

Health Fact Sheets

Smoking, 2018

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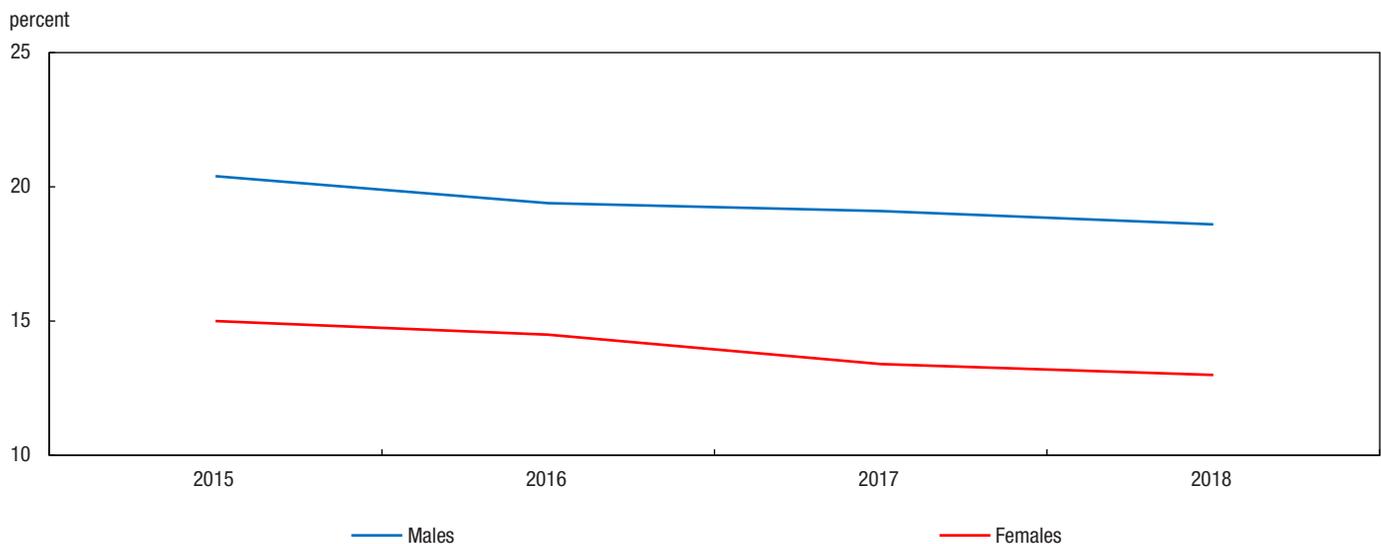
Health Fact Sheets

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Smoking, 2018

In 2018, 15.8% of Canadians aged 12 and older (roughly 4.9 million people) smoked cigarettes either daily or occasionally.¹ Among both sexes, the number of current smokers has declined between 2015 and 2018 (from 20.4% to 18.6% for males and from 15.0% to 13.0% for females, Chart 1).²

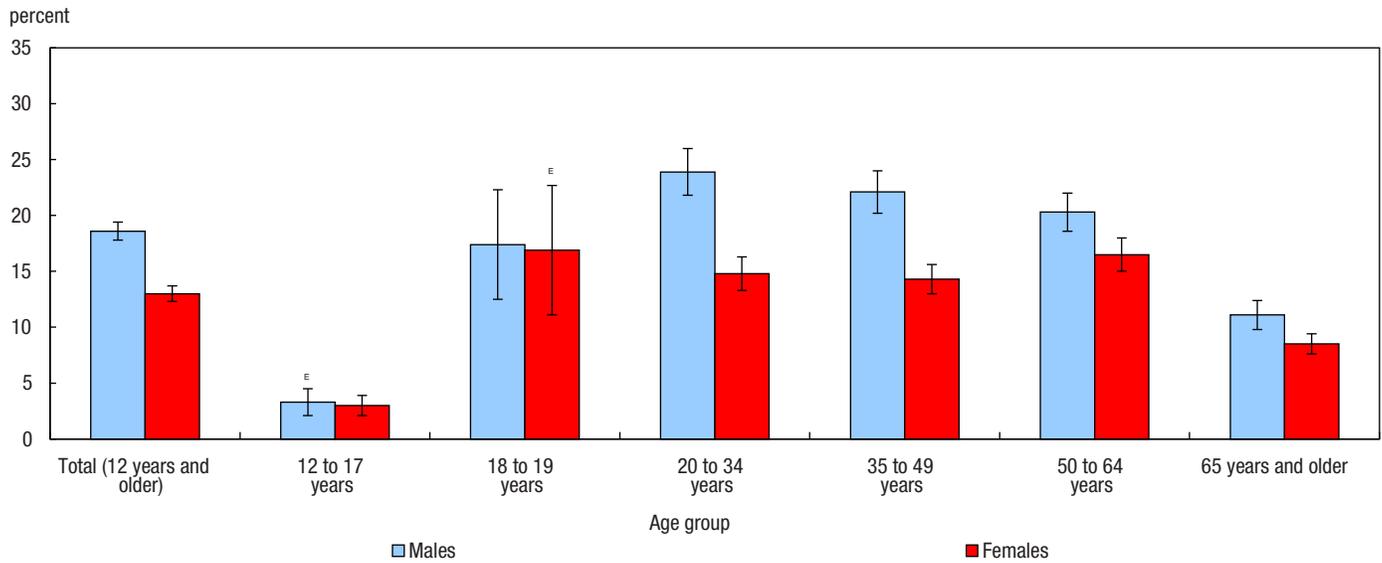
Chart 1 Daily or occasional smokers, by sex, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2015 to 2018



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2015 to 2018.

