

Awareness of Alcohol's Association With Chronic Disease

Health Indicator Report

Background

- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information about awareness among adults aged 18 and over living in Halton Region of the association between alcohol consumption and chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, and diseases of the liver and stomach other than cancer.
- Long-term risks associated with frequent consumption of alcohol include damage to organs such as the liver, brain, heart, and stomach; cancers including liver, breast, throat, and stomach; high blood pressure; anxiety and depression; malnourishment and vitamin deficiencies, and reduced resistance to infection.¹ The Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction cautions that all alcohol use comes with risks, and these risks exist on a continuum based on how much alcohol one consumes.²
- This health indicator report uses data from the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS).

Key findings

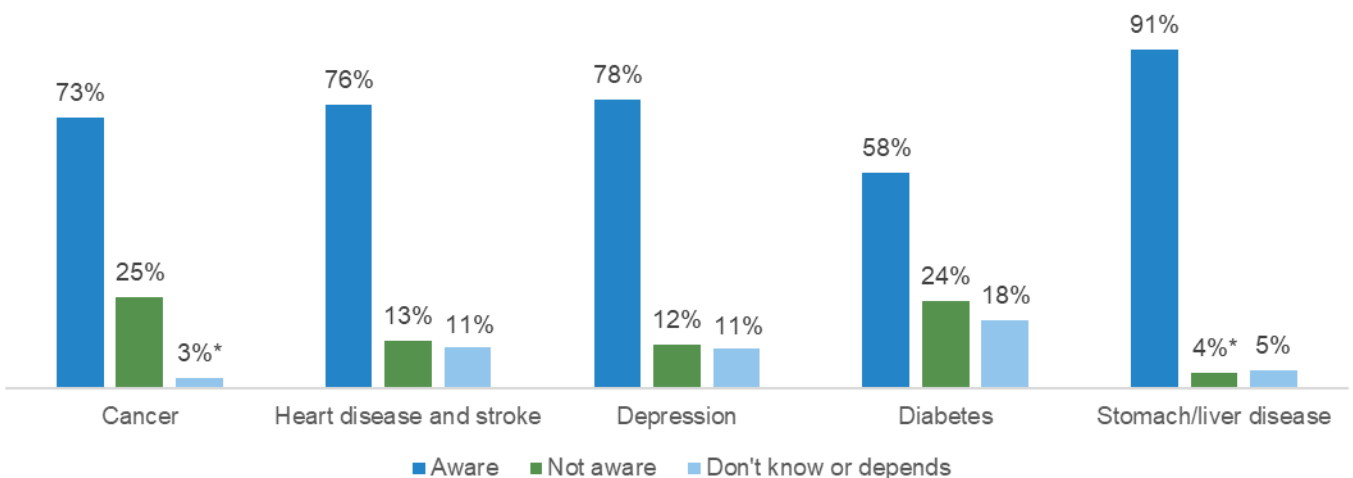
- In 2023, 73% of Halton adults aged 18 and older were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer, 76% were aware that drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, 78% were aware that drinking alcohol causes depression, 58% were aware that drinking alcohol causes diabetes, and 91% were aware that drinking alcohol causes stomach and liver diseases other than cancer.
- Individuals aged 25-44 were more likely than those aged 65 and older to be aware that drinking alcohol causes depression.
- Individuals aged 45-64 were more likely than those aged 65 and older to be aware that drinking alcohol causes diabetes.
- Individuals aged 25-44 and 45-64 were more likely than those aged 65 and older to be aware that drinking alcohol causes diseases of the liver or stomach.
- Individuals with post-secondary education were more likely than those without post-secondary education to be aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer.



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Overview

- In 2023, 73% of Halton adults aged 18 and older were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of **cancer**, another 25% were not aware that it did, and 3%* didn't know or believed that it depends on how much alcohol one drinks.
- In 2023, 76% of Halton adults aged 18 and older were aware that drinking alcohol causes **heart disease and stroke**, another 13% were not aware that it did, and 11% didn't know or believed that it depends on how much alcohol one drinks.
- In 2023, 78% of Halton adults aged 18 and older were aware that drinking alcohol causes **depression**, another 12% were not aware that it did, and 11% didn't know or believed that it depends on how much alcohol one drinks.
- In 2023, 58% of Halton adults aged 18 and older were aware that drinking alcohol causes **diabetes**, another 24% were not aware that it did, and 18% didn't know or believed that it depends on how much alcohol one drinks.
- In 2023, 91% of Halton adults aged 18 and older were aware that drinking alcohol causes **stomach and liver diseases other than cancer**, another 4%* were not aware that it did, and 5% didn't know or believed that it depends on how much alcohol one drinks.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who were aware, were not aware, didn't know or thought it depends that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer and drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, and stomach and liver diseases other than cancer, Halton Region, 2023

