

## Health Fact Sheet

# Cancer Screening, 2017

Release date: June 26, 2018



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# Health Fact Sheets

Statistics Canada, Catalogue no.82-625-X

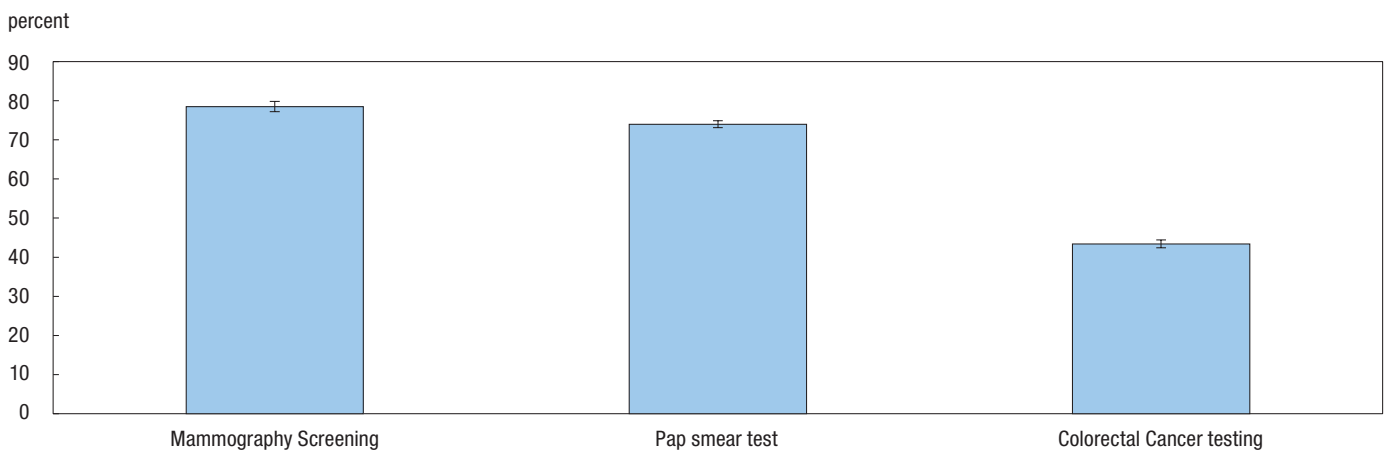
## Cancer Screening, 2017

Cancer is the leading cause of death in Canada, affecting females and males of all ages.<sup>1</sup> As of 2017, it is estimated that almost 1 in 2 Canadians will develop a form of cancer in their lifetime, and 1 in 4 will die of Cancer.<sup>2</sup> Early detection through cancer screening and the treatment of precancerous conditions is an important part of reducing the number of people who are diagnosed with cancer.

### Meeting the Guidelines

The Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care (CTFPHC) has recommended guidelines for when and how often a person should receive cancer screening. In 2017, Canadians were more likely to meet the guidelines for mammogram screening, and less likely to meet the guidelines for colorectal cancer testing (Chart 1).

**Chart 1** Meeting "The Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care (CTFPHC)" cancer screening guidelines, Canada, 2017



**Note:** The Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care (CTFPHC) recommends adults aged 50 to 74 receive a fecal occult blood test every two years or a sigmoidoscopy every 10 years for colorectal cancer testing. The CTFPHC recommends a mammogram every 2 to 3 years for women aged 50 to 74, and Pap test every three years for women aged 25 to 69.

