

Health Fact Sheets

Heavy drinking, 2018

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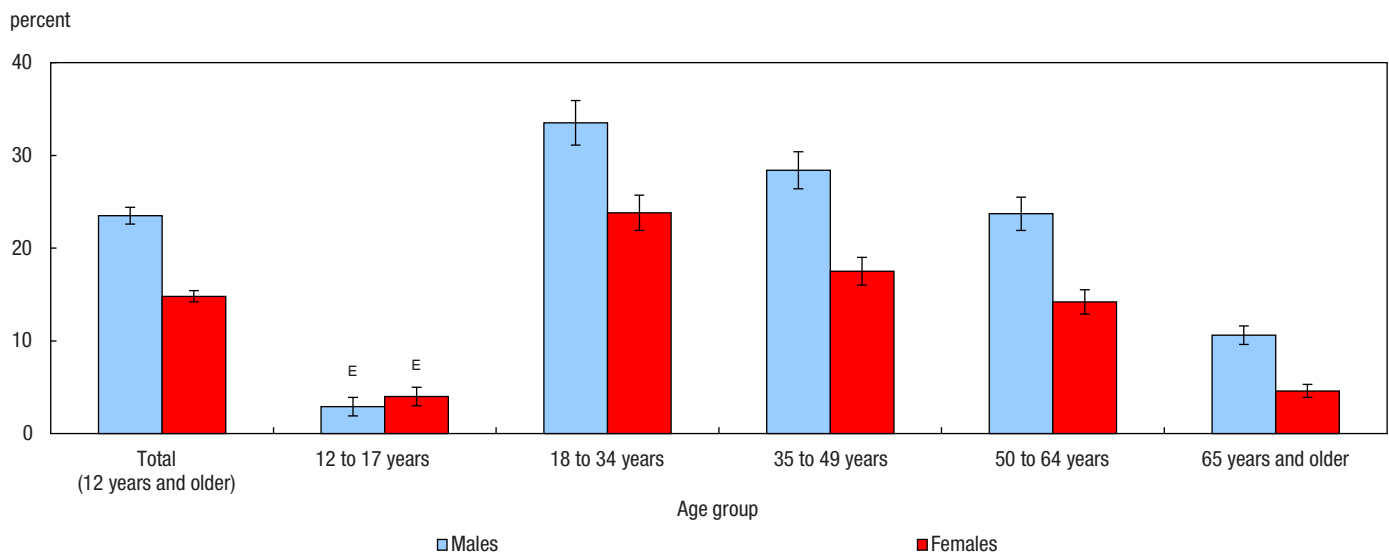
Statistics Canada, Catalogue no.82-625-X

Heavy drinking, 2018

In 2018, 19.1% of Canadians aged 12 and older (roughly 5.9 million people) reported alcohol consumption that classified them as heavy drinkers.¹ The proportion of people classified as heavy drinkers remained stable between 2017 and 2018 (19.5%, 19.1%).²

Overall, males were more likely (23.5%) to report heavy drinking than females (14.8%) in 2018. The highest proportion of heavy drinking for both sexes was among those aged 18 to 34. In this age group, 33.5% of males and 23.8% of females were heavy drinkers (Chart 1).

Chart 1 Heavy drinking, by age group and sex, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2018



^E use with caution

Note: Heavy drinking refers to males who reported having 5 or more drinks, or women who reported having 4 or more drinks, on one occasion, at least once a month in the past year.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2018.

Despite the fact it is illegal to sell alcohol to anyone under 18 in Canada,^{3 4} 25.6% of Canadian youth aged 12 to 17 reported consuming an alcoholic beverage in the previous 12 months. Among those who did drink, 37.8% of them did so at least once a month. Overall, 3.4% of youth were classified as heavy drinkers, which has remained consistent since 2015.

The proportion of residents who reported heavy drinking in the past 12 months was **lower** than the national average (19.1%) in:

- Ontario (17.3%)
- Manitoba (16.0%)

The proportion of residents who reported heavy drinking in the past 12 months was **higher** than the national average in:

- Newfoundland and Labrador (27.7%)
- Quebec (21.2%)

The proportion of residents who were classified as heavy drinkers was about the same as the national average in all other provinces. Canadians residing in rural areas were more likely to report heavy drinking (22.4%) compared to those living urban areas (18.4%).

About heavy drinking

Excessive alcohol consumption can have serious health and social consequences, especially when combined with other behaviours such as driving while intoxicated. For males, heavy drinking refers to having consumed five or more drinks, per occasion, at least once a month during the past year. For females, heavy drinking refers to having consumed four or more drinks, per occasion, at least once a month during the past year.

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Data

Additional data from the Canadian Community Health Survey are available from table [13-10-0096-01](#).

Notes

1. Estimates in this article referring to the national average or Canada rate exclude the territories. This is because the coverage of the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) in 2018 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 are 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. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. 2017. [Alcohol \(Canadian Drug Summary\)](#). (accessed June 4, 2019).
4. The legal drinking age for alcohol is 18 in Alberta, Manitoba, and Quebec. In the other provinces and territories, the drinking age is 19.

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)).