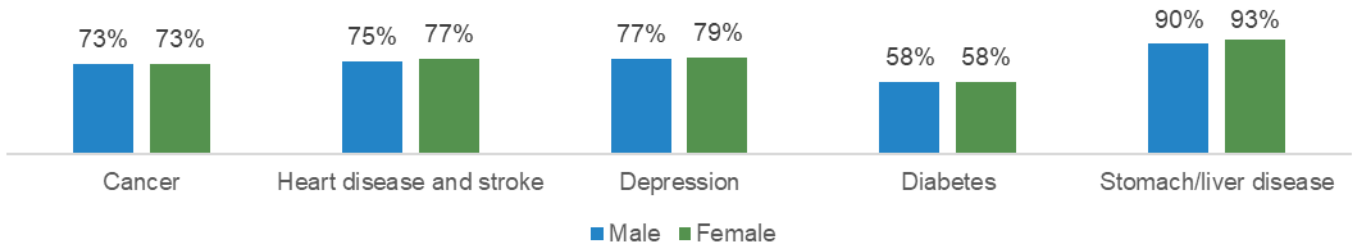
Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.



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Sex

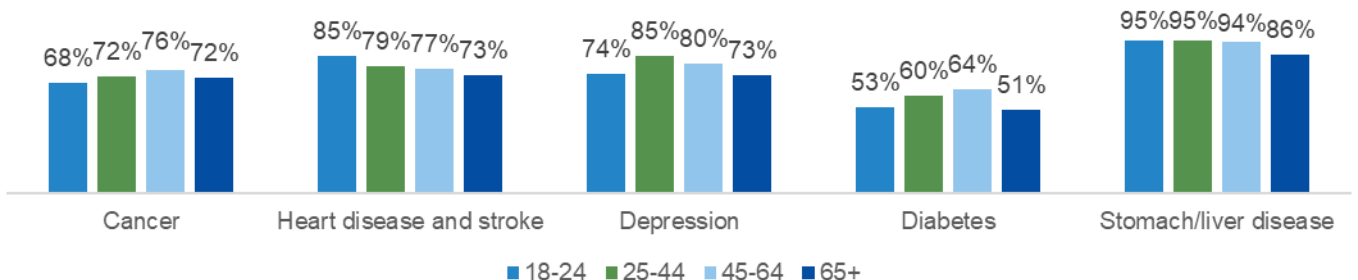
- In 2023, there were no statistically significant differences by sex in the percentage of Halton adults aged 18 and older who were aware that drinking alcohol everyday increases the risk of cancer, or that drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer and drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer, by sex, Halton Region, 2023

Age

- In 2023, there were no statistically significant differences by age in the percentage of Halton adults aged 18 and older who were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer, or that drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke.
- Individuals aged 25-44 were more likely than those aged 65 and older to be aware that drinking alcohol causes depression.
- Individuals aged 45-64 were more likely than those aged 65 and older to be aware that drinking alcohol causes diabetes.
- Individuals aged 25-44 and 45-64 were more likely than those aged 65 and older to be aware that drinking alcohol causes diseases of the liver or stomach other than cancer.



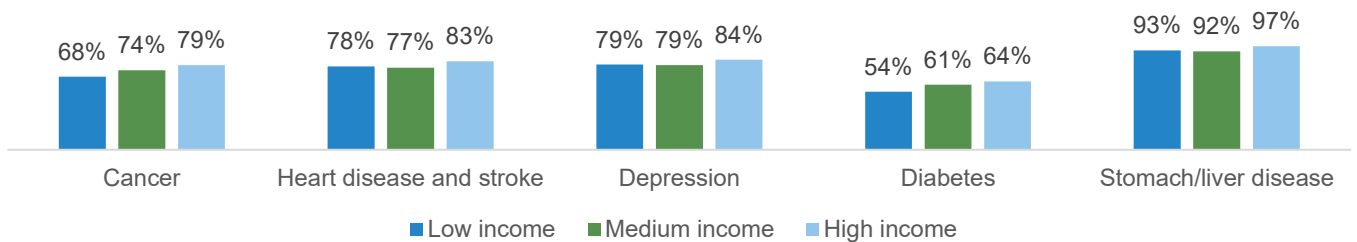
Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer and drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer, by age group, Halton Region, 2023



