

## FACTUM

### In Vino Veritas? Three Quarters (73%) of Canadians Unlikely to Change Alcohol Consumption Following New Health Canada Guidelines

Still, four in ten (40%) say they've been cutting back their alcohol consumption since the New Year and two in ten (18%) have already participated in a 'Dry Month'

**Toronto, ON, March 12, 2023** – Earlier this year, Health Canada announced that it was readjusting its guidelines for alcohol consumption to a two-drink weekly cap - indicating that no amount of alcohol could now be considered safe. However, a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of Global News has found that three quarters (73%) of Canadians are unlikely to change their alcohol consumption following the new guidelines. Still, behaviours may yet change as results show that four in ten (40%) say they've been cutting back since the New Year and two in ten (18%) have participated in a 'Dry Month'.

#### *Canadians' reactions to Health Canada's guidelines*

Canadians' reactions to Health Canada's new guidelines on alcohol consumption remain mixed. On one hand, a slight majority (53%) feel this new information will enable them to make better decisions regarding their alcohol consumption, which is higher among younger Canadians (18-34: 60%; 35-54: 55% vs. 55+: 45%) and households with kids (59% vs. 50% for households who don't). Moreover, six in ten (59%) say they will probably think more about the associated health risks of drinking (i.e. cancer, heart disease), which is higher among women (62% vs. 55% for men) and households with kids (65% vs 56% for households who don't).

On the other hand, Canadians don't appear set on radically changing their behaviours. Indeed, three quarters (73%) say it's unlikely their alcohol intake will change in light of Health Canada's new guidelines; a sentiment which shows little variation among socio-demographic subgroups. Furthermore, over half (52%) agree that they will need more information before they consider making changes to their alcohol consumption, which is higher among men (56% vs. 48% for women).

In the same vein, Canadians appear to need more convincing as a strong majority (57%) think that the recommended amount of maximum consumption is so low that it lacks credibility - a belief more widely held among men (61% vs. 53%). Further, a slight majority (52%) of Canadians believe that the new Health Canada guidelines are just another fear-mongering tactic; an opinion which is also higher among men by a 10-point difference (57% vs 47% for women).

#### *Rethinking and changing habits: a generational shift?*

For some Canadians, these new guidelines foreshadow little change as a third (36%) claim to consume 0 drinks in a typical week (which is much higher among women 45% vs. 26% for men). Indeed, among the two thirds (64%) who do enjoy at least one drink a week or more, 85% believe their alcohol consumption is perfectly fine, which is highest among Boomers (91% vs. 69%: Gen Z, 82%: Millennials, 86%: Gen X).



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Still, a fifth (20%) of Canadians believe they consume too much alcohol (which is higher among men 24% vs. 15% for women). A similar proportion (23%) say they their level of alcohol consumption has a negative effect on their physical health, which is also the case for those who claim detrimental effects on their mental health (20%). In all three instances, younger Canadians seem to be more affected: they are more likely to say they consume too much alcohol (18-34: 36% vs. 16%: 35-54; 11%: 55+) or signal negative impacts on their physical health (18-34: 35%; 35-54: 25% vs. 12%: 55+) and mental health (18-34: 38% vs. 19%: 35-54; 5%: 55+).

At the same time, younger Canadians appear to be spearheading the most significant shifts in drinking habits. Among Canadians who drink, four in ten (40%) say they have cut back their drinking since the New Year, which jumps to over half among those aged 18-34 (51% vs 34%: 35-54; 37%: 55+). Similarly, almost two in ten (18%) have participated in either 'Dry January' or 'Dry February', which climbs to almost a third among those aged 18-34 (32% vs. 18%: 35-54; 7%: 55+).





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### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between February 15 and 17, 2023, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,350 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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