

Top five highlights from a new report on the health of Canadians, 2023

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This release highlights key findings from Statistics Canada's first annual [Health of Canadians](#) report, which describes the health status of Canadians as well as the factors that influence their health.

1. Canadians are generally living longer and healthier lives, but life expectancy fell by more than half a year in 2020, the largest single-year decline in Canada since 1921

While life expectancy had been rising over the last four decades in Canada, it declined in 2020 and continued to decrease in 2021 because of COVID-19 and increased deaths associated with substance-related harms. In 2021, life expectancy at birth was 81.6 years overall, with males living an average of 79.3 years and females an average of 84.0 years. While life expectancy decreased for both males and females in 2020, the decrease in 2021 was [entirely attributable to males](#) (-0.2 years), as a slight increase was noted for females (+0.1 years).

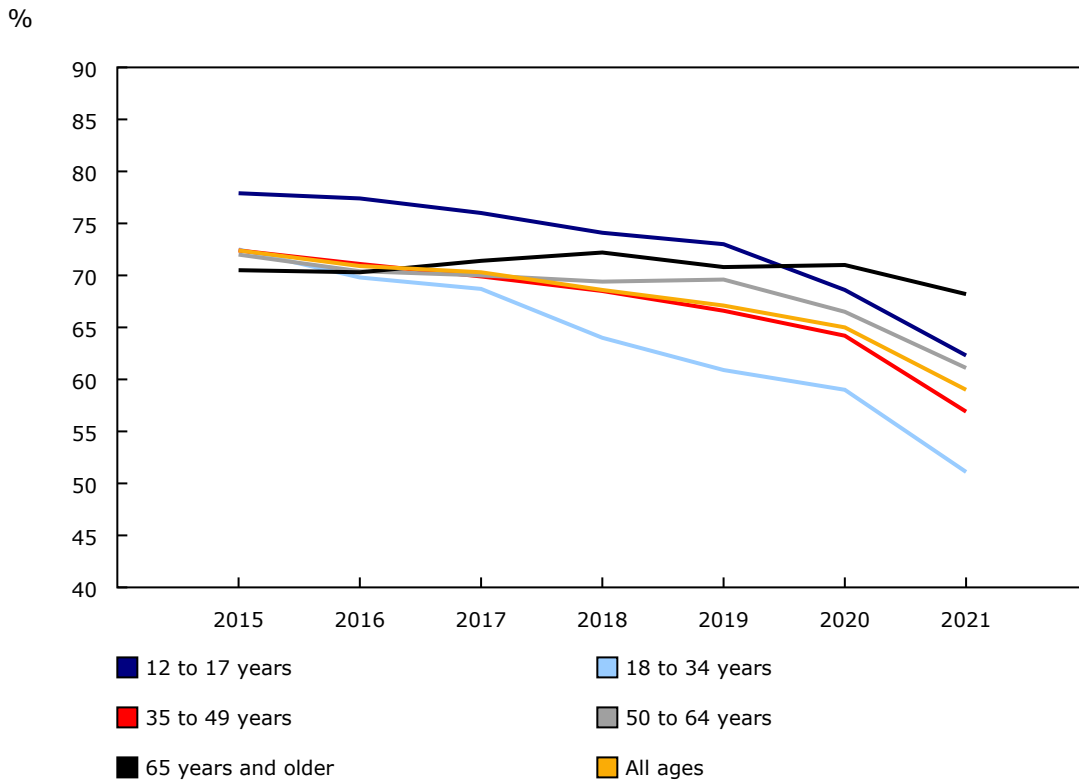
2. Most Canadians consistently rate their overall health as very good or excellent, but mental health has declined, and the prevalence of anxiety and mood disorders has increased among vulnerable populations

More than half (59.7%) of Canadians aged 12 years and older rated their general health as very good or excellent in 2021. While self-rated general health has remained relatively stable since 2015, the proportion of people reporting very good or excellent mental health decreased from 72.4% in 2015 to 59.0% in 2021. This decline was observed across all age groups, and especially among adults aged 18 to 34 years who reported a 21-percentage-point decrease. A higher proportion of heterosexual Canadians (60.1%) reported very good or excellent mental health, compared with gay or lesbian (52.8%) and bisexual or pansexual (21.6%) Canadians.