Awareness of alcohol's association with chronic disease

Income

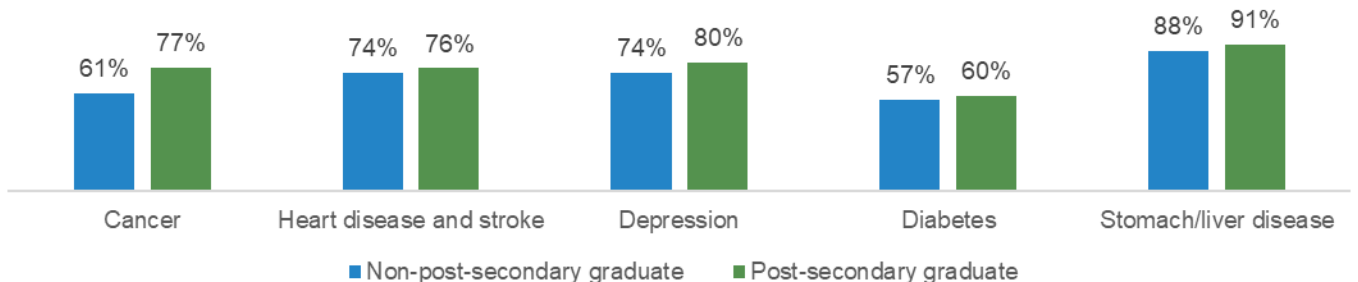
- In 2023, there were no statistically significant differences by income in the percentage of Halton adults aged 18 and older who were aware that drinking alcohol everyday increases the risk of cancer, or that drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer and drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer, by income, Halton Region, 2023

Education

- In 2023, there were no statistically significant differences by education in the percentage of Halton adults aged 18 and older who were aware that drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer.
- Individuals with post-secondary education were more likely than those without post-secondary education to be aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer.



Percentage of adults aged 18 and over who were aware that drinking alcohol every day increases the risk of cancer and drinking alcohol causes heart disease and stroke, depression, diabetes, or stomach and liver diseases other than cancer, by education, Halton Region, 2023

About RRFSS

- The Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System (RRFSS) is an on-going telephone survey (land line and cell phone) used to collect information on attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and awareness of issues related to health in Halton. RRFSS is conducted by the Institute of Social Research and York University.
- Each year, a random sample of approximately 1,200 adults aged 18 and over are surveyed in Halton Region.
- In 2016, RRFSS underwent changes in sampling and analysis methodology. Therefore, it is not recommended to compare data from 2016 onwards to past years of RRFSS data.
- RRFSS also underwent changes in sampling and analysis methodology in 2023 due to an over-representation of residents aged 65 and older in prior survey cycles. In 2022, 33% of respondents completed the survey by cell phone and 67% of respondents completed the survey by landline. In 2023, 60% of respondents completed the survey by cell-phone and 40% completed the survey by landline. While there was an overall younger sample in 2023 compared to 2022, residents aged 65 and older continue to be over-represented and residents 25-44 year olds continue to be under-represented.
- For more information on RRFSS methodology, limitations and statistical terms see the Data Notes and Data Interpretation Guide at www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Public-Health/Health-Statistics.

Data notes

Definitions: Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had ever heard that drinking alcohol everyday may increase their risk of cancer. For all other chronic illnesses, respondents were asked to indicate whether they thought that drinking alcohol can cause these problems. For these other chronic illnesses, the frequency with which alcohol needed to be consumed was not specified.

Data Source: Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System [2023], Halton Region Public Health and Institute for Social Research, York University.

Estimates marked with an asterisk (*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.

References

1. Government of Canada. (2021). Health risks of alcohol. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/substance-use/alcohol/health-risks.html>
2. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. (2023). Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report. https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2023-01/CCSA_Canadas_Guidance_on_Alcohol_and_Health_Final_Report_en.pdf

For more health indicator and health status reports, visit the Halton Health Statistics webpage at halton.ca.