

Health Fact Sheets

Non-smokers, 2012



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- . not available for any reference period
- .. not available for a specific reference period
- ... not applicable
- 0 true zero or a value rounded to zero
- 0^s value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
- ^P preliminary
- ^r revised
- X suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
- ^E use with caution
- F too unreliable to be published
- * significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Non-smokers, 2012

The choice not to smoke is significant due to the impact smoking can have on a person's health. According to the World Health Organization, smoking is an important and preventable cause of death.¹

In 2012, 79.7% of Canadians aged 12 and older, roughly 23.4 million people, were non-smokers. Among males, 76.9% were non-smokers and among females 82.5% were non-smokers. Of the non-smokers, just over half had never smoked and just under half were former smokers.

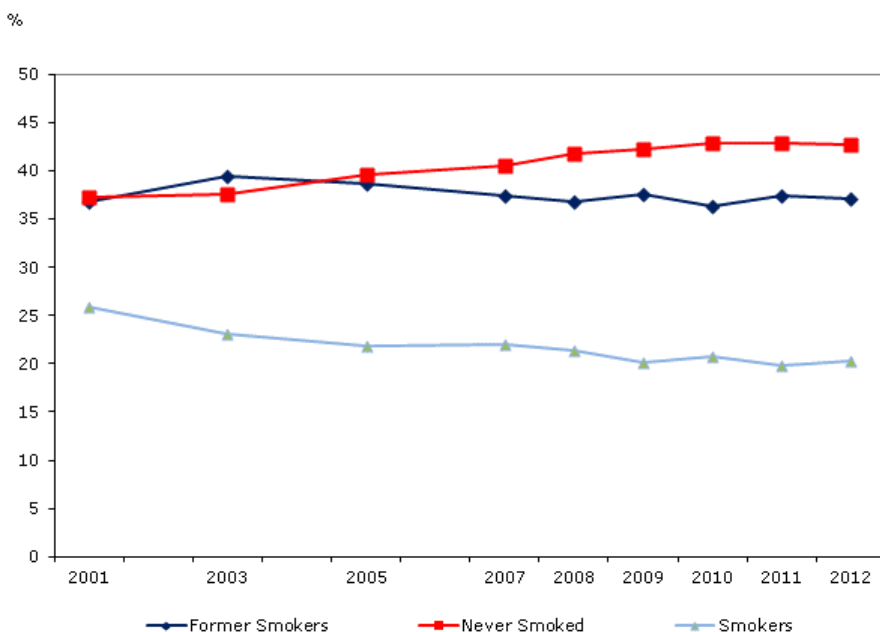
Provincially, the percentage of residents who were non-smokers was higher than the national average in British Columbia (85.5%) and Ontario (81.0%). The percentage of non-smokers was lower than the national average in Nova Scotia (76.3%), New Brunswick (76.3%), Quebec (76.2%), Newfoundland and Labrador (73.9%), Yukon (70.6%), Northwest Territories (64.2%) and Nunavut (45.7%).

The smoking rate in Canada has decreased over the last decade. Over the same time period the percentage of people who have never smoked has increased. In 2012, 42.6% of Canadians aged 12 or over, or about 12.5 million people, had never smoked, up from 37.3% in 2001 (Chart 1).

Approximately 10.9 million, or 37.1%, of Canadians aged 12 and older were former smokers in 2012.



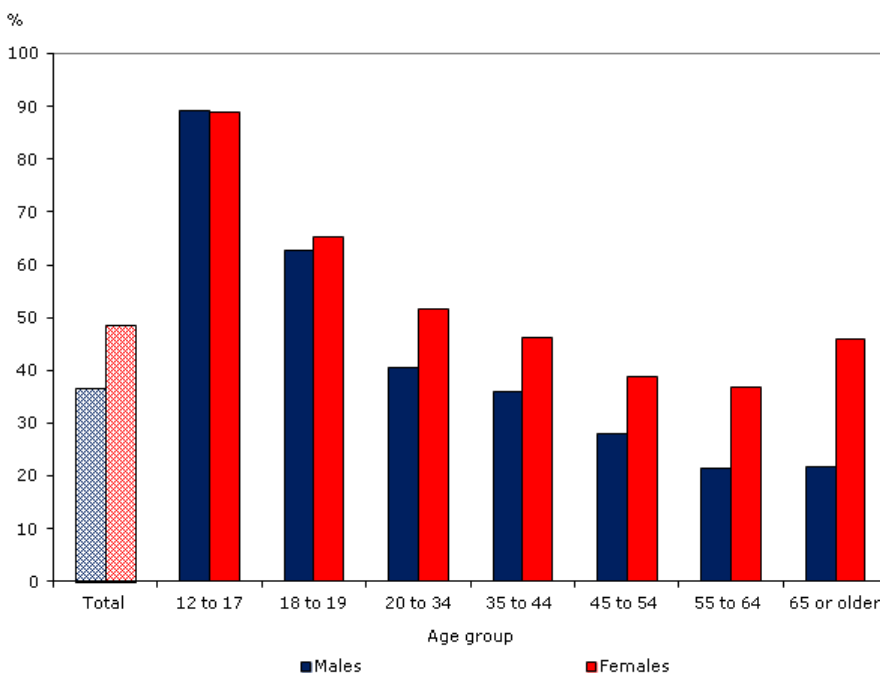
Chart 1
Percentage of smokers, former smokers and those who have never smoked, household population aged 12 or older, Canada, 2001 to 2012



