Quitting Smoking
Findings from the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey

The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey is conducted annually by Statistics Canada for Health Canada. The information used in this analysis was provided through interviews conducted by Statistics Canada between February and December 2002.

This fact sheet describes 2002 results concerning the quitting behaviour of Canadian smokers.

Intentions to Quit

Most smokers – men and women - are intending to quit in the next 6 months.

The majority of smokers say “yes” to the question “are you seriously considering quitting smoking within the next six months?”

Although more men (62%) than women (57.8%) state this intention, this difference is not statistically significant. There is no significant statistical difference between the genders.

More men than women intend to quit in the next 30 days.

When asked if they were seriously considering quitting within the next 30 days 31.3% of men and 25.0% of women said yes, results which are statistically different.

As above, a higher percentage of male smokers seriously considered quitting within the next 30 days.
Quit attempts

Last year more than one-half million Canadians quit smoking (513 426 people).

Of Canada's 5.4 million smokers, 45% (2.4 million) made at least one attempt to quit smoking. An attempt was defined as stopping smoking for at least 24 hours because of trying to quit. Of those attempts, at least 65% were able to quit for at least one week.

On average it takes 3.1 attempts before someone quits smoking.

Gender differences

Canadian men and women are equally likely to have made a quit attempt that lasts either 24 hours or 1 week. There is no statistical difference between the proportion or men (44%) or women (46.3) who quit for twenty four hours, nor in the number who quit for 1 week.

It takes men on average 3.5 attempts before they quit for good and women 2.5 attempts.

Incentives to Quit

What would it take to quit? Willpower.

Regardless of plans to quit in the future people were asked what it would take for them to stop smoking.

The most common thing smokers identified as needed to stop smoking is will power. Other popular responses include the respondent's own death and getting a fatal smoking related disease. The addition of more restrictions had the lowest response rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would it take for you to quit smoking? (percentage responding)</th>
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<td>more restrictions</td>
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<tr>
<td>pressure from family/friend</td>
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<tr>
<td>better support</td>
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<td>pregnancy (women)</td>
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<td>effective/affordable programs</td>
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<td>smoking death/illness of family</td>
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<td>change of lifestyle</td>
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<tr>
<td>increased cost</td>
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<td>get a fatal disease</td>
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<tr>
<td>own death</td>
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<tr>
<td>other</td>
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<tr>
<td>more willpower</td>
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** Estimates flagged with the letter U do not meet Statistics Canada's quality standards. Conclusions based on these data will be unreliable, and most likely invalid.

Success in Quitting

Highly educated Canadians are most likely to be able to quit smoking.

When the number of persons in each educational group who have ever smoked are considered against those who have become former smokers it was found that those with a lower level of education were
less likely to quit smoking when compared to those with higher levels of education.

For example, of smokers with less than secondary education only 50.7% quit smoking whereas, 64.1% smokers who have completed university or teacher’s college have quit. A statistical difference between these groups is only for those who have completed university or teacher’s college.

Among Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24, a similar trend is observed with more education resulting in higher quit rates. However, overall only 22.1% of smokers in this age group have quit.

The average number of quit attempts before quitting for good seems to remain quite constant regardless of education level, with no statistical difference between these averages.

Key Findings

► Quitting behaviour is similar in all segments of the population.
► Most Canadian smokers want to quit, try to quit and eventually succeed in quitting.
► More than half of Canadians who smoked at one time have now successfully quit smoking.
► Less educated smokers are less likely to quit smoking than those with highest levels of education.
The fine print (adapted from Health Canada www.gosmokefree.ca)

Survey methods: The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS) was initiated in 1999 to provide Health Canada with reliable data on tobacco use and related issues. The primary objective is to track changes in smoking status and amount smoked, especially for those aged 15–24, who are most at risk for taking up smoking.

Population Coverage: The target population for CTUMS is all persons aged 15 and older living in Canada, excluding residents of Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories, and full-time residents of institutions. In addition, because this was a telephone survey, the 3% of Canadians without telephones are not included.

