



SUBSTANCE USE IN CANADA DURING COVID-19

The Bottom Line

While the majority of Canadians report consistent levels of alcohol and cannabis consumption since the onset of COVID-19, a concerning number have reported binge drinking or increased consumption. Paying attention to common factors associated with increased use and following low-risk guidelines can be helpful in managing use.

Canadians, Cannabis, and Alcohol

Canada

28% of Canadians 18 years of age and older with children have participated in binge drinking.

25% of Canadians aged 18-34 have increased their alcohol consumption.

21% of Canadians aged 35-54 have increased their alcohol consumption

14% of Canadians aged 18-34 have increased their cannabis consumption.

Prairies

74.6% of Prairie residing Canadians aged 18 and older report their alcohol consumption has stayed the same.

90% of Prairie residing Canadians aged 18 and older report their cannabis consumption has stayed the same.

Factors Associated with Increased Substance Use

Lack of regular schedule
Increased stress
Boredom
Loneliness
Anxiety
Depression
Stockpiling

Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

Following low-risk guidelines supports a healthy lifestyle, promotes healthy body and brain development, and promotes a culture of moderation.

Adult Females should not exceed 10 drinks/week or 2 drinks/day. On special occasions, 3 drinks is the recommended maximum.

Adult Males should not exceed 15 drinks a week with no more than 3 drinks a day. On special occasions, 4 drinks is the recommended maximum.

Youth (15-24) should not exceed 1-2 drinks at a time, and never drink more than 1-2 times/week. Youth should never exceed alcohol limits outlined according to their sex.

Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (Continued)

Type of Alcohol	"One Drink" Guidelines
Beer	341 ml (12 oz.) with a 5% alcohol content
Cooler/Cider	341 ml (12 oz.) with a 5% alcohol content
Wine	142 ml (5 oz.) with a 12% alcohol content
Distilled Alcohol	43 ml (1.5 oz.) with a 40% alcohol content

Possible Responses

- Set limits and stick to them. Consider age, body weight, sex, and health problems when setting drinking guidelines.
- Plan non-drinking days each week to avoid developing a habit. Drink slowly: Do not exceed 2 drinks within 3 hours and have one non-alcoholic beverage in between each alcoholic beverage.
- Eat before and during alcohol intake. Avoid stockpiling alcohol during COVID-19.

Canada's Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines

Prolonged and excessive cannabis use can cause short- and long-term physical health problems. It may also cause withdrawal symptoms and affect mental and social activities.

Cannabis use should be limited to once a week. Cannabis use should not begin prior to the age of 16.

Smoking cannabis into the lungs is the most harmful way to use cannabis.

Pregnant women and those with a history or family history of psychosis should not use cannabis at all.

Possible Responses

- Be aware of those around you, side effects, and limits with cannabis use.
- Reduce health risks by using cannabis in other forms, such as vaping or edibles. When smoking cannabis, avoid inhaling deeply or holding smoke in the lungs.
- Choose products with a lower tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) content, or a higher ratio of cannabidiol (CDB) to THC to support the prevention of dependency and other mental health problems. Synthetic cannabis products are dangerous and should be avoided.
- Set limits with cannabis use, such as only on the weekends as a young adult, to prevent daily use which may be habit-inducing.

For original sources and documents, please visit: www.childtraumaresearch.ca

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