

Tracking physical activity levels of Canadians, 2016 and 2017

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About 40% of children and youth aged 5 to 17 meet the recommended targets for physical activity compared with 16% of adults aged 18 to 79. Regular physical activity has been tied to improvements in body composition, self-esteem, bone density and blood pressure so tracking Canadians' activity levels over time plays an important public health function.

The Canadian Health Measures Survey (CHMS) directly measures the physical activity level of Canadians aged 3 to 79 by using an activity monitor. In Canada, recommendations on physical activity and sedentary behaviour for both children and adults are integrated into the 24-Hour Movement & Activity Guidelines of 2015. The guidelines provide specific recommendations on physical activity, sedentary behaviour and sleep for ages 0 to 4, 5 to 17, 18 to 64 and 65 and older.

Boys aged 5 to 17 twice as likely as girls to meet physical activity guidelines

For children and youth, the recommended physical activity target is a daily average of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA). Approximately two in five children and youth aged 5 to 17 met this recommended guideline. For this age group, boys (52%) were twice as likely as girls (26%) to meet the guideline. Children aged 5 to 11 (47%) were 1.5 times more likely than youth aged 12 to 17 (31%) to meet the recommended guidelines.

Similar to children and youth, guidelines also exist for the adult population. The recommendation for adults is a physical activity target of 150 minutes of MVPA per week, in sessions of 10 minutes or more. Compared with children and youth, adults are generally less likely to adhere to the guidelines set for physical activity. Less than 2 in 10 adults aged 18 to 79 met the recommended guidelines. There were no significant differences between men (18%) and woman (15%) or when comparing age groups: 18 to 39 (16%), 40 to 59 (17%) and 60 to 79 (17%).

These results are consistent with previous results, from 2007 to 2015, for both children and youth as well as adults.

Note to readers

Cycle 5 of the Canadian Health Measures Survey was conducted from January 2016 to December 2017. The target population consists of persons 3 to 79 years of age living in the 10 provinces. The observed population excludes: persons living in the three territories; persons living on reserves and other Aboriginal settlements in the provinces; full-time members of the Canadian Forces; the institutionalized population and residents of certain remote regions. Altogether these exclusions represent approximately 3% of the target population.

This release of the CHMS includes the full and sub-sample files for the activity monitor data for Canadians aged 3 to 79 as well as the results of the jumping and Peripheral Quantitative Computed Tomography (pQCT) tests for Canadians aged 6 to 79. Along with this release will be the per minute activity monitor files for cycles 1 to 5.

Sample weighted files and instructions are available for combining cycle 5 Canadian Health Measures Survey data (where possible) with equivalent data from cycles 1 to 4.



Available tables: [13-10-0338-01](#), [13-10-0339-01](#) and [13-10-0388-01](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [5071](#).

The health fact sheet, "Physical activity and screen time among Canadian children and youth, 2016 and 2017" ([82-625-X](#)) is now available.

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).