Data Collection: The results in this fact sheet are based on data collection that took place between February and December 2002. Statistics Canada conducted computer-assisted interviews by telephone; only direct reports (i.e., not third-party) with selected persons were accepted.

Survey Design: Information about household composition and second-hand smoke in the home was collected in 50,906 households. In about half of these households, one person aged 15 or older was selected to obtain information on smoking habits. This amounted to 23,341 individuals in 2002, about half of whom were aged 15–24. With this sampling frame, it is possible to estimate the smoking prevalence of Canadians aged 15 and older within about ±2% each year. The margin of error will increase when estimating the prevalence of tobacco use for subgroups. To allow provincial comparisons of approximately equal reliability, the overall sample size for the survey was divided equally across all 10 Canadian provinces. A few topics were introduced or modified in the questionnaire in July 2002, and the sample for these was 11,909. They include non-cigarette forms of tobacco use and visits to a physician and dentist (to establish a denominator for those smokers receiving advice to quit from these health professionals).

The overall response rate, which takes into consideration the participation of both households and individuals, was 82% for the 2002 CTUMS data collection. Every telephone number called by Statistics Canada was fully accounted for in order to calculate the survey’s response rate accurately and to properly weight the data to represent the Canadian population.

Terminology
Smoking status has been defined to be consistent with the definitions used in other national Health Canada surveys that collect data on tobacco use.

Smoking prevalence: the number of smokers in a specified group, divided by the total population of that group, expressed as a percentage. May also be referred to as the “smoking rate”.

Cigarette consumption: the amount reported smoked by either daily or occasional smokers. In the CTUMS fact sheets and supplementary tables, the context for cigarette consumption is normally that of daily smokers.

Current smoker: includes daily smokers and non-daily smokers (also known as occasional smokers). Determined from the response to the question “At the present time do you smoke cigarettes every day, occasionally, or not at all?”

Daily smoker: refers to those who respond “every day” to the question “At the present time do you smoke cigarettes every day, occasionally or not at all?”

Non-daily smoker: often referred to as “occasional” smoker, refers to those who respond “Occasionally” to the question “At the present time do you smoke cigarettes every day, occasionally or not at all?”

former smoker

Short term quitter: former smoker who quit smoking less than one year prior to the survey. Determined by the response to the question “When did you stop smoking? Was it less than 1 year ago, 1 to 2 years ago, 3 to 5 years ago, or more than 5 years ago?”

Long term quitter: former smoker who quit smoking a year or more ago and has not resumed smoking during that time frame. Determined by the response to the question “When did you stop smoking? Was it less than 1 year ago, 1 to 2 years ago, 3 to 5 years ago, or more than 5 years ago?”

Ever-smokers: current and former smokers combined.

Quit rate: the ratio of the number of former smokers in a specified group divided by the number of ever-smokers in that group.

Never-smoker: was not smoking at the time of the interview and answered “NO” to the question “Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your life?”

Non-smokers: former smokers and never-smokers combined.

Light smoker: a smoker who reports consuming between 1-10 cigarettes per day.

Moderate smoker: a smoker who reports consuming between 11-19 cigarettes per day.

Heavy smoker: a smoker who reports consuming 20 cigarettes or more per day.

Stages of Change: the 5 following stages describe readiness to quit smoking. They are defined according to the conventions of Abrams, Velicer, and colleagues.

Precontemplation: current smokers who answered “NO” to the question “Are you seriously considering quitting within the next six months?”

Contemplation: current smokers who either were seriously considering quitting within the next six months but answered “NO” to the question “Are you seriously considering quitting within the next 30 days?” OR were seriously considering quitting within the next 30 days, but did not try to quit for at least 24 hours during the past year (i.e., answered “NONE” to the question “In the last year, how many times have you quit for at least 24 hours?”).

Preparation: current smokers who were seriously considering quitting within the next 30 days and had quit smoking at least once, for at least 24 hours, during the past year.

Action: former smokers (i.e., did not currently smoke) who had quit smoking within the past six months (inclusive).

Maintenance: former smokers who, at the time of the interview, had quit smoking at least six months ago.

This list of terminology contains definitions of terms that appear in fact sheets and supplementary tables based on the Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS).