

Inequalities in High Alcohol Consumption in Canada



1 in 5

Canadian adults report high alcohol consumption. High alcohol consumption, or heavy drinking, is defined as having had 5 or more drinks on one occasion at least once a month over the past year.*

Heavy drinking affects our physical and mental health and can lead to harms such as:



impaired social functioning



alcohol poisoning, stroke and hypertension

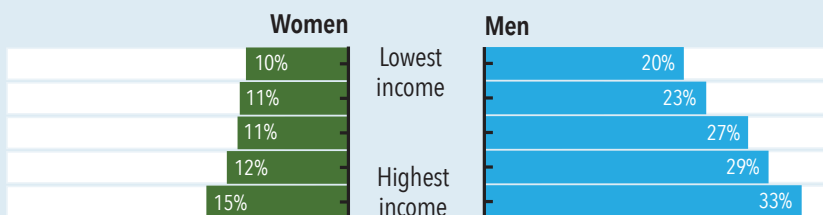


some mental health disorders (e.g. depression)



physical injury (e.g. violence, car accidents)

High alcohol consumption increases with income:



The proportion of high alcohol consumption is:

2.2x
HIGHER



among working adults than those who are permanently unable to work

3.5x
HIGHER

among White Canadians than among East/Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Arab/West Asian Canadians

3.0x
HIGHER

among White Canadians than among Black Canadians

2.3x
HIGHER

among men than among women

1.6x
HIGHER

among lesbian and bisexual women than among heterosexual women

Factors that influence high alcohol consumption include:



alcohol access and affordability



social environment (e.g. social and cultural practices, loss of cultural identity, stigma, social networks and supports)



socioeconomic position, occupation type



individual motivations for drinking and coping abilities



gender norms



lack of knowledge about the risks

Addressing these factors may reduce inequalities in high alcohol consumption in Canada.

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* In 2013 Statistics Canada revised the definition of heavy drinking 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.

Source: Canadian Community Health Survey – Annual Component (2010–2012).

For more data on health inequalities in Canada, visit: <https://infobase.phac-aspc.gc.ca/health-inequalities/>

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