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 – 2012.

The percentage of people who had never smoked was highest for those aged 12 to 19. For this age group, there was no difference between males and females. However after age 20, females were more likely to have never smoked than males for each of the age groups. The largest difference between the sexes was for the 65 and older age group. Over age 65, 46.0% of females had never smoked, while the rate was 21.6% for males (Chart 2).

Chart 2
Percentage who have never smoked, by age group and sex, household population aged 12 or older, Canada, 2012



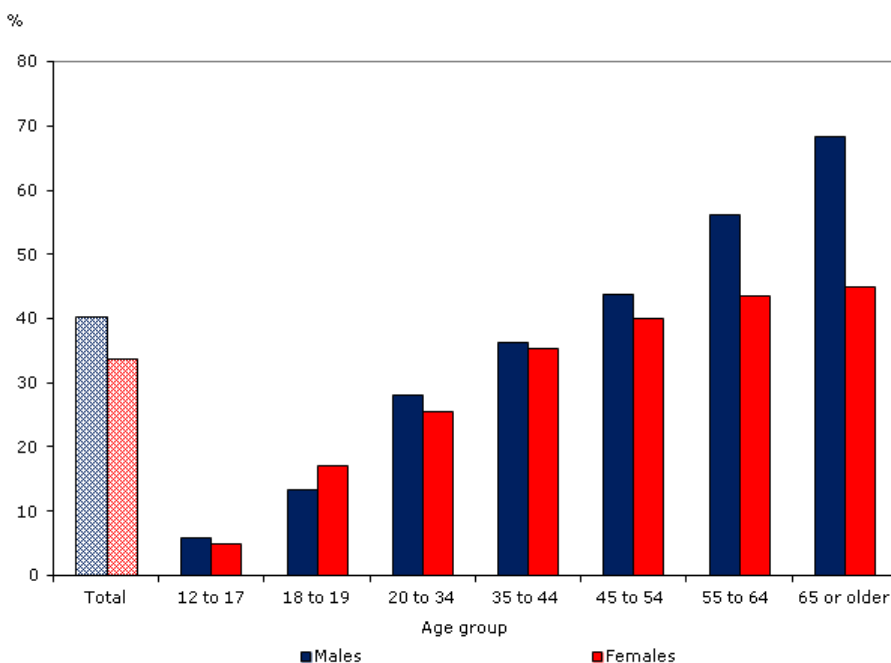
Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2012.

By quitting smoking, former smokers can experience many improvements to their health such as lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of cancer.² These health benefits continue as more time passes since the last cigarette. A year after quitting, the risk of developing heart disease decreases to half that of a smoker.³ After ten years, the risk of dying from lung cancer decreases by almost half.² In 2012, former smokers had not smoked on average for 18 years.

The percentage of females who were former smokers was lower than the percentage of males. In 2012, 40.4% of males and 33.9% of females were former smokers. However, females were more likely to have never smoked.

The percentage of former smokers was significantly higher for males compared to females for those over the age of 55. There was no significant difference between the sexes for the other age groups (Chart 3).

Chart 3
Percentage who are former smokers, by age group and sex, household population aged 12 or older, Canada, 2012



Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2012.

Notes

1. World Health Organization. 2008. *WHO (World Health Organization) Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008: The MPOWER Package*. Geneva.
2. Canadian Cancer Society. *For Smokers Who Want to Quit – One Step at a Time*. Canadian Cancer Society 2013.
3. Janz, Teresa. 2012. “Current Smoking Trends.” Health at a glance. June 2012. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. (number) 82-624-X. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2012001/article/11676-eng.pdf> (accessed December 9, 2013).

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World Health Organization. 2008. *WHO (World Health Organization) Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic, 2008: The MPOWER Package*. Geneva.

Data tables

Additional data from the Canadian Community Health Survey are available from CANSIM table 105–0501.