

TOBACCO USE AND CESSATION: CANADA

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Overview

Canada's tobacco use rates are comparable to those of the United States. Canada spends over \$3.5 billion annually to provide direct medical care to tobacco users.¹ Tobacco-related illnesses are a major cause of death; every year, more than 45,000 Canadians die prematurely from tobacco-related illnesses.² Between 1999 and 2012, smoking rates declined from 25% to 16%.³ Despite this trend, tobacco use and smoking remain a leading cause of preventable disease and death in Canada.⁴

Prevalence of Tobacco Use

Currently, 16.1% of all Canadian adults (aged 15 and older) smoke, including 18.4% of men and 13.9% of women.⁵ Cigarettes are the main source of tobacco use in Canada. In 2012, smokers consumed an average of 15.0 cigarettes daily.⁵ Although less common than cigarettes, some Canadians smoke cigars or use spit tobacco. In 2012, 4.1% of Canadians reported having smoked cigars or cigarillos in the previous 30 days.⁵

Cost of Tobacco Use

In 2013, Canadians spent an average of between \$88.70 and \$113.39 for 200 cigarettes.⁶

Annually, Canada spends over C\$3.5 billion to provide direct medical care (including hospital, physician and drug costs) to tobacco users.¹ When indirect costs (e.g., worker absenteeism, residential fires, lost future income caused by premature death, etc.) are incorporated, tobacco's total annual economic burden to society totals C\$15 billion.¹

The Annual Estimated Cost Per Canadian Employee Who Smokes⁷

Increased absenteeism	C\$414
Decreased productivity	C\$3,842
Unsanctioned smoke breaks	90%

Tobacco-Related Health Information

Tobacco-related illnesses are a major cause of death in Canada.

- Tobacco-related illnesses kill about 45,000 Canadians each year.²
- Every 11 minutes a Canadian dies from tobacco use.⁸

The risk of cancer and other serious conditions increase sharply the more or longer an individual smokes.² Half of lifetime smokers will die from a tobacco-related disease.²

Lung cancer is a leading cause of cancer death for both men and women.² Smoking tobacco causes 85% of all new cases of lung cancer in Canada.²

Non smokers are also at risk due to second hand smoking. Over 800,000 Canadians die from second hand smoke.⁹

Tobacco Use in the Workplace

Tobacco companies are being held responsible for health care costs related to smoking in the workplace.⁴

Smoking and Occupation

Tobacco use rates in Canada differ education level.⁵

- 19.5% of Canadians without a high school degree smoke.
- 18.1% of Canadians with a high school degree smoke.
- 17.5% of Canadians with a community college degree smoke.
- 10.2% of Canadians with a four-year university degree smoke.

Smoking rates also vary by occupation:¹⁰

- 28.4% of trade, transport or equipment operators smoke.
- 24% of workers in processing, manufacturing or utilities occupations smoke.
- 20.5% of sales or service workers smoke.
- 15.9% of workers employed in the administrative, financial or clerical sectors smoke.
- 12% of health care workers smoke.

Smoking Restrictions at Work

The Canadian government banned smoking in all federally regulated workplaces and public spaces.¹¹ All provinces and territories have banned smoking in indoor public places.¹² The Canadian government encourages all employers to go smoke-free.

According to the 2006 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS), 94% of working individuals reported having some workplace smoking restriction in place.¹⁰ Of surveyed employers:

- 44% restricted tobacco entirely.¹⁰
- 43% allowed smoking in designated workplace areas, up from 34% in 2005.¹⁰
- 6% did not restrict tobacco use in the workplace.¹⁰

Tobacco use and consumption vary by occupation type. For example:

- 13.6% of professionals in business, finance or administration are current smokers.¹³
- 18.6% of individuals in sales or service are current smokers.¹³
- 13.5% of health professionals are current smokers.¹³

Public education and tobacco control efforts in Canada began in 1962. In that year, Canada's Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons on Smoking & Health publicized the link between smoking, disease and premature death, two full years before the U.S. Surgeon General's 1964 report linking tobacco use to lung cancer was published. Canada's health system strongly advocates tobacco cessation by:

- Implementing a Federal Tobacco Control Strategy to reduce tobacco-related death and disease among Canadians through basic tenets of prevention, protection, cessation (quitting smoking) and product regulation.^{13 13}
- Joining the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in 2003.¹⁴
- Observing an annual National Non-Smoking Week during the third week of January to educate Canadians about smoking dangers, helping smokers quit, preventing non-smokers from becoming smokers and establishing a goal of Canada to become a smoke-free society.¹⁵

The Canadian Cancer Society, the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, the Canadian Lung Association, and the provincial, territorial and federal Ministries of Health are major supporters of National Non-Smoking Week.¹⁵

Tobacco Cessation Treatment Options

A wide variety of tobacco cessation treatment options are available in Canada, including quitlines, medications and counseling. The first quitlines in Canada were established in 2002. Now, all 10 Canadian provinces have them in place. Nicotine replacement products (NRTs), such as nicotine gum and nicotine patch, are available over the counter. In addition, there are currently two prescription medications available to help smokers quit. These non-nicotine drugs are bupropion SR (trade name Wellbutrin® and Zyban®) and varenicline (trade name Chantix™).¹⁶

Resources

- [Health Canada](#)
Helpful information on tobacco control and legislation in Canada.
- [Quit Lines by Province](#)
Profiles of quit lines listed by province, including languages and services offered.
- [Smoking Cessation in the Workplace: A Guide to Helping Your Employees Quit Smoking](#)
Toolkit for employer tobacco cessation actions.

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