

Ontarians with the most education have the lowest smoking levels

Smoking shows an inverse relationship with level of education. Eighteen percent of adults who completed post-secondary education smoked in Ontario in 2007, compared with 29% who completed secondary education and 39% with less than secondary education. Smoking rates were higher in men than women for all levels of education.

Education is the most frequently used marker of socioeconomic position in studies of smoking and social inequality because it appears to have a larger influence than other socioeconomic indicators on smoking.¹ Tobacco use continues to be a major cause of premature death due to cancer and chronic disease.

Long-term data suggest that smoking rates in Ontario have dropped for all levels of education since the late 1980s. This decline may be partly related to a variety of tobacco control policies introduced in Ontario, and Canada, over that period. These include higher tobacco taxes, restrictions on advertising, health warnings, second-hand smoke restrictions, and public health education campaigns.

Through the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* (enacted May 31, 2006), the Ontario Government has prohibited smoking in enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places and banned public display of tobacco products prior to purchase. As of January 21, 2009, smoking in a motor vehicle with children under age 16 years present is prohibited.

For more information, see

- [Cancer System Quality Index 2009](http://csqi.cancercare.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=40955&pageId=41046) at <http://csqi.cancercare.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=40955&pageId=41046>
- [Smoke-Free Ontario](http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/health/smoke_free/default.asp) at http://www.mhp.gov.on.ca/english/health/smoke_free/default.asp
- [Ontario Tobacco Research Unit](http://www.otru.org/monitoring_reports.html) at http://www.otru.org/monitoring_reports.html
- Talk to your health care provider or call Cancer Information Service (1 888 939-3333)

References

1. Schaap MM, Kunst AE. Monitoring of socio-economic inequalities in smoking: Learning from the experiences of recent scientific studies. *Public Health* 2009; 123(2):103-109.

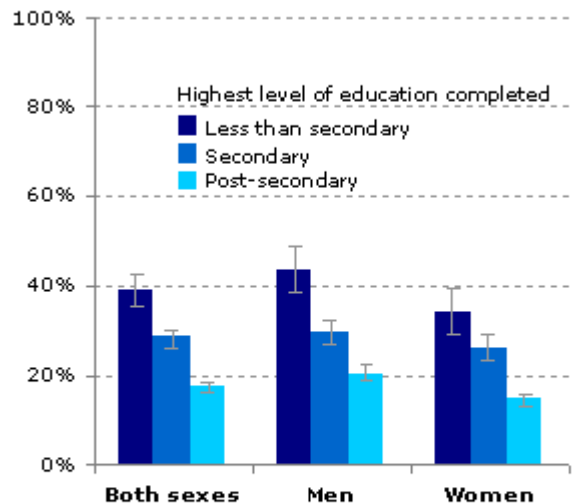
Ontario Cancer Facts are produced by Population Studies and Surveillance.

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Percentage of current smokers by education, aged 20+, Ontario, 2007



Source: Statistics Canada (Canadian Community Health Survey 2007)

Rates are age-standardized to the 2001 Canadian population
Current smoker: daily or occasional smoker who smoked at least 100 cigarettes in lifetime and at least 1 cigarette in the past 30 days