

## Health Fact Sheet

# Helmet use in recreational activities, 2017

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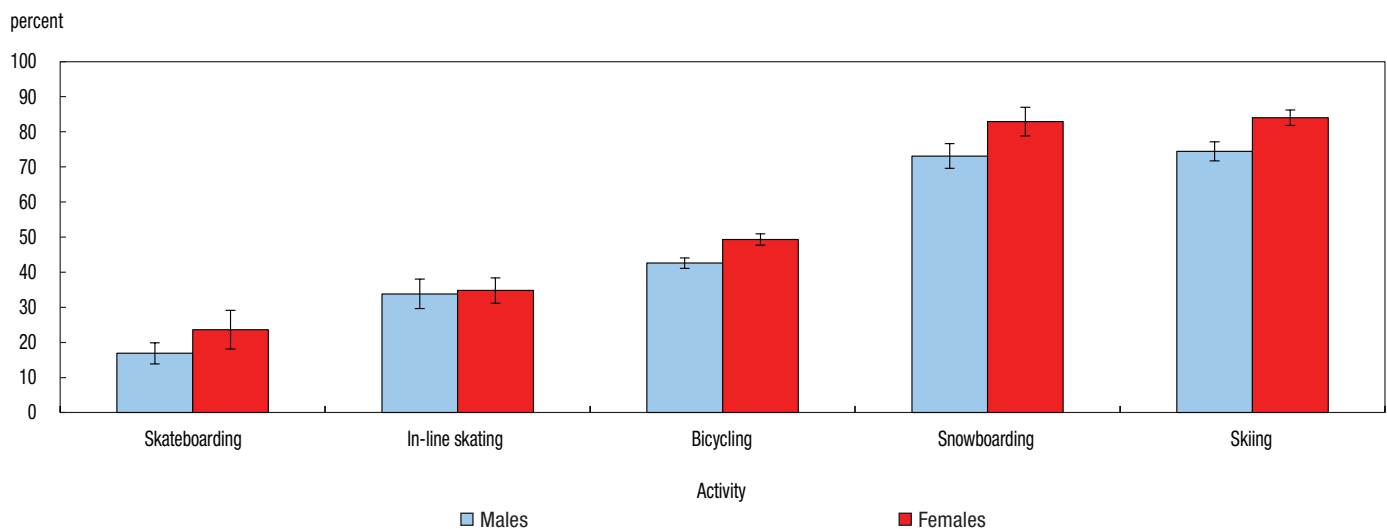
# Health Fact Sheets

Statistics Canada, Catalogue no.82-625-X

## Helmet use in recreational activities, 2017

In 2017, the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) asked Canadians aged 12 and older about their use of helmets while participating in various physical activities. Over this time period, Canadians were more likely to always wear a helmet while downhill skiing (78.6%), snowboarding (76.3%) or bicycling (45.5%) than when skateboarding (18.7%) or in-line skating (34.2%). Females were more likely than males to report always wearing a helmet for skateboarding, biking, snowboarding, and skiing (Chart 1).<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

**Chart 1** Percentage reporting always wearing a helmet, by activity and sex, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2017



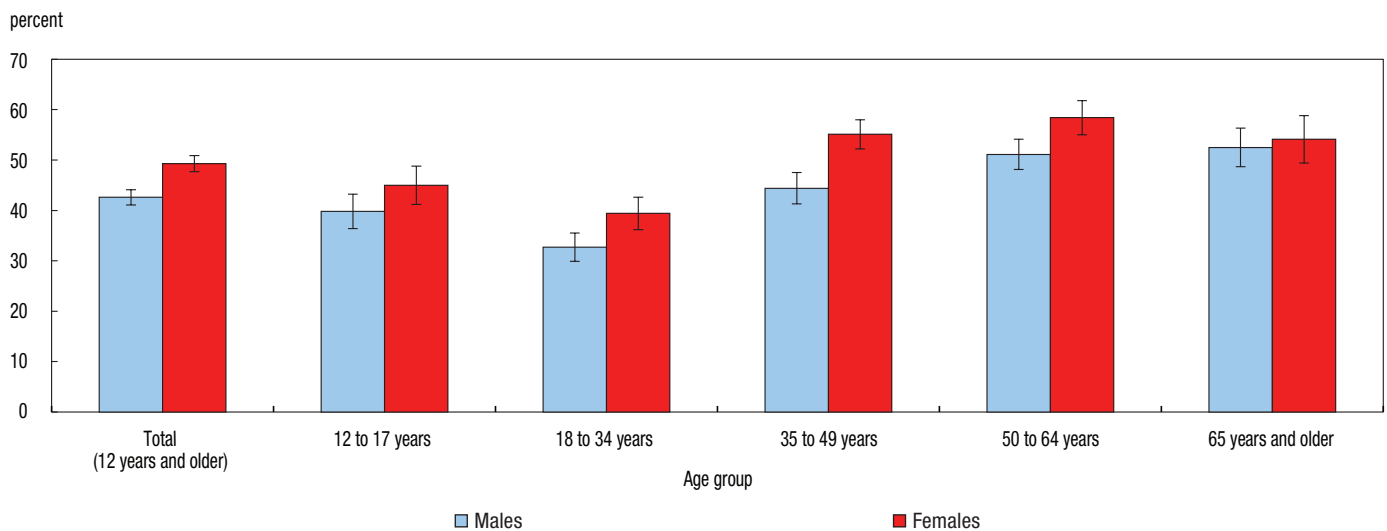
**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

## Bicycle helmet use

In 2017, more than 11.3 million Canadians aged 12 and older reported riding a bicycle in the past 12 months. Of these, 45.5% always wore a helmet.

The percentage of Canadians that reported always wearing a bicycle helmet decreased after age 17, increasing again for Canadians aged 35 to 49. For those aged 12 to 17, 39.8% of males and 45.0% of females always wore a helmet. For both males and females, those aged 18-34 were less likely to report that they always wore a helmet. Regular helmet use<sup>4</sup> then increased with age for females between the ages of 18 to 34 and 35 to 49 and for males from age 18 to 34 to 50 to 64 (Chart 2).

**Chart 2** Percentage reporting that they always wore a helmet when bicycling, by age group and sex, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2017



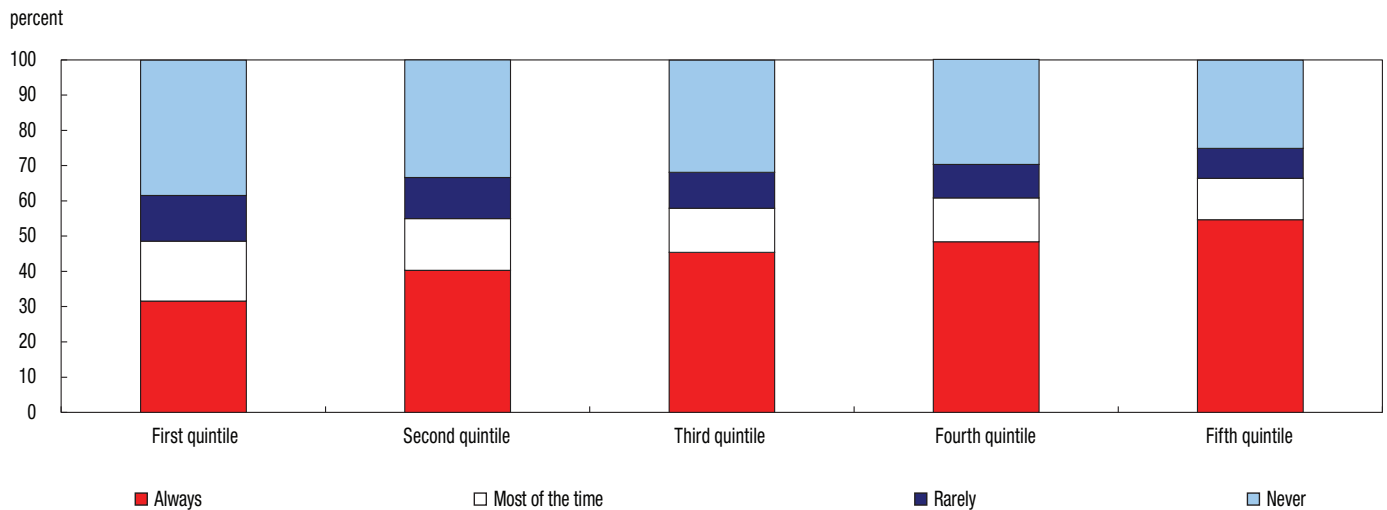
**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

Helmet use while biking can save lives and reduce the risk of injury.<sup>5</sup> While 45.5% of Canadians reported that they always wore a helmet when bicycling in the past 12 months, 30.9% (roughly 3.5 million people) reported that they never wore one.

## Education, income and bicycle helmet use

Canadians aged 25 or older with secondary school graduation or less<sup>6</sup> were less likely to report that they always wore a bicycle helmet (35.8%), compared to those with a post-secondary graduation (53.0%). Helmet use also varied by income, as Canadians living in a household in the lowest income quintile<sup>7</sup> were less likely to report always wearing a bicycle helmet (31.6%) compared to Canadians living in a household in the highest income quintile (54.7%; Chart 3).