Among the sexes, the proportion in 2018 who smoked daily or occasionally was higher among males (18.6%) than females (13.0%). Across all age groups, smoking was least common among youth aged 12 to 17 (3.2%, Chart 2).³

Chart 2 Daily or occasional smokers, by age group and sex, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2018

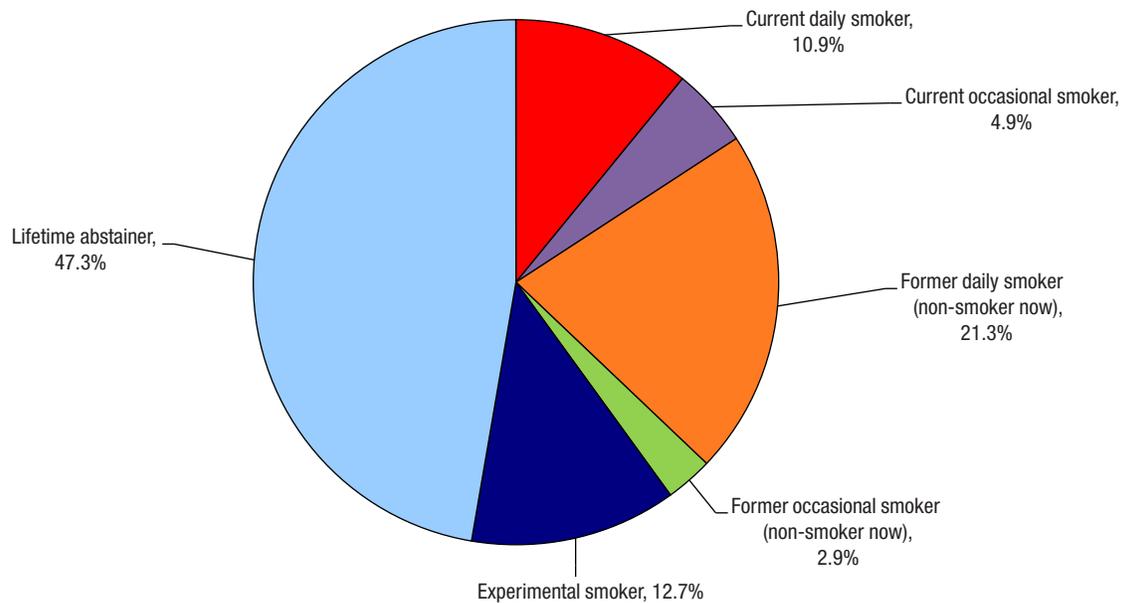


^E use with caution

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2018.

Of the 4.9 million current smokers, the majority (3.4 million) smoked cigarettes daily. The majority of current non-smokers were lifetime abstainers, having never smoked a whole cigarette. Just over one in five Canadians (21.3%) in 2018 were current non-smokers who used to be daily smokers (Chart 3).

Chart 3 Smoking status, population aged 12 and older, Canada, 2018



Note: Experimental smokers are current non-smokers who have had at least one whole cigarette in their lifetime.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2018.

People typically begin smoking during their teenage years⁴, so the percentage who have not started smoking by age 20 is an indicator of future smoking rates. In 2018, 62.6% of those aged 20 to 24 had never smoked a whole cigarette. Within this age group, the proportion for never smoking was higher for females than for males (70.2% vs 55.9%). Overall, the number of 20 to 24 year olds who have never smoked a whole cigarette has increased from 2015 (57.9%).

The proportion of residents who smoked daily or occasionally was **lower** than the national average (15.8%) in:

- British Columbia (12.0%)

The proportion of residents who smoked daily or occasionally was **higher** than the national average in:

- Nova Scotia (18.0%)
- Quebec (17.5%)
- Saskatchewan (20.1%)

The proportion of residents who smoked daily or occasionally was about the same as the national average in all other provinces.

About Smoking

Smoking is a risk factor for lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic respiratory disease, and other conditions.⁵ According to the World Health Organization, smoking is an important and preventable cause of death.⁶

The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) categorizes respondents by smoking status based on their self-reported smoking habits:

- **Lifetime abstainer** - Has never smoked a whole cigarette.
- **Experimental smoker** - Has smoked at least 1 whole cigarette, but less than 100 in their lifetime.
- **Former occasional smoker (non-smoker now)** - Currently doesn't smoke, but has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime. These respondents have never smoked daily.
- **Former daily smoker (non-smoker now)** - Currently doesn't smoke, but has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lifetime. These respondents have previously smoked daily.
- **Current occasional smoker** - Smokes cigarettes occasionally.
- **Current daily smoker** - Smokes cigarettes every day.

The CCHS smoking rate covers cigarettes that are bought ready-made as well as cigarettes that are self-made, but does not include electronic cigarettes.

References

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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. Note that the proportion of women aged 18 to 19, and men aged 12 to 17 who smoked either daily or occasionally had a coefficient of variation between 15.1% and 35.0%; interpret with caution.
4. Jiajian, C., and W.J. Millar. 1998. [Age of smoking initiation: Implications for quitting](#). *Health Reports*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003. Vol. 9, no. 4. (accessed February 25, 2019).
5. Shields, M. 2005. [The journey to quitting smoking](#). *Health Reports*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003. Vol. 16, no. 3. (accessed February 25, 2019).
6. World Health Organization. 2008. [WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008](#). *The MPOWER Package*. Geneva. (accessed February 25, 2019).

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