

# CTUMS

CANADIAN TOBACCO USE MONITORING SURVEY

## QUITTING SMOKING

### Introduction

The Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey (CTUMS) was developed to provide Health Canada and its partners with timely, reliable, and continual data on tobacco use and related issues. The survey's primary objective is to track changes in smoking status and amount smoked, especially for 15–24-year-olds, who are most at risk for taking up smoking.

These findings are based on interviews conducted by Statistics Canada between February and December 2003. This fact sheet focuses on topics relating to smoking cessation.

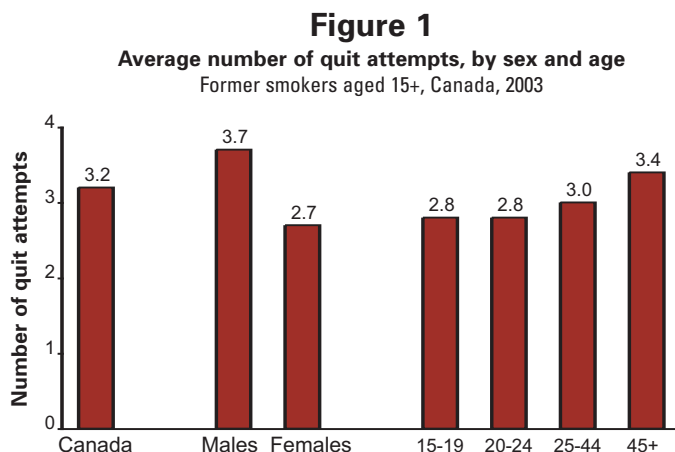
All CTUMS fact sheets and supplementary tables, representing four full years of data collection since February 1999, are available on Health Canada's Tobacco Control Programme website at [www.gosmokefree.ca/ctums](http://www.gosmokefree.ca/ctums).

### Former Smokers

In 2003, an estimated 26% of Canadians (6.8 million persons) aged 15 and over were former smokers as compared with 21% (5.3 million persons) who were current smokers. Comparatively more males (29%) than females (24%) were former smokers.

As of 2003, 56% of ever-smokers (current and former smokers) had stopped smoking. This is called the "quit rate." There was little difference in quit rates between men and women. Twenty-nine percent of ever-smokers aged 20–24 had quit, whereas 71% of those aged 45 and over had quit. The quit rate was highest in British Columbia (63%) and was much the same in all other provinces.

As shown in Figure 1, former smokers reported an average of 3.2 attempts to quit before stopping for good, with males averaging more attempts (3.7) than did females (2.7). About half of the former smokers reported quitting on their first attempt. As well, at the time of quitting, former smokers said that they were smoking 18.1 cigarettes per day (20.4 for males and 15.4 for females). This daily amount was higher than the overall average of 15.9 cigarettes consumed by current daily smokers.



Source: 2003 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey

### Reasons for Quitting

Former smokers were asked an unaided question on why they quit smoking. Multiple responses were accepted. Mentioned by 50% of former smokers, the predominant reason cited by far was "own health." The frequency of this response differed little by either age or sex.

Other reasons for quitting smoking included “just wanted to quit/no reason” (19%) and “cost” (12%). Respondents only rarely mentioned other reasons, such as “concern about family health” and “pressure from family/friends.”

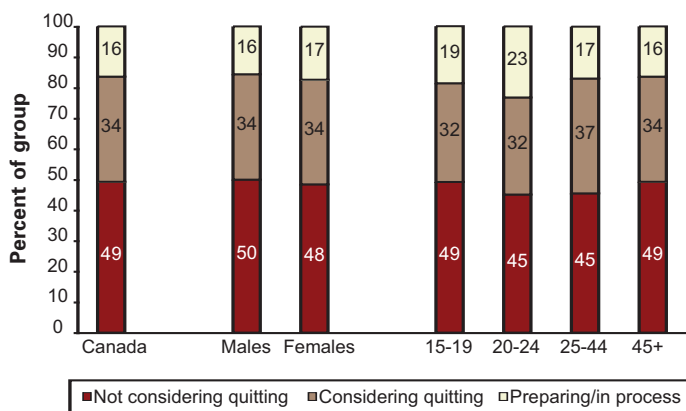
## Methods Used to Quit Smoking

Former smokers who had quit in the previous two years were asked about their use of various methods to reach smoking cessation. The methods most frequently reported were the nicotine patch (32%) and reducing consumption (29%). Other cessation methods, such as using a 1-800 quit phone line and hypnosis/acupuncture, were reported relatively rarely. Among former smokers who did not report using one of the quit methods listed, 80% stated that they just quit on their own without special preparation or help.

## Current Smokers Readiness to Quit Smoking

“Stages of change” is a broadly accepted concept that has three categories (precontemplation, contemplation, and preparation) measuring the readiness-to-quit status of current smokers plus two categories (action and maintenance) measuring the quit status of former smokers. Precise definitions of these categories are available at the website identified at the end of this fact sheet.

**Figure 2**  
Stages of quitting smoking, by sex and age  
Current smokers\* aged 15+, Canada, 2003



Source: 2003 Canadian Tobacco Use Monitoring Survey  
\* Current smokers = daily + non-daily smokers

Almost half (49%) of current smokers were “precontemplators,” that is, they were not considering quitting (Figure 2). Another 34% of current smokers were in the contemplation stage (considering quitting at some

time), and 16% were in the preparation stage (seriously considering quitting in the next 30 days). There was little difference in quit intentions by sex. However, readiness to quit smoking was somewhat higher among younger smokers, those smoking “light” or “mild” cigarettes (including “extra” and “ultra” versions), and smokers residing in the Atlantic and Prairie provinces.

## Visits With Health Professionals

Smokers were asked about visits to health professionals and receiving advice and information about quitting smoking.

Seventy-one percent of current smokers said that they had seen a doctor in the last year. Of these, about half (53%) reported that they were advised to quit or reduce smoking. Among those receiving this advice, 60% said that they were provided with information on quitting. Older smokers were generally more likely to receive this advice and/or information.

Fifty-eight percent of smokers had seen a dentist in the previous year. Of these, 29% reported that the dentist had advised them to quit or reduce smoking and, of these, 24% said that they had been provided with information on quitting. The results were much the same regardless of age or sex.

## Survey Methods

**Objectives:** 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 2003. Statistics Canada conducted computer-assisted interviews by telephone; only direct reports (i.e., not third-party) with selected persons were accepted.

**Survey Design:** To allow provincial comparisons of approximately equal reliability, the overall sample size for the survey was divided equally across all 10 Canadian provinces. Information about household composition and second-hand smoke in the home was collected in 47,982 households. In half of these households, someone aged 15 or older was selected to provide information on smoking habits. This amounted to 21,300 individuals in 2003, 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  $\pm 0.9\%$  each year. The margin of error will increase when estimating the prevalence of tobacco use for subgroups. A few questions were added to the questionnaire in July 2003, and the sample size for these was 10,741. The topics included age at which daily smoking began and use of marijuana.

The overall response rate, which takes into consideration the participation of both households and individuals, was 76% for the 2003 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.

**Microdata:** A microdata set containing the results of the survey is available for purchase from Statistics Canada. The public release of the data was announced on August 9, 2004, in Statistics Canada's *The Daily*.

**Terminology:** A section containing definitions of the main terminology used in this fact sheet can be found at the following website location:  
<[www.gosmokefree.ca/ctums](http://www.gosmokefree.ca/ctums)>.