



PHYSICIANS FOR A SMOKE-FREE CANADA MÉDECINS POUR UN CANADA SANS FUMÉE

P.O. Box 4849 • Station E • Ottawa • Ontario • K1S 5J1
www.smoke-free.ca

Background

Cigarettes & the Health of Canadians

29% of Canadians over the age of 15 are smokers – almost 7 million Canadians.

- Smoking is increasingly associated with poverty and disadvantage.
- Aboriginal Canadians smoke at among the highest rates in the world. Smoking is also more common among Canadians who work in primary resource industries and those who have been unemployed for long periods.
- Smoking rates vary considerably by region and by social grouping. They are lowest in B.C. and Ontario (26%) and highest in Quebec (34%) and the Atlantic provinces (31%). In the prairie provinces, 29% of people smoke.
- Smoking is much more common among Francophone Canadians (35%) than Anglophone Canadians (26%). Among those whose first language is neither English nor French, smoking rates are considerably lower (15%)

| | Percentage who smoke |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Men | 31% |
| • Women | 26% |
| • Young adult men (20-24 years) | 39% |
| • Young adult women (20-24 years) | 32% |
| Aboriginal Canadians | |
| • First Nations | 56% |
| • Metis | 57% |
| • Inuit | 72% |
| Economic status | |
| • Lowest income adequacy | 38% |
| • Highest income adequacy | 21% |
| Education | |
| • Less than high school | 33% |
| • College or University | 23% |
| Occupation | |
| • Forestry workers | 56% |
| • Unemployed > 12 months | 50% |
| • Transportation workers | 46% |
| • Mining, fishing, construction | 43%-45% |
| • Involved in labour dispute | 42% |
| • Teaching or medicine | 18%-19% |

45,000 Canadians die from smoking each year – and the number is still growing.

- Smoking is responsible for one in five deaths in Canada. This is roughly five times the number of deaths caused by car accidents, suicides, drug abuse, murder and AIDS combined.

- The chance of dying from smoking for long-time smokers is 1 in 2. Deaths from smoking result in 15 years loss of expected life, on average.
- About half the deaths from smoking happen before the smoker reaches 70 years of age. These smokers lose an average of 22 years of life. Older persons (70 and over) who die because of smoking lose an average of 8 years of life expectancy.
- Of the 45,000 deaths each year:
 - 29,000 are among men
 - 16,000 are among women
 - 100 are among infants
 - 17,600 are from tobacco-caused cardiovascular disease
 - 17,700 are from tobacco-caused cancer
 - 9,500 are from tobacco-caused respiratory disease

There are as many smokers today as in 1965 (although the percentage has decreased)

| | <i>1965</i> | | | <i>1996</i> |
|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| Number of smokers | 6.5 million | | | 6.9 million |
| Prevalence (% who smoked) | 50% | | | 29% |
| Number of cigarettes smoked each year | 53 billion | | | 52 billion |
| Cigarettes per day per smoker | 22 | | | 21 |
| | | <i>1981</i> | <i>1990</i> | <i>1996</i> |
| Quit ratio (former smokers: ever smokers) | | 36% | 55% | 50% |
| | | <i>1977</i> | <i>1996</i> | |
| ITL Profits | \$61 million | | | \$815 million |
| ITL Profit margins (before taxes) | 21% | | | 46% |