## Smoking Rate
(Indicator Set: Policy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive Definition</th>
<th>Numerator</th>
<th>Number of individuals in the denominator who reported being a current smoker, either daily or occasionally.</th>
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</thead>
</table>
|                        | **Inclusions** | • Individual is in the denominator  
• Individual reported one of the following:  
  – Currently smoking daily  
  – Currently smoking occasionally |
|                        | **Exclusions** | None |
| Denominator            | Number of respondents age 12 and older. |
|                        | **Inclusions** | • Age of individual is at least 12 years |
|                        | **Exclusions** | None |

**Data Source**
Canadian Community Health Survey

**Notes**
- Occasional smokers include former daily smokers who now smoke occasionally.
- This indicator does not take into account the number of cigarettes smoked.

**Interpretation**
- A low rate for this indicator can be interpreted as a positive result.

**Further Analysis**
- This indicator can be modified to measure the rate among individuals age 12 to 19 to examine smoking rates for teenagers.

**Indicator Rationale**
It is well established that tobacco is a leading preventable cause of morbidity and mortality in Canada, causing many diseases, including cancer, heart disease and stroke. In 2010, it was estimated that approximately 16.7% of the Canadian population, or 4.7 million persons, smoked. Approximately half of those smokers are expected to become ill or die from their tobacco use. Smoking accounts for 85% of all new cases of lung cancer in Canada, and 37,000 deaths each year are attributable to smoking. The economic burden of tobacco use in Canada is also great, with an estimated social cost of $17 billion a year and direct health care costs of $4.4 billion.
Smoking rates in Canada have dropped dramatically in the last 50 years; fewer than 20% of Canadians smoke today, compared with approximately 50% in 1965. Despite these gains, however, the decreasing trend in smoking rates appears to have slowed in recent years, and adults age 20 to 24 exhibit the highest rates of smoking. In 2010, 20% of Canadian males and 14% of Canadian females reported being current smokers; 3.7 million Canadians reported daily smoking, with an average consumption of 15 cigarettes a day.

Smoking continues to pose a significant and preventable health risk to Canadians. Reducing smoking continues to be one of the most important public health interventions in Canada; the role of primary health care providers in promoting smoking cessation is critical in reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with this risky health behaviour.

References


For more information on the PHC indicators, data sources and reporting initiatives, visit CIHI’s website at [www.cihi.ca/phc](http://www.cihi.ca/phc) or send us an email at [phc@cihi.ca](mailto:phc@cihi.ca).