**Chart 3** Percentage of bicycle helmet use, always, most of the time, rarely or never, by income quintile, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2017

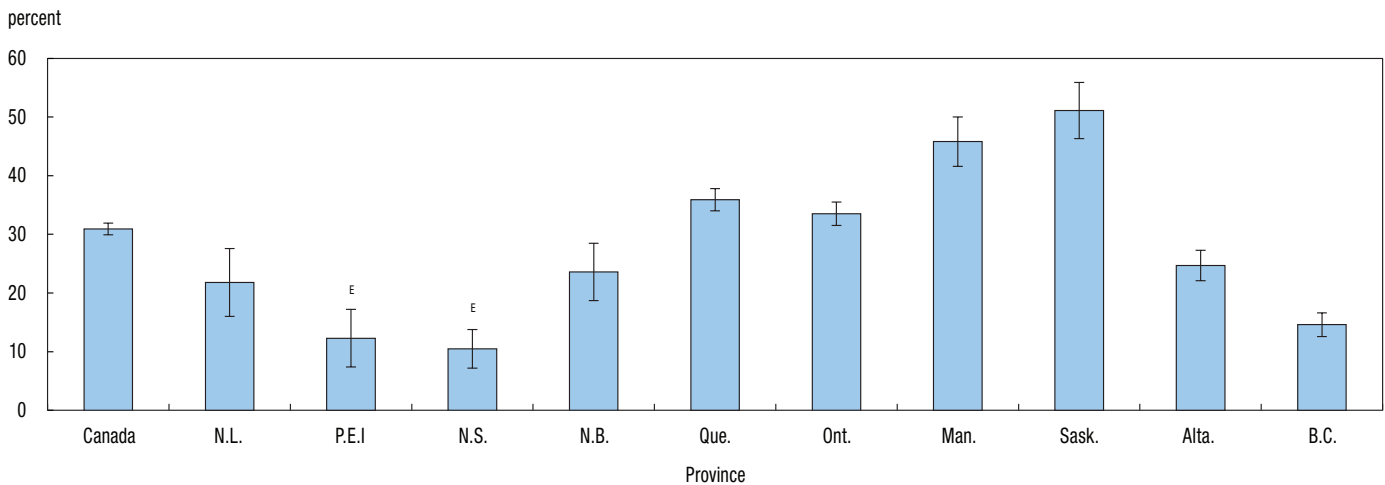


**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

## Bicycle helmet use by province

Several provinces mandate the use of bicycle helmets, but with differing age restrictions.<sup>8</sup> The percentage of Canadians who reported never wearing a bicycle helmet varied depending on the province of residence (Chart 4).

**Chart 4** Percentage reporting that they never wore a helmet when bicycling, by province, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2017



<sup>E</sup> use with caution (these data have a coefficient of variation between 15.1% and 35.0%)

**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

The proportion of residents who reported they never wore a bicycle helmet was **lower** than the national average (30.9%) in the following provinces where bicycle helmet use is mandatory:

- Newfoundland and Labrador (21.8%)
- Prince Edward Island (12.3%)<sup>9</sup>
- Nova Scotia (10.5%)<sup>9</sup>
- New Brunswick (23.6%)
- Alberta (24.7%)<sup>10</sup>
- British Columbia (14.6%)

The proportion of residents who reported they never wore a bicycle helmet was **higher** than the national average in the following provinces where bicycle helmet use is mandatory:

- Quebec (35.9%)
- Ontario (33.5%)<sup>10</sup>
- Manitoba (45.8%)<sup>10</sup>
- Saskatchewan (51.1%)

## Notes

1. Estimates in this article referring to the national average or Canada rate exclude the territories. This is because the coverage of CCHS in 2017 does not represent the entire population of the territories. Only half of the communities in the territories were visited in 2017, and the other half in 2018 so analyses based on the territories is only available for two year cycles of the CCHS (e.g. 2017-2018).
2. In this article when two estimates are said to be different this indicates that the difference was statistically significant at a 95% confidence level (p-value less than 5%).
3. The proportion of females who wore a helmet skateboarding was significantly different than males with a p-value of 3%. The confidence intervals for females and males overlapped (13.9-19.9% and 18.1-29.1%), interpret this difference with caution.
4. Regular helmet use in this article is referring to respondents who report that they always wore a helmet.
5. Thompson DC, Rivara FP, Thompson RS. 1999. *Helmets for preventing head and facial injuries in bicyclists*. Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. (accessed May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018)
6. Highest level of education is divided into two groups; those with a post-secondary certificate, diploma or university degree, and those with secondary school graduation or less.
7. Based on household income, adjusted by the before-tax low income cut-off (LICO) for the household and community size. The LICO is the threshold at which a family would typically spend a larger portion of its income than the average family on the necessities of food, shelter, and clothing. This accounts for spending power based on the family and community size.
8. As of 2017, bicycle helmet use was mandatory in British Columbia, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador. In Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta, the legislation only applied to children under 18. For more information, please see “Bike Helmet Legislation Chart” [http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/policy/Bike Helmet Legislation Chart-2014.pdf](http://www.parachutecanada.org/downloads/policy/Bike%20Helmet%20Legislation%20Chart-2014.pdf)
9. Note that the proportion of residents in Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia who reported they never wore a bicycle helmet had a coefficient of variation between 15.1% and 35.0%; interpret with caution.
10. In Alberta, Ontario and Manitoba, the use of bicycle helmet is mandatory only for children under the age of 18.

For more information on the Canadian Community Health Survey, please contact Statistics Canada’s Statistical Information Service (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 613-951-8116; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats@STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats@STATCAN@canada.ca)).