

Health Fact Sheets

Heavy drinking, 2013



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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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Heavy drinking, 2013

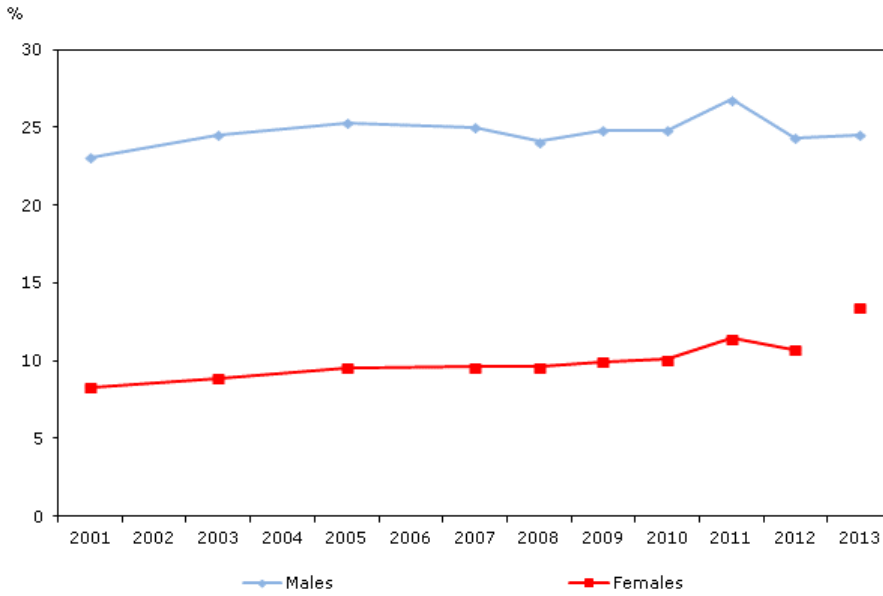
Excessive alcohol consumption can have serious health and social consequences, especially when combined with other behaviours such as driving while intoxicated. For males, heavy drinking refers to having consumed five or more drinks, per occasion, at least once a month during the past year. The same definition applies to females between 2001 and 2012. Starting in 2013, the limit for heavy drinking for females was reduced to four or more drinks.¹



In 2013, 18.9% (5.5 million) of Canadians aged 12 and over reported alcohol consumption that classified them as heavy drinkers.

Heavy drinking was reported among 24.5% of males and 13.4% of females in 2013. For males this rate was about the same as 2012 (24.3%), but a significant decrease from 26.8% in 2011. As a result of the change in definition of heavy drinking for females, 2013 estimates are not directly comparable to previous years. The increased proportion of female heavy drinkers from 10.7% in 2012 to 13.4% in 2013 is partly due to the new definition in 2013 (Chart 1).

Chart 1
Percentage who reported heavy drinking¹ in the last year, by sex, household population aged 12 or older, Canada, 2001 to 2013



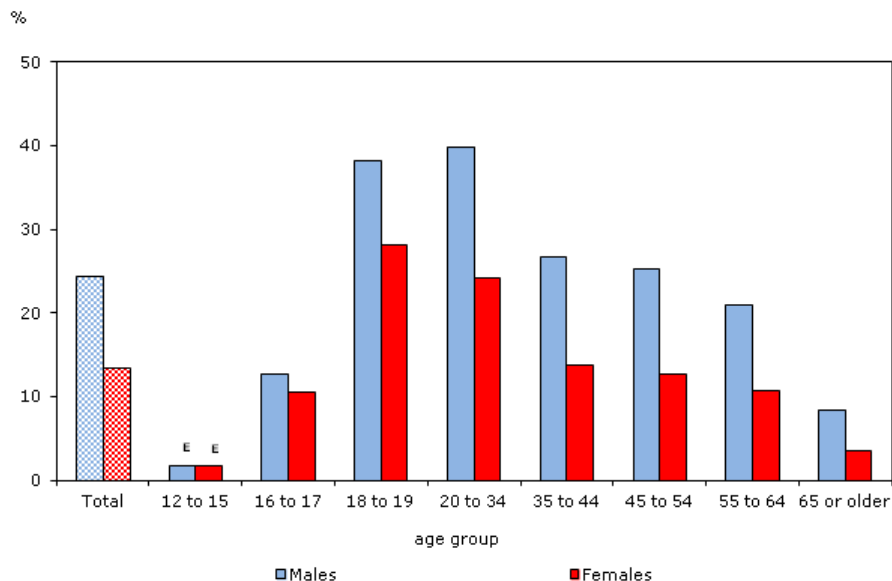
Note: 1. For males, heavy drinking refers to having 5 or more drinks, at least once a month in the last year. The same definition applies to females between 2001 and 2012. Starting in 2013, the limit for heavy drinking for females was reduced to four or more drinks.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 - 2013.

Typically, a higher proportion of males report heavy drinking than females. In 2013, this still holds true, even with the limit for females being lowered to four or more drinks. Males were more likely to report heavy drinking than females for all ages, except between 12 and 17, where there was no significant difference between the sexes.

The highest rates of heavy drinking for both sexes were among those aged 18 to 34. In the 18 to 19 age group, 38.3% of males and 28.2% of females reported heavy drinking. In the 20 to 34 age group, the rates were 39.8% for males and 24.2% for females (Chart 2).

Chart 2
Percentage who reported heavy drinking¹ in the last year, by age group and sex, household population aged 12 or older, Canada, 2013



Notes: 1. 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.
 E Use with caution (coefficient of variation 16.6% to 33.3%).

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2013.

The proportion of residents who reported heavy drinking was **lower** than the national average (18.9%) in:

- Ontario (17.1%)
- British Columbia (17.4%)

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

- Newfoundland and Labrador (24.5%)
- New Brunswick (25.1%)
- Quebec (20.8%)
- Yukon (32.4%)
- Northwest Territories (33.0%)

Residents of the other provinces and Nunavut² reported rates that were about the same as the national average.

End notes

¹ A definition change was implemented in 2013 to conform with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Health Canada guidelines for Heavy drinking. 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. While this indicator remains comparable for males to the 5 or more drinks indicator published in previous years, it is no longer comparable for females.

² Note that the rate for Nunavut had a coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3%; use with caution.

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Data

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