**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

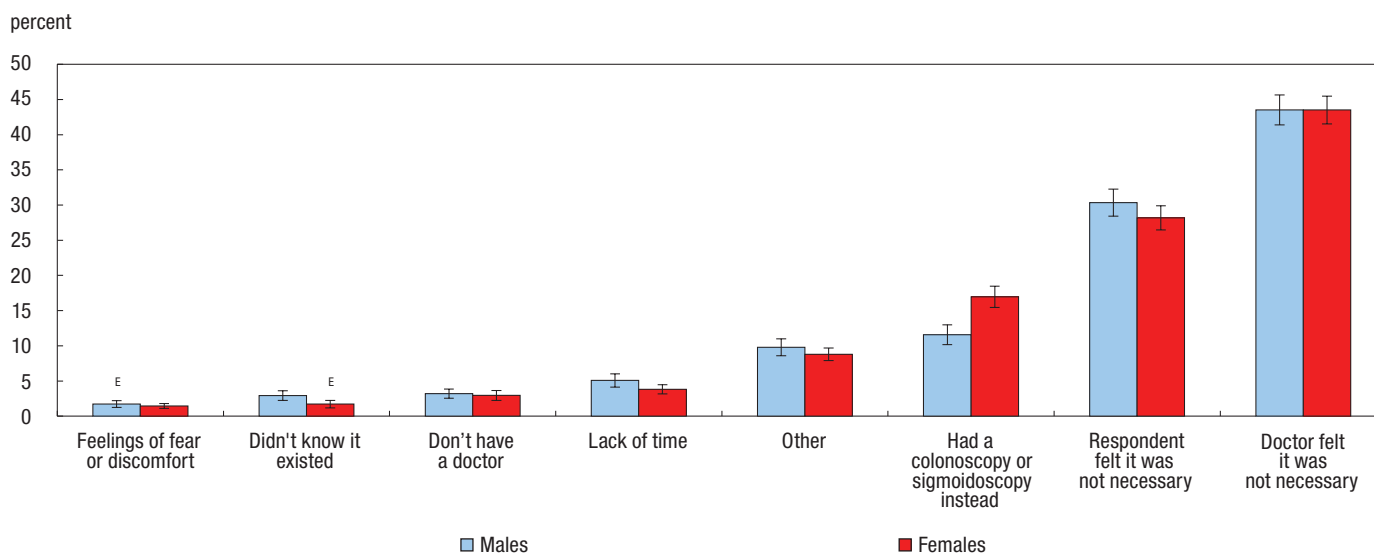
## Colorectal Cancer Testing

Colorectal Cancer is among the five most common types of cancer in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Since 2000 there has been a decrease in incidence rates of colorectal cancer for women, and a similar trend has been seen for men since 2008. These trends can likely be attributed to greater rates of cancer screening across Canada.<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, 60.9% of Canadians aged 50 to 74 (roughly 6.5 million people) reported that they have had a fecal occult blood test (FOBT) in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup> Among the sexes, the proportion was higher for females (62.3%) than males (59.4%).<sup>4</sup>

The CTFPHC recommends colorectal screening for adults aged 50 to 74 with an FOBT every two years or a sigmoidoscopy every 10 years unless they are at high risk.<sup>2</sup> Among Canadians 50 to 74, 40.6% have had a fecal test in the past 2 years. The most common reason among Canadians aged 50 to 74 for not getting a fecal test in the past two years was that the doctor felt it was not necessary (Chart 2).

**Chart 2** Reasons for not having a fecal test in the previous two years, by sex, population aged 50 to 74, Canada, 2017



ε use with caution (these data have a coefficient of variation between 15.1% and 35.0%)

**Note:** Respondents could have reported more than one reason for not having a fecal test, so estimates are not exclusive within the population (they can add to more than 100%).

**Source:** Canadian Community Health Survey, 2017.

In 2017, 47.9% of Canadians aged 50 to 74 reported that they have had a sigmoidoscopy or a colonoscopy in their lifetime. Among Canadians 50 to 74 who have received one of these tests, it was more common to have had a colonoscopy (87.3%), rather than a sigmoidoscopy (3.4%) or both (9.3%).

## Mammography

Mammography is an x-ray of the breast used to help detect both cancerous and non-cancerous tumours. By 1998 organized breast screening programs were established in Canada across all 10 provinces.<sup>5</sup>

In 2017, 91.4% of women aged 50 to 74 (roughly 5 million people) reported having a mammogram in their lifetime.

Among the 5 million women who have received a mammogram, the most common reason was because it was part of a routine follow up (69.8%). Women also reported they had a mammogram due to their age (16.5%), or a family history of breast cancer (12.6%).

In 2017, 78.5% of women aged 50 to 74 have had a mammogram in the past three years. The CTFPHC guideline recommends a mammogram every two to three years for women in this age group. For women who did not meet this guideline, the most common reason reported was that they felt it was not necessary.

### **Pap smear test**

In 2017, 90.6% of women aged 25 to 69 reported that they had a Pap smear test in their lifetime.

The CTFPHC recommends that women aged 25 to 69 years old receive Pap tests every three years, as a method for early detection of abnormal cells in the cervix.<sup>2</sup> In 2017, 74.0% of women aged 25 to 69 had a Pap test in the past three years. Women aged 25 to 34 (79.2%) and 35 to 49 (79.4%) were more likely to have received a Pap test in the past three years compared with women aged 50 to 69 (67.3%).

### **Socio-Economics and meeting the cancer screening guidelines**

The proportion of Canadians who followed the CTFPHC guidelines for mammograms and Pap tests were lower among those who had a secondary school graduation or less compared to women with a post-secondary graduation. Females in the lowest income households were also less likely to meet the recommended guidelines, compared to women in higher income households. The proportion of people meeting the guidelines for colorectal cancer screening did not differ by education or income.<sup>6</sup>

## Notes

1. Statistics Canada. Leading causes of death, total population, by age group and sex, Canada, annual, Table (13-10-0394-01). Last updated February 22, 2018. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1310039401> (accessed: June 7th, 2018).
2. Canadian Cancer Society, Statistics Canada, and Public Health Agency of Canada. 2017. Canadian Cancer Statistics 2017. (accessed April 16th, 2018)
3. Estimates in this article referring to the national average or Canada rate exclude the territories. This is because the coverage of CCHS in 2017 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 is only available for two year cycles of the CCHS (e.g. 2017-2018).
4. 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%).
5. Public Health Agency of Canada. 2005. Organized Breast Cancer Screening Programs in Canada. (accessed May 24th, 2018)
6. Based on household income, adjusted by the before-tax low income cut-off (LICO) for the household and community size. The LICO is the threshold at which a family would typically spend a larger portion of its income than the average family on the necessities of food, shelter, and clothing. This accounts for spending power based on the family and community size.

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