

Environment Fact Sheet: Treatment of drinking water by Canadian households, 2015

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In 2015, half of Canadian households treated their drinking water. The most frequent reason for treatment was to improve the taste, odour or appearance of the water (45% of households treating their water). The most common water treatment technique was the use of jug filters, which were reported by 25% of Canadian households.

Households in Newfoundland and Labrador (65%) were most likely to treat their drinking water before using it, while Quebec households (39%) were least likely to do so. Among census metropolitan areas (CMAs), households in Winnipeg (73%), Barrie (68%) and Calgary (65%) were most likely to treat their water. Conversely, this was less common in the Windsor (42%), Québec (35%) and Sherbrooke (25%) CMAs.

In general, households that owned their home were more likely to treat their water (55%) than those that did not (38%). Similarly, 56% of households with children treated their water compared to 48% of those without children. Households with a total annual income of more than \$100,000 treated their water in 58% of the cases compared with 43% of households with an income under \$60,000. Finally, households living in a dwelling built before 1995 were less likely to treat their water (47%) than those with newer houses (62%).

Of the 10% of households that received a boil water advisory in 2015, 60% treated their water by boiling it, 65% used bottled water and 12% filtered their water.



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At the time of Confederation, many changes were taking place in the realm of public health. In the 1880s, the discovery of bacteria and their effects on health led to improvements in the wastewater sanitization network. Improvements to the sewage, filtration and wastewater treatment systems in turn helped to improve the quality of life of Canadians.

In 1911 and 1912, typhoid fever hit Ottawa. Transmitted through contaminated drinking water, it led to more than 2,365 cases being reported and 174 deaths. The typhoid epidemic then struck Montréal in 1927, leaving 533 deaths in its wake. Nowadays, this disease has practically been eradicated in Canada, thanks to the effective treatment of drinking water.

Sources: "Robert Koch - Biographical". Nobelprize.org. Nobel Media AB 2014. Web. 28 March 2017. <http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/medicine/laureates/1905/koch-bio.html>.

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"Typhoid in Montreal". Public Health Journal. Vol 18. March 1927. p 149-150.

Bhutta, Zulfiqar A. 2006. "Current concepts in the diagnosis and treatment of typhoid fever". BMJ Publishing Group Ltd. Vol. 14. no 5. p 266-272.



Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3881](#).

The article "Treatment of drinking water by Canadian households, 2015" is now available in the publication *Environment Fact Sheets* ([16-508-x](#)).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca).