

# Health Behaviours of Youth in Newfoundland and Labrador

## Objective

To compare health behaviours between Canadian provinces for persons aged 12–17 years and persons aged 18–34 years.

## Practice Points

1. Health behaviours are individual actions people take that can affect their health. Some behaviours, such as eating well and being physically active, can lead to improved health while other behaviours, such as smoking and excessive alcohol intake, can have detrimental health effects.
2. Health behaviours are influenced by social and economic environments – including where individuals live, work, and learn – and by an individual’s means and opportunity to make healthy decisions.
3. The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) collects information related to health status, health system utilization, and health determinants. The CCHS comprises two types of surveys: an annual component on general health; and focused surveys on specific health topics including nutrition that occur on an occasional basis.

## Methods

1. Data on health behaviours was obtained from Statistics Canada for persons aged 12–17 years and those aged 18–34 years. (Data Source: Health Characteristics, annual estimates, Table 13-10-0096-01, Statistics Canada).
2. Health behaviours were compared over time for Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and Canada (CA) and between provinces (2021–2022).

## Results

### Youth Aged 12–17 Years

Table 1. Lifestyle Indicators for those Aged 12–17 Years in NL and CA (%), 2019–2022

Indicator	NL (%)				CA (%)			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Current Smoker, Daily or Occasional	F	F	F	x	2.5	1.8 <sup>E</sup>	1.1 <sup>E</sup>	0.3
Heavy Drinking <sup>1</sup>	F	F	F	x	2.7	2.8	3.4	3.3
Overweight or Obese	37.8 <sup>E</sup>	26.3 <sup>E</sup>	39.7 <sup>E</sup>	37.5 <sup>E</sup>	24.5	23.2	27.2	30.1
Physical Activity (average of 60 mins per day) <sup>2</sup>	–	46.9 <sup>E</sup>	50.3	–	–	42.9	45.2	–
Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (5 times or more per day) <sup>2</sup>	–	F	F	–	–	24.1	22.1	–

<sup>1</sup>Heavy drinking refers 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.

<sup>2</sup>Data not collected in 2019 or 2022.

F: too unreliable to be published.

x: suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*.

<sup>E</sup>Use with Caution. Indicates estimate has a coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3% and has a high sampling variability.

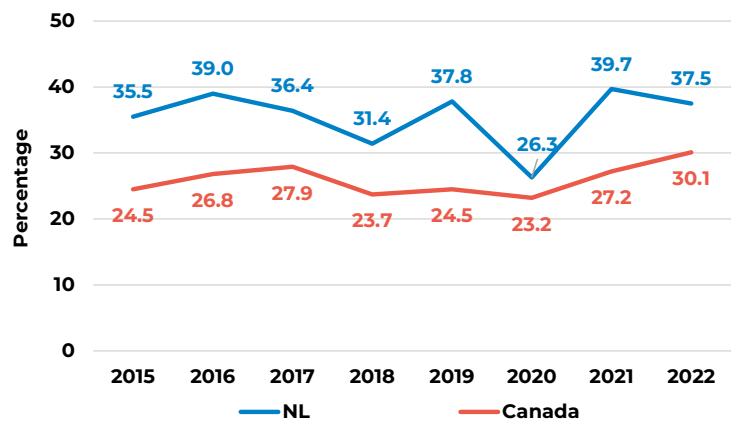
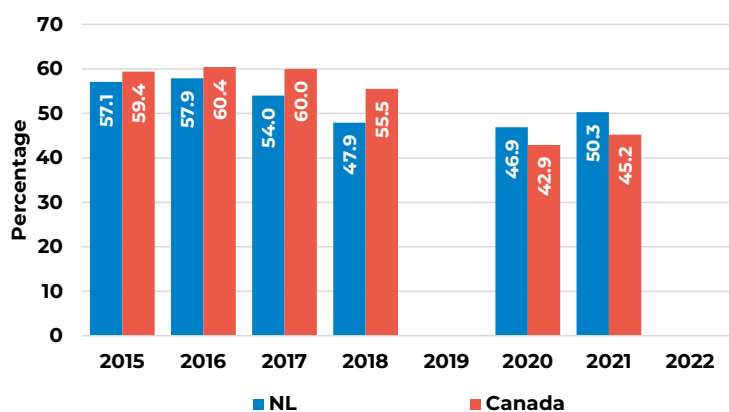


Figure 1. Body Mass Index (BMI) (overweight or obese) for those Aged 12–17 Years in NL and CA (%), 2015–2022



\*Data not collected in 2019 or 2022.

**Figure 2. Physical Activity Rates (avg. 60 mins/day) for those Aged 12–17 Years in NL and CA (%), 2015–2021**

- Smoking rates for those aged 12–17 years have decreased across CA from 2019 to 2022. However, heavy drinking has increased during the same timeframe (no comparable data for NL).

- From 2015 to 2022, BMIs (overweight and obese) were higher in NL compared to CA for those aged 12–17 years. In 2022, rates were 25% higher in NL compared to CA.
- Overall, from 2015 to 2021, rates of physical activity have decreased in NL and across CA for those aged 12–17 years. From 2015 to 2018, rates were higher in CA but in 2020 and 2021 rates were higher in NL. In 2021, the rate of physical activity was 11% higher in NL compared to CA.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption has decreased from 2017 to 2021 across CA. For those aged 12–17 years, the rate decreased by 24% across CA. There are no comparable data for NL, but it should be noted that in 2017 the rate was 45% lower in NL compared to CA.

**Table 2. Lifestyle Indicators for those Aged 12–17 Years by Province (%), 2021–2022**

Province	Current Smoker, Daily or Occasional (%)		Heavy Drinking <sup>1</sup> (%)		Overweight or Obese (%)		Physical Activity (average of 60 mins per day) (%) <sup>2</sup>		Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (5 times or more per day) (%) <sup>2</sup>	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
NL	F	x	F	x	39.7 <sup>E</sup>	37.5 <sup>E</sup>	50.3	-	F	-
PE	F	x	F	x	26.1 <sup>E</sup>	32.1 <sup>E</sup>	55.7	-	21.0 <sup>E</sup>	-
NS	F	x	F	x	27.6 <sup>E</sup>	30.2 <sup>E</sup>	53.5	-	16.6 <sup>E</sup>	-
NB	F	x	F	x	15.0 <sup>E</sup>	37.5	34.0 <sup>E</sup>	-	16.7 <sup>E</sup>	-
QC	F	x	4.6 <sup>E</sup>	4.7	19.6	27.8	46.8	-	31.3	-
ON	0.6 <sup>E</sup>	x	2.3 <sup>E</sup>	2.6	29.7	30.5	38.7	-	21.9	-
MB	F	x	F	4.5	32.8	26.8	48.6	-	11.5 <sup>E</sup>	-
SK	F	x	F	6.2	39.8	28.6	50.6	-	14.3 <sup>E</sup>	-
AB	F	x	2.9 <sup>E</sup>	2.7	33.4	31.5	51.2	-	17.2	-
BC	F	x	3.2 <sup>E</sup>	2.4	20.1	30.7	53.6	-	21.6	-
Canada	1.1 <sup>E</sup>	0.3	3.4	3.3	27.2	30.1	45.2	-	22.1	-

<sup>1</sup>Heavy drinking refers 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.

<sup>2</sup>Data not collected in 2022.

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- Rates of smoking and heavy drinking cannot be compared between all ten provinces for those aged 12–17 years. Data on fruit and vegetable consumption are not available for NL.
- In 2022, NL had the highest rate of overweight and obese children – tied with NB.
- In 2021, NL ranked sixth for rate of physical activity amongst those aged 12–17 years (1 = best and 10 = worst).

### Youth Aged 18–34 Years

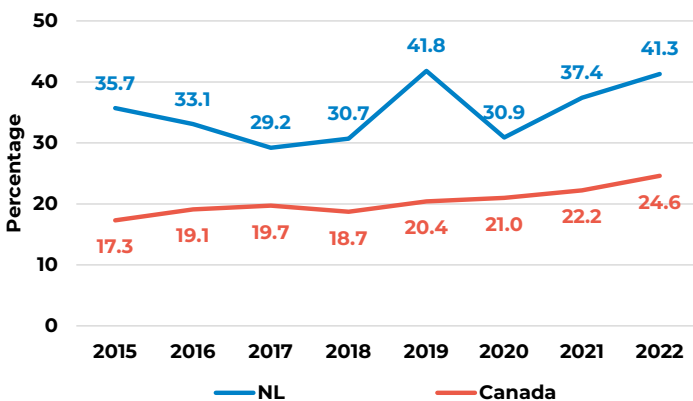
**Table 3. Lifestyle Indicators for those Aged 18–34 Years in NL and CA (%), 2019–2022**

Indicator	NL (%)				CA (%)			
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2019	2020	2021	2022
Current Smoker, Daily or Occasional	21.9 <sup>E</sup>	24.7 <sup>E</sup>	16.0 <sup>E</sup>	17.9	17.2	14.9	11.4	10.7
Heavy Drinking <sup>1</sup>	33.5	27.2 <sup>E</sup>	32.2	36.0	26.9	22.4	20.1	27.2
Overweight (BMI 25 to 29.99)	17.6 <sup>E</sup>	31.8 <sup>E</sup>	29.7	26.5	30.2	30.7	30.8	28.0
Obese (BMI ≥ 30)	41.8	30.9 <sup>E</sup>	37.4	41.3	20.4	21.0	22.2	24.6
Physical Activity (at least 150 mins per week) <sup>2</sup>	–	59.6	55.6	–	–	59.9	59.3	–
Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (5 times or more per day) <sup>2</sup>	–	18.2 <sup>E</sup>	9.5 <sup>E</sup>	–	–	22.4	17.8	–

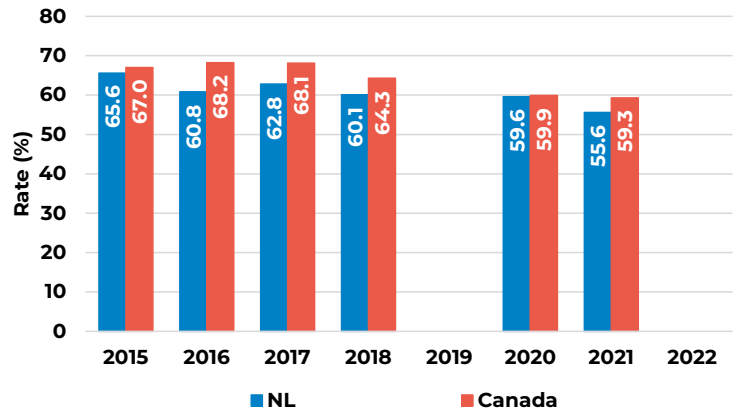
<sup>1</sup>Heavy drinking refers to males who reported having 5 or more drinks or women who reported having 4 or more drinks on one occasion at least once a month in the past year.

<sup>2</sup>Data not collected in 2019 or 2022.

<sup>E</sup>Use with Caution. Indicates estimate has a coefficient of variation between 16.6% and 33.3% and has a high sampling variability.



**Figure 3. BMI ≥ 30 for those Aged 18–34 Years in NL and CA (%), 2015–2022.**



\*Data not collected in 2019 or 2022.

**Figure 4. Physical Activity Rates (at least 150 mins/week) for those Aged 18–34 Years in NL and CA (%), 2015–2021**

- Smoking rates for those aged 18–34 years have decreased from 2019 to 2022 across both NL and CA. However, heavy drinking has increased during the same timeframe.
- From 2015 to 2022, obesity rates (BMI ≥ 30) were substantially higher in NL compared to CA for those aged 18–34 years. In 2022, rates were almost 70% higher in NL compared to CA.
- Overall, from 2015 to 2021, rates of physical activity have decreased in NL and across CA for those aged 18–34 years. In 2021, the rate of physical activity was 6% lower in NL compared to CA.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption has decreased from 2017 to 2021 for those aged 18–34 years in both NL and CA. From 2017 to 2021, the rate decreased by 52% in NL and 34% across CA. In 2021, the rate of fruit and vegetable consumption in NL was 47% lower than the rate in CA.

**Table 4. Lifestyle Indicators (%) for those Aged 18–34 Years by Province, 2021–2022**

Province	Current Smoker, Daily or Occasional (%)		Heavy Drinking <sup>1</sup> (%)		Obese (BMI ≥ 30)		Physical Activity (at least 150 mins per week) (%) <sup>2</sup>		Fruit and Vegetable Consumption (5 times or more per day) (%) <sup>2</sup>	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
NL	16.0 <sup>E</sup>	17.9	32.2	36.0	37.4	41.3	55.6	-	9.5 <sup>E</sup>	-
PE	11.7 <sup>E</sup>	x	29.9	F	32.1	F	56.1	-	18.5 <sup>E</sup>	-
NS	11.8 <sup>E</sup>	15.1	29.9	29.6	29.9	23.1	67.4	-	16.4 <sup>E</sup>	-
NB	13.0 <sup>E</sup>	14.7	24.1	28.5	28.1	33.9	57.3	-	20.3	-
QC	13.2	13.7	19.2	31.7	20.8	23.4	60.4	-	23.7	-
ON	11.3	9.0	19.8	24.2	22.5	24.5	56.5	-	16.6	-
MB	11.8 <sup>E</sup>	5.5	21.5	29.7	25.3	27.8	59.6	-	19.5	-
SK	10.5	16.8	22.6	30.5	26.8	33.1	61.6	-	19.4	-
AB	11.9	10.9	21.1	27.9	21.4	25.5	59.6	-	15.2	-
BC	8.2 <sup>E</sup>	8.9	17.3	25.9	18.8	20.6	64.2	-	14.5	-
Canada	11.4	10.7	20.1	27.2	22.2	24.6	59.3	-	17.8	-

<sup>1</sup>Heavy drinking refers 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.

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- NL had the highest rates (rank 10) of smoking, heavy drinking, and obesity (BMI ≥ 30) among the Canadian provinces for persons aged 18–34 years (1 = best and 10 = worst).
- NL had the lowest rates (rank 10) of physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption among the Canadian provinces for persons aged 18–34 years.

## Conclusions

- In comparison to CA, NL ranks poorly with respect to lifestyle indicators for both those aged 12–17 years and 18–34 years.
- Among the Canadian provinces, NL had the highest rate of overweight and obese children and ranked sixth for physical activity rates for persons aged 12–17 years.
- For those 18–34 years, NL ranked tenth for rates of smoking, heavy drinking, obesity, physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption.