadians who reported height and weight that classified them as obese has held steady for two consecutive years.

Smoking

Smoking rates for both men and women have fallen over the last decade. Rates for men fell from 28.1% in 2001 to 22.3% in 2011 and for women, from 23.8% to 17.5%.

Among females, smoking rates declined across all age groups over the past decade. For males, smoking rates declined across all age groups, except for those aged 55 to 64, where there was no change.

Since 2001, the largest declines for both sexes occurred among teenagers. For those aged 15 to 17 the rates fell from 20.8% to 9.4%. For those aged 18 to 19, rates dropped from 33.7% to 19.1%.

Despite the progress in reducing smoking rates among young people, about 1 in 10, or 121,000, young teens aged 15 to 17 smoked in 2011. Young people in this age group were three times more likely to smoke if they lived in homes where someone smoked.

Of the 5.8 million smokers in 2011, the majority, nearly 4.4 million, smoked cigarettes on a daily basis.

Heavy smoking—25 or more cigarettes a day—has been on a downward trend. In 2011, 23.5% of men who smoked daily were heavy smokers, down from 30.9% in 2001. Among female daily smokers, the rate fell from 20.3% to 14.2%.

On the other hand, the rate of light daily smoking—14 cigarettes a day or fewer—increased for both sexes, although the trend was more pronounced for women.

Overall, the average number of cigarettes smoked per day fell from 17 in 2001 to 15 in 2011. For heavy smokers, the average was unchanged at 28.

Exposure to second-hand smoke

The proportion of non-smokers aged 12 and older who were regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at home declined from 10.6% in 2003 to 5.5% in 2011.

Although the proportion of Canadians aged 12 to 19 exposed to second-hand smoke at home fell from 23.4% in 2003 to 12.6% in 2011, this group was still the most likely to report this type of exposure. In 2011, 12 to 19 year-olds made up 29.4% of the 1.27 million non-smokers aged 12 and older who were regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at home.

Fruit and vegetable consumption

In 2011, 40.4% of Canadians aged 12 and older reported that they consumed fruit and vegetables five or more times per day. This was down for the second year in a row from the peak of 45.6% in 2009.



Females were much more likely than males to consume fruit and vegetables. In 2011, 47.2% of females consumed fruit and vegetables five or more times daily, compared with 33.5% of males.

Physical activity during leisure time

In 2011, 53.8% of Canadians were at least 'moderately active' during their leisure time, up from 52.1% the year before. 'Moderately active' would be equivalent to walking at least 30 minutes a day or taking an hour-long exercise class at least three times a week.

The most popular leisure-time activity was walking: 70% reported walking during leisure time in the three months prior to the survey. Gardening, home exercise, jogging or running, swimming, and bicycling were also popular.

Males were more likely than females to be at least moderately active during leisure time. In 2011, 56.4% of males reported that they were at least moderately active, up from 54.9% in 2010. Among females, the proportion was 51.3%, up from 49.4% in 2010.

Teenagers aged 12 to 19 had the highest rates (76.0% for boys and 67.6% for girls) of moderate physical activity.

Overweight and obesity

In 2011, 18.3% of Canadians aged 18 and older, roughly 4.6 million adults, reported height and weight that classified them as obese. This rate was virtually unchanged from 2009.

Between 2003 and 2011, obesity rates among men rose from 16.0% to 19.8%, and among women, from 14.5% to 16.8%.

When people who were overweight were included, 60.1% of Canadian men, about 7.6 million, and 44.2% of women, roughly 5.6 million, had an increased health risk because of excess weight. These rates have remained stable since 2009.

Obesity rates were highest in the age group 55 to 64 and lowest among teenagers aged 18 to 19.

Heavy drinking

Heavy drinking refers to consuming five or more drinks per occasion, at least once a month during the year prior to the survey.

In 2011, 19.0% of individuals aged 12 and over reported heavy drinking, up from 17.3% in 2010. Heavy drinking increased for both sexes. The proportion among males rose from 24.8% to 26.8%; among females, it rose from 10.1% to 11.4%.

Higher proportions of males than females reported heavy drinking in every age group, except among those aged 12 to 15 where there was no significant difference between the sexes.

For both sexes, those most likely to report heavy drinking were in the 18 to 34 age group.

Note to readers

This release presents data from the 2011 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), featuring information on more than 30 health indicators, including perceived health, smoking, second-hand smoke at home, access to a regular medical doctor (family doctor or specialist), physical activity during leisure time, obesity, high blood pressure, drinking, fruit and vegetable consumption, diabetes, asthma, arthritis and perceived life stress.

The CCHS is an ongoing survey that collects a wide range of information about the health status of Canadians, factors determining their health status and their use of health care services. The results are released yearly. About 65,000 respondents were interviewed for the survey in 2011.

Data for all indicators are available at the national, provincial and territorial level, as well as for the 115 health regions across Canada.

Residents of Indian reserves, health care institutions, some remote areas and full-time members of the Canadian Forces were excluded.

Available without charge in CANSIM: tables 103-0404, 105-0501 and 105-0503.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3226.

For more statistics and analysis on the health of Canadians and the health care system, visit the [Health in Canada](#) module. This module is accessible from our website, under *Features*.

Many products featuring the most recent results from the 2011 Canadian Community Health Survey are now available from the *Key resource* module of our website under *Publications*. The article "Current Smoking Trends" is available in *Health at a Glance* (82-624-X, free). The publication *Health Fact Sheets* (82-625-X, free) is available. The *Health Trends* (82-213-X, free) online application, which provides a time-series view of health data at the provincial, territorial and national level, is also available. You can also consult the latest electronic issue of *Health Indicators* (82-221-X, free), which includes a set of more than 80 health indicators for Canada, the provinces and territories, and the health regions.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Statistics Canada's National Contact Centre (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 613-951-8116; infostats@statcan.gc.ca), or the Media Hotline (613-951-4636; mediahotline@statcan.gc.ca).