In 2021, over 3.4 million Canadians aged 12 years and older (10.4%) reported having been diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, and over 3.1 million (9.6%) reported having been diagnosed with a mood disorder. The prevalence of anxiety (+2.6 percentage points) and mood disorders (+1.7 percentage points) has increased since 2015. A higher proportion of First Nations people living off reserve (20.4%) and Métis (19.7%) reported having anxiety compared with non-Indigenous people (10.1%). Similarly, a higher proportion of First Nations people living off reserve (19.0%) and Métis (19.6%) reported having a mood disorder compared with non-Indigenous people (9.6%). A larger proportion of people in the lowest income quintile reported having anxiety (13.9%) and a mood disorder (14.4%), compared with those in the highest income quintile (9.7% for anxiety; 8.5% for mood disorders).



Chart 1
Canadians aged 12 years and older reporting very good or excellent mental health, by age group, 2015 to 2021



Note(s): Estimates exclude those living in the territories.

Source(s): Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015 to 2021 (3226), Table 13-10-0096-01 Health characteristics, annual estimates.

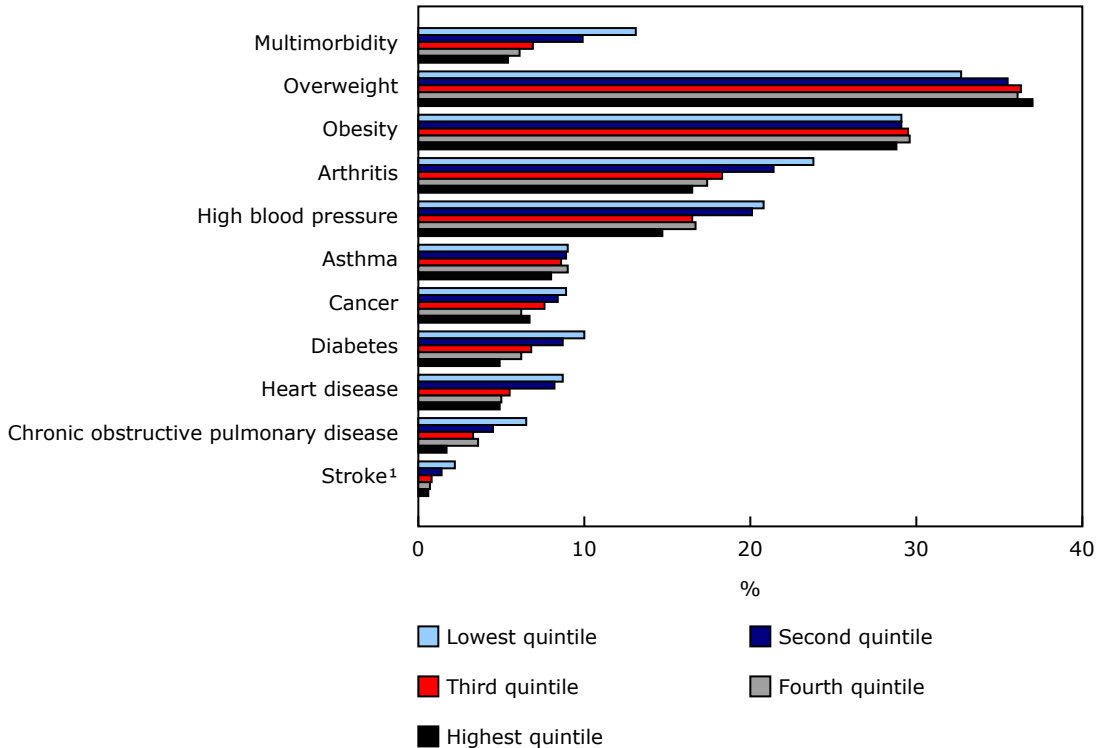
3. The prevalence of some chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and obesity have increased, but lung cancer incidence has decreased in Canada

Chronic conditions affect daily living activities, reduce quality of life and increase the risk of mortality. The prevalence of some chronic conditions increased from 2015 to 2021, including high blood pressure (16.9% to 17.7%), heart disease (4.4% to 4.9%) and obesity (26.1% to 29.2%). However, the lung cancer incidence rate among males declined from 72.2 per 100,000 people in 2015 to 62.5 per 100,000 in 2021.

In 2021, a higher proportion of people in the lowest household income quintile than those in the highest income quintile reported having arthritis (+7.3 percentage points), high blood pressure (+6.1 percentage points), diabetes (+5.1 percentage points), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) (+4.8 percentage points), heart disease (ever diagnosed) (+3.8 percentage points), cancer (ever diagnosed) (+2.2 percentage points) and stroke (+1.6 percentage points).

In 2021, 1 in 12 Canadians (8.3%) experienced multimorbidity, which involves having three or more chronic conditions, up from 7.5% in 2015. In 2021, Canadians in the lowest household income quintile had a higher prevalence of multimorbidity (13.1%) compared with those in the highest quintile (5.4%).

Chart 2
Prevalence of common chronic conditions and multimorbidity among Canadians, by household income quintile, 2020 and 2021



Note(s): Stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, heart disease (ever diagnosed) and cancer (ever diagnosed) are reported for Canadians aged 12 years and older; arthritis is reported for Canadians aged 15 years and older; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is reported for Canadians aged 35 years and older; and overweight and obesity are reported for Canadians aged 18 years and older. For asthma and COPD, 2020 data are used. Multimorbidity is defined as having three or more of the selected chronic conditions: arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer (ever diagnosed), heart disease (ever diagnosed), stroke, mood disorders and anxiety. Estimates exclude those living in the territories.

1. Stroke percentages for the fourth and fifth quintiles should be interpreted with caution.

Source(s): Canadian Community Health Survey, 2020 and 2021 (3226).

4. Fewer Canadians are meeting physical activity and nutrition guidelines, but the proportion of heavy drinkers and smokers has declined since 2015

Engaging in a certain level of physical activity, a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, decreased alcohol consumption and smoking all contribute to a lower risk of mortality (including premature death) and chronic diseases such as liver disease, COPD, certain cancers and cardiovascular disease. From 2015 to 2021, the proportion of Canadians aged 12 years and older who met physical activity guidelines (56.9% to 53.9%) and consumed more than five fruits and vegetables per day (31.5% to 21.8%) declined. For physical activity, the decline was most pronounced among youth aged 12 to 17 years (-14 percentage points). In 2019, while over four in five children aged 5 to 11 years (81.8%) were reported to have participated in some moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in the previous seven days, over one-third (34.9%) met the recommendation of doing at least 60 minutes of such activity per day.

Other health behaviours improved. In 2021, 15.6% of Canadians aged 12 years and older engaged in heavy drinking, down from 19.2% in 2015. The proportion of daily or occasional smokers also declined, down from 17.7% in 2015 to 11.8% in 2021.

5. While most (85.5%) Canadians have a regular health care provider, 4.7 million (14.4%) do not, and there are continued unmet health care and home care needs

