

Canadian Community Health Survey, 2012

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In 2012, the proportion of non-smokers aged 12 and older who were regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at home declined to 4.7% — less than half what it was in 2003 (10.6%).

In addition to trends in exposure to second-hand smoke at home, new data from the Canadian Community Health Survey show other important shifts in the health and behaviour of the Canadian population. For example, the rate of "heavy drinking" declined in 2012 as did the proportion of those who found most days "quite a bit or extremely stressful". On the other hand, reported heights and weights classified 18.4% of adults as obese, similar to the previous year.

Exposure to second-hand smoke

Overall, the rate of exposure to second hand smoke at home decreased from 5.5% in 2011 to 4.7% in 2012. Although the proportion of Canadians aged 12 to 19 exposed to second hand smoke at home fell from 23.4% in 2003 to 11.4% in 2012, this group was still the most likely to report this type of exposure. In 2012, 12 to 19 year-olds made up 30.4% of the 1.1 million non-smokers aged 12 and older who were regularly exposed to second-hand smoke at home.

Among the 35 to 44 age group, females (2.7%) were more likely than males (1.3%) to be exposed to second-hand smoke at home. There was no significant difference between the sexes in other age groups.

Smoking

In 2012, 20.3% of Canadians aged 12 and older, or roughly 5.9 million people, smoked either daily or occasionally — 23.1% of males and 17.5% of females. Smoking rates have remained about the same since 2009. The most recent significant difference was 2008 when the rates were higher; 24.3% for males and 18.5% for females.

Heavy drinking

Heavy drinking refers to consuming five or more drinks per occasion, at least once a month during the year prior to the survey.

In 2012, 17.4% of Canadians aged 12 and older reported heavy drinking, down from 19.0% in 2011. The rates of heavy drinking had remained relatively stable between 2005 and 2010 at around 17% before increasing in 2011.

The rate of heavy drinking among males fell from 26.8% to 24.3%; among females the rate was 10.7% in 2012 compared with 11.4% in 2011.

Males were more likely than females to report heavy drinking in every age group, except among those aged 12 to 15 where there was no significant difference between the sexes. For both sexes, those most likely to report heavy drinking were between the ages of 18 and 34.

Perceived life stress

In 2012, 22.7% of Canadians aged 15 and older reported that most days were "quite a bit or extremely stressful", down from 23.6% in 2011.

Since 2003, females have been more likely than males to report that most days were quite a bit or extremely stressful. This gender difference held true in 2012, in particular for those aged 15 to 19. In this age group, 21.2% of females reported stress in their daily lives, compared with 13.4% of males. Daily stress was the highest among the 35 to 44 and 45 to 54 age groups, peaking at around 30% for both men and women.



Physical activity during leisure time

In 2012, 53.9% of Canadians were at least "moderately active" during their leisure time, up from 52.1% in 2010. "Moderately active" would be equivalent to walking at least 30 minutes a day or taking an hour-long exercise class at least three times a week.

The most popular leisure-time activity was walking: 71.1% of Canadians reported walking during leisure time in the three months prior to the survey. Gardening, home exercise, jogging or running, swimming, and bicycling were also popular activities.

Since 2001, males were more likely than females to be at least moderately active during leisure time. In 2012, 56.2% of males reported that they were at least moderately active, about the same as 2011. Among females, the proportion was 51.6%, about the same as 2011 but up from 49.3% in 2010.

Teenagers aged 12 to 19 had the highest rates of moderate physical activity, 76.7% for boys and 65.6% for girls.

Obesity

In 2012, 18.4% of Canadians aged 18 and older, roughly 4.7 million adults, reported height and weight that classified them as obese. For men, the rate rose from 16.0% in 2003 to 19.0% in 2009, and has remained relatively stable since. For women, obesity rates increased from 14.5% in 2003 to 16.7% in 2009, remained stable from 2009 to 2011, and rose to 18.0% in 2012.

Among those aged 35 to 44, men were more likely than women to be classified as obese. In all other age groups, obesity rates were about the same for men and women.

Diabetes

In 2012, 6.5% of Canadians aged 12 or older reported that they had diabetes. This was not a significant change from 2011, though it was an increase from 5.8% in 2007.

Throughout the period from 2001 to 2012, males were more likely than females to report that they had diabetes. In 2012, the rates were 6.9% for males, compared with 6.1% for females.

Between the ages of 12 and 54, males and females reported similar rates of diabetes. Starting at age 55, males were more likely than females to report being diabetic.

Note to readers

This release presents data from the 2012 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), featuring information on more than 30 health indicators, including perceived health, smoking, second-hand smoke at home, access to a regular medical doctor (family doctor or specialist), physical activity during leisure time, obesity, high blood pressure, drinking, fruit and vegetable consumption, diabetes, asthma, arthritis and perceived life stress.

The CCHS is an on-going survey that collects a wide range of information about the health status of Canadians, factors determining their health status and their use of health care services. The results are released yearly. The 2012 estimate is provided plus the most recent year where there is a significant difference. About 65,000 respondents were interviewed for the survey in 2012.

Data for all indicators are available at the national, provincial and territorial level, as well as for the 115 health regions across Canada.

Residents of Indian reserves, health care institutions, some remote areas and full-time members of the Canadian Forces were excluded.

Available in CANSIM: tables [105-0501](#) and [105-0503](#).

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number [3226](#).

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