

Heavy Drinking

Why Is This Important?

Heavy drinking means consuming ≥ 5 drinks on one occasion at least once a month. In 2013, this standard was reduced for females to ≥ 4 drinks. Heavy drinking increases short-term health and social risks of drinking alcohol such as seizures, injuries and poisoning, as well as long-term risks of cancer, liver disease, high blood pressure, stroke and dementia. Drinking alcohol during pregnancy can cause low birth weight and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). Heavy drinking is associated with poor [self-rated health](#) and [self-rated mental health](#) higher levels of [stress](#) and also linked to episodic heavy [smoking](#). Heavy drinking is common among young adults but decreases with age.

What Is Being Done?

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse's [low risk drinking guidelines](#)

University of Saskatchewan's [What's your Cap](#) program

To Learn More:

[What is Health Equity?](#) A Primer for the Health Care System

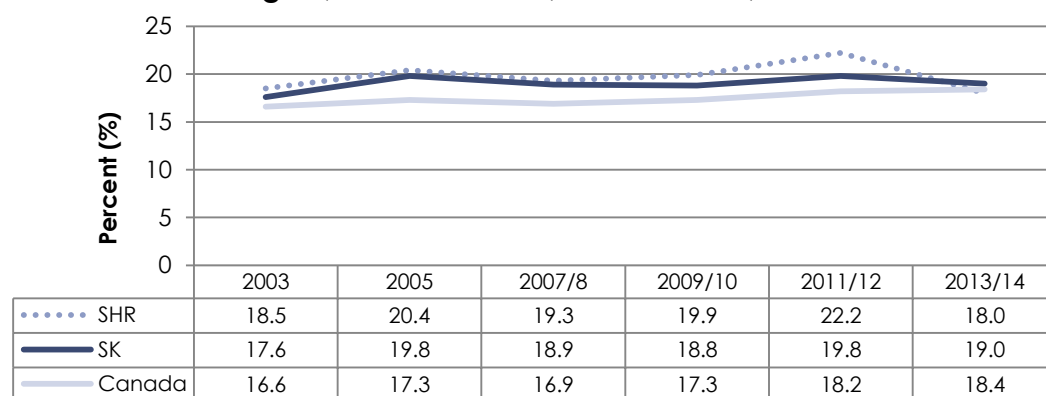
Chief Medical Health Officer's [Call to Action](#)

Highlights

The proportion of heavy drinkers of alcohol in the Region has dropped.

- Almost one in five (18%) Regional residents reported heavy drinking on one occasion at least once per month in 2013/14 (*Figure 1*). This is about the same as the Canadian rate of 18.4% and equates to over 50,000 people in the Region.
- People living in the highest income households were significantly more likely to report heavy drinking compared to those in the lowest income households (27.2% compared to 15.7%; *Figure 2*).
- Heavy drinking varies by [sub-group](#), including sex, age, education level and geography.

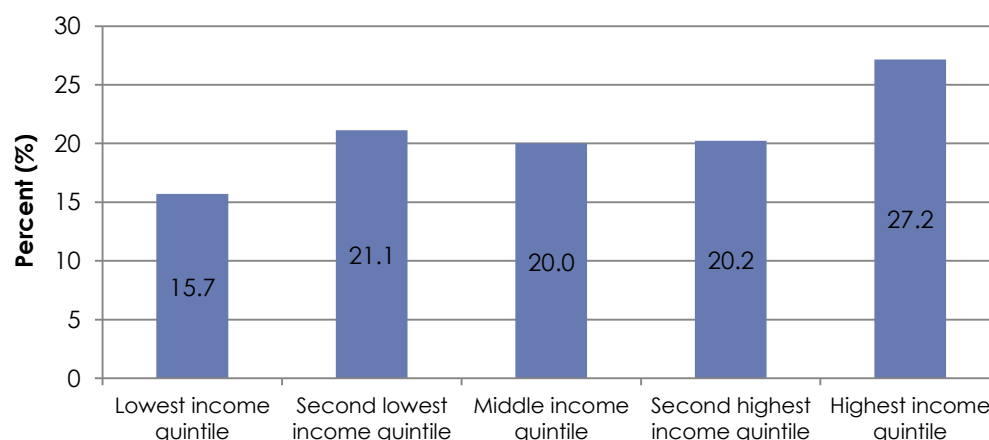
Figure 1: Percent Heavy Drinking on One Occasion at Least Once a Month, Saskatoon Health Region, Saskatchewan, and Canada, 2003 to 2014



Note that in 2013 the definition for heavy drinking in females changed to four or more drinks on one occasion in the past year.

Source: [Statistics Canada](#)

Figure 2: Percent Heavy Drinking on One Occasion at Least Once a Month by Income Quintile, Saskatoon Health Region, 2008 to 2012



This study was conducted, in part, with data provided by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health to the Health Quality Council. The interpretations and conclusions herein do not necessarily represent those of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health or Government of Saskatchewan. The analyses are based on data from Statistics Canada and the opinions expressed do not represent the views of Statistics Canada.

Source: [Statistics Canada](#)