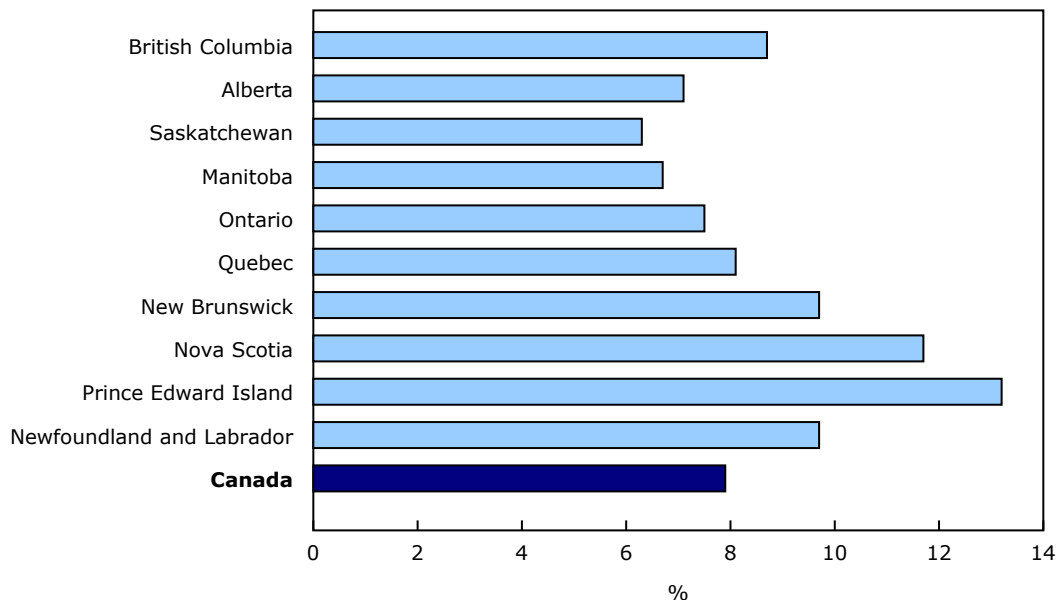
While 85.5% of Canadians living in the provinces had a regular health care provider in 2021, 14.4% of Canadians (4.7 million people) did not, and the proportion of those with a provider varied across subpopulations:

- Lower proportions of bisexual or pansexual Canadians (77.4%) reported having a regular health care provider, compared with heterosexual Canadians (85.6%).
- Lower proportions of First Nations people living off reserve (81.2%) reported having a regular health care provider, compared with non-Indigenous Canadians (85.7%).
- Having a regular provider also varied across racialized groups, from 71.7% among Latin American people to 89.8% among Filipino people.

In 2021, almost 2.5 million Canadians had unmet health care needs, meaning they felt that they needed health care in the past 12 months, but did not receive it. Unmet health care needs were more prevalent in the Atlantic provinces (10.7%), compared with the rest of Canada. More females (8.9%) than males (6.9%) reported unmet health care needs.

Population aging and the increasing prevalence of some chronic conditions mean that the need for home care services is growing. In 2021, 3.2% of Canadians used home care services, and 1.6% had unmet home care needs. Canadians with the lowest household incomes used home care services more (6.2%) and had more unmet home care needs (3.3%), compared with Canadians with the highest household incomes (2.2% used home care services; 0.5% had unmet home care needs; use the second percentage with caution).

Chart 3
Canadians aged 16 years and older reporting unmet health care needs, by province, 2021



Note(s): Estimates for Canada do not include the territories.

Source(s): Canadian Income Survey, 2021 (5200), Table 13-10-0836-01 Unmet health care needs by sex and age group.

Note to readers

More information is available in the [Health of Canadians](#) report, which consolidates data from several Statistics Canada sources.

Disaggregated data by year, age, sex, province or territory, household income and Indigenous or racialized group were unadjusted for any factors that could account for the differences across these groups.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers [3207](#), [3226](#), [3231](#), [3233](#), [3251](#), [3701](#), [3901](#), [5071](#), [5200](#) and [5233](#).

The [Health of Canadians](#) report, available today, brings together important health data, both for the population overall and for specific groups, to provide a comprehensive portrait of population health and to shed light on health disparities. It includes key statistics on population health, such as health outcomes (e.g., chronic conditions), health behaviours (e.g., exercise, nutrition), access to health care (e.g., unmet health care needs) and determinants of health (e.g., age, income).

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; infostats@statcan.gc.ca) or Media Relations (statcan.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.statcan@statcan.gc.ca).