

# CANADIANS AND FITNESS

***Comparable To A Year Ago, A Majority (79%) of Canadians Say They Are Fit And Meet National Fitness Standards (88%)***

***But Despite Fit Feeling, Four in Ten (42%) Consider Themselves Overweight – up 6% Since 2000 (36%)***

***And, Half (48%) of Canadians Support “Fat” Tax on High-Fat Foods, Such As Chips, Soft Drinks and Snack Cakes***



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**Toronto, ON** – An Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV Poll released today reveals that eight in ten (79%) Canadians describe themselves as being “very fit” (20%) or “somewhat fit” (58%), and the number of self-described fit Canadians has remained the same as a year ago. In June 2000, 81% described themselves as either “very fit” (22%) or “somewhat fit” (59%).<sup>1</sup>

As well, nine in ten (88%) Canadians indicate that their exercise regime complies with Canada’s Physical Activity Guide which suggests “one hour of low-intensity activity daily” (32%), “30 to 60 minutes of moderately-intense activity at least four days a week” (35%) or “20 to 30 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise at least four days a week” (21%). The exercise regime of just over one in ten (12%) does not meet this standard.

Yet, despite feeling fit and exercising, more Canadians consider themselves overweight than just one year ago. Four in ten (42%) Canadians consider themselves overweight, up 6 points

from 36 per cent in June 2000. Today, 38 per cent (versus 33% in 2000) describe themselves as “somewhat overweight” and 4 per cent (versus 3% in 2000) say that they are “very overweight”.

Half of Canadians (48%) also believe that “high-fat foods such as chips, soft drinks and snack cakes should be taxed at a higher rate than nutritious foods”. Furthermore, 39 per cent believe that “there should be financial incentives –that is, tax breaks- for those who maintain a healthy lifestyle as measured, for example, by Body Mass Index (BMI) or blood pressure”.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid/Globe and Mail/CTV poll conducted between June 5<sup>th</sup> and June 7<sup>th</sup>. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1003 Canadian adults. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  per centage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.*

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<sup>1</sup> Tracking data is based on polling done for the May/June 2000 National Angus Reid Report – a syndicated, bimonthly digest of Canadian public opinion trends.

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## ***Comparable A Year Ago, A Majority (79%) of Canadians Say They Are Fit And Meet National Fitness Standards (88%)***

The majority of Canadians (58%) deem themselves to be “somewhat fit”, but much fewer are willing to go the extra step of saying that they are “very fit” (20%). Meanwhile, 22 per cent of Canadians say that they are “not very” (16%) or “not at all fit” (6%). Canadians’ fitness is reflected in the 88 per cent whose exercise regime falls within Canada’s Physical Activity Guide which suggests that “one hour of low-intensity activity daily” (32%), “30 to 60 minutes of moderately-intense activity at least four days a week”, (35%) or “20 to 30 minutes of vigorous-intensity exercise at least four days a week” (21%) is necessary to reap the benefits of exercise.

- Younger Canadians aged 18 to 34, (83%) are more likely than older Canadians, those 35 to 54 (76%) or 55+ (75%), to say that they are “very or somewhat fit”.
- Canadians in upper income households, earning \$60k or more (83%) and middle income households, earning between \$30k to \$59k, (81%) are more likely than those in lower income households, earning less than \$30k, (73%) to consider themselves “very or somewhat fit”.

## ***But Despite Fit Feeling, Four in Ten (42%) Consider Themselves Overweight – up 6% Since 2000 (36%)***

The proportion of Canadians who consider themselves overweight has increased slightly from this time last year. In 2000, 33 per cent of Canadians said that they considered themselves “somewhat overweight”. This compares to 38 per cent today. About the same proportion consider themselves “very overweight” (4% versus 3% in 2000) as a year ago. Half (50%) of Canadians say that they are “about the right weight”. Just 8% describe themselves of “somewhat or very underweight”.

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- Older Canadians, aged 35 and over (50%) are more likely than younger Canadians, aged 18 to 34, (24%) to consider themselves “very or somewhat overweight”.

## ***And, Half (48%) of Canadians Support “Fat” Tax on High-Fat Foods, Such As Chips, Soft Drinks and Snack Cakes***

Consistent with the growing numbers of Canadians who consider themselves overweight despite feeling fit, half (48%) of Canadians agree that “high-fat foods such as chips, soft drinks and snack cakes should be taxed at a higher rate than nutritious foods”, including 28 per cent who “strongly agree”. Of the 52 per cent who disagree, 30 per cent say that they “strongly disagree” with this statement.

Moreover, four in ten (39%) agree that there “should be financial incentives –that is, tax breaks for those who maintain a healthy lifestyle as measured, for example, by Body Mass Index (BMI) or blood pressure”, including 17 per cent who “strongly agree”. Of the 61 per cent who disagree with this statement, 41 per cent “strongly disagree”.

- Quebecers (56%) are more likely than Ontarians (43%) to agree that there should be with a “fat” tax on high-fat foods.
- Quebecers (45%) are also more likely to agree that there should be financial incentives (tax breaks) for those who maintain a healthy lifestyle than Ontarians (34%).
- Agreement with a “fat” tax on high-fat foods increases by age: 18 to 34 (34%), 35 to 54 (52%) and 55 + (58%), as does agreement with financial incentives for Canadians who maintain a healthy lifestyle: 18 to 34 (33%), 35 to 54 (37%) and 55 + (47%).



- Canadians in low and middle income households, earning less than \$60k (51%) are more likely than those living in households earning \$60+ (44%) to agree that high-fat foods should be taxed at a higher rate than nutritious foods.
- Canadians in low income households, earning less than \$30k (44%), are also more likely than those in high income households, earning \$60+ (35%), to agree that there should be financial incentives for Canadians who maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Women (53%) are more likely than men (43%) to agree with a “fat” tax on high-fat foods.

Looking at the younger generation, there is universal agreement among Canadians that nutrition education (96%) and physical fitness courses (96%) should be an integral part of the curriculum for primary and secondary school students.

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***For more information on this news release, please contact:***

***John Wright  
Senior Vice- President  
Public Affairs  
Ipsos-Reid  
(416) 324-2900***

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