

OSTEOPOROSIS IN MEN: WHAT CANADIANS DON'T KNOW COULD HURT THEM

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about this debilitating bone disease***

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of osteoporosis in men over the age of 50***



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Toronto, ONTARIO – The results of a recent survey suggest that Canadians have a lot to learn about osteoporosis in men. While 73% understand that men are affected by the condition, half (48%) of Canadians mistakenly believe that there are evident signs of osteoporosis that they are able to recognize. Furthermore, three quarters (74%) of Canadians vastly underestimate the actual prevalence (1 in 8) of osteoporosis in men over the age of 50.

These are the findings of an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted between May 26th and 30th, 2003 in partnership with the Osteoporosis Society of Canada, Osteoporosis Quebec and Canada's Association for the Fifty-Plus. The poll is based on a randomly selected sample of 1001 adult Canadians. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 3.1 percentage 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 2001 Census data.

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When read a list of statements about osteoporosis and asked to determine if each one is true or false, three quarters (73%) of Canadians correctly identify “men can get osteoporosis” as true and two thirds (67%) know that “osteoporosis can be treated”. However, almost half (48%) falsely believe that “osteoporosis has evident signs, which [they] can recognize”. Close to a third (31%) of respondents falsely believe that keeping a proper diet and a healthy lifestyle can prevent osteoporosis, and 29% know that “[they] cannot die from osteoporosis”. Finally, 16% believe that the likelihood of developing osteoporosis is smaller than that of developing Parkinson’s Disease, and 13% still think that “osteoporosis only affects older women”. To each statement, a noticeably high proportion answered “I don’t know”, ranging from 14% to 28%.

- Regionally, residents of Alberta (81%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (83%) and Ontario (76%) are more likely than residents of Quebec (64%) to say that the statement “men can get osteoporosis” is true.
- Quebecers (28%) are more likely than all other Canadians to believe that osteoporosis only affects older women. They are also more likely (39%) than the people of British Columbia (24%), Alberta (24%), Ontario (30%) and the Atlantic provinces (27%) to believe that proper diet and a healthy lifestyle can prevent the development of osteoporosis.
- Women (76%) are more likely than men (70%) to know that men can be affected by osteoporosis. They (72%) are also more likely than men (62%) to be aware that osteoporosis can be treated.
- Men (23%) are more likely than women (10%) to believe that the likelihood of developing osteoporosis is smaller than that of developing Parkinson’s Disease.
- For every statement, men are more likely than women to answer, “I don’t know”.



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The frequency with which men over the age of 50 are affected by osteoporosis is underestimated by 74% of Canadians. A sizeable proportion of people answered “I don’t know” (15%), but only 7% of the sample polled selected the correct answer (1 in 8) from a range of options that were read to them. Meanwhile, 4% overestimate the prevalence of osteoporosis in men over 50.

- Residents of British Columbia (11%) are more likely than residents of Ontario (5%) to estimate accurately the prevalence of osteoporosis in men over 50.
- Men (9%) are more likely than women (5%) to know that the chances that a man over the age of 50 will be affected by osteoporosis are about 1 in 8.

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