

CANADIANS TALK ABOUT EYES, EYESIGHT AND EYE HEALTH



Ipsos Reid

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Canadians Talk About Eyes, Eyesight And Eye Health

Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos Reid survey conducted on behalf of the Canadian Association of Optometrists, explored Canadians knowledge and attitudes toward eyes, eye health, and their behaviour as it pertains to their general health and contact with optometrists. The results provide some fascinating insights into how Canadians are thinking and behaving when it comes to their eyes and eye health and in particular the discrepancies between their beliefs and their propensity to take action.

Key findings from the study:

- When Canadians look at someone or meet them for the first time, the person's smile (39%) or eyes (36%) are what they notice most, by quite a wide margin, and much before other features like their hair (11%), their voice (6%), their walk (5%) or their hands (3%).
- Three out of four Canadian adults (76%) say they wear prescription eyeglasses. There are more women (79%) than men (73%) who have them.
- Canadians tend to think of people who wear eyeglasses as smart (32%), serious (26%) and important (11%). One in ten would go as far as to say a person with glasses looks sexy (13%) and fun (7%). Only 1% would characterize them as unattractive or nerdy, 8% bookish.
- Seven in ten Canadians (70%) say their eyesight is so precious to them that absolutely nothing would be worth giving it up for, not even winning the lottery, living a full healthy life to the age of 100, being Prime Minister of Canada, or enjoying great sex for the rest of their lives.
- Most Canadians believe that not being able to see their families would be the one thing they would miss most if they could no longer see.
- The ability to see is so important to most (55%) Canadian adults that they would be willing to give up some other physical ability to regain their sight if they became blind.

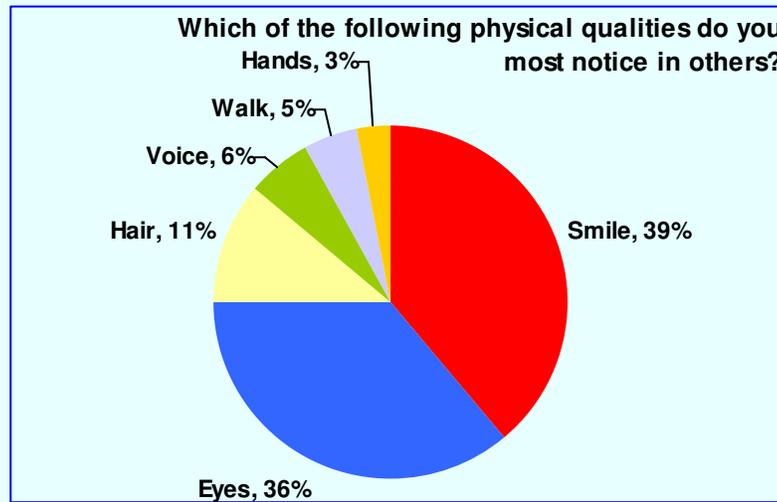


- A majority believe that yearly visits to a family doctor, and annual or semi-annual check-ups by a dentist are important to ensuring their general health. Only 38%, however, are of the opinion that they should be visiting an optometrist that frequently.
- When it comes to actual plans to visit an optometrist in the forthcoming year, 38% of Canadians report being 'very likely' to take such action --another 34% claim to be "quite likely" to do so.

These are the findings of an online survey conducted by Ipsos Reid for The Canadian Association of Optometrist among 1121 Canadians. The interviewing was completed, online, between August 17 and August 21, 2006. These data were weighted to ensure the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what would have been, had this entire population been polled.



Smiles And Eyes Are What Canadians Notice Most About People...



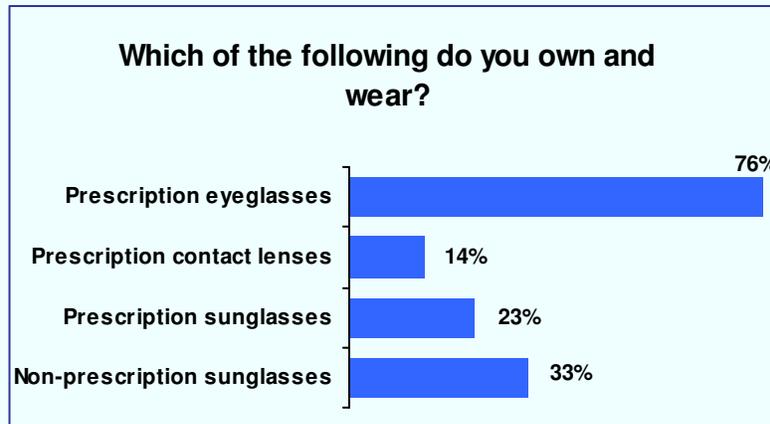
There are interesting demographic differences in terms of how eyes are factored into people’s reactions to the people they encounter ...

- Men are more likely than women to notice someone’s eyes most (39% vs. 33%) and are in fact just as likely to notice eyes as they are someone’s smile. Women, on the other hand, are more naturally attracted to smiles.
- The older generation (age 55+) is twice as likely to pay special attention to smiles first (50%) than it is to eyes (25%) while 18-34 year olds are actually more attracted to eyes (43%) than to smiles (31%).

| Physical qualities notice most: | Men % | Women % | 18-34 % | 35-54 % | 55+ % |
|---------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| - Smile | 38 | 41 | 31 | 37 | 50 |
| - Eyes | 39 | 33 | 43 | 40 | 25 |
| - Hair | 9 | 14 | 14 | 12 | 8 |
| - Voice | 5 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 8 |
| - Walk | 7 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| - Hands | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |

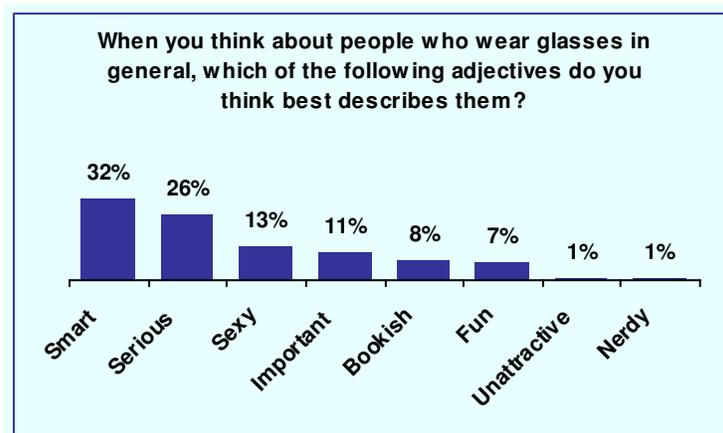


Want To Look Smart? Wear Glasses – 76% Already Do...!



| What they own and wear: | Men % | Women % | 18-34 % | 35-54 % | 55+ % |
|-------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| - Prescription eyeglasses | 73 | 79 | 61 | 74 | 92 |
| - Prescription contact lenses | 10 | 18 | 28 | 12 | 4 |
| - Prescription sunglasses | 22 | 23 | 15 | 19 | 34 |
| - Non-prescription sunglasses | 31 | 36 | 40 | 33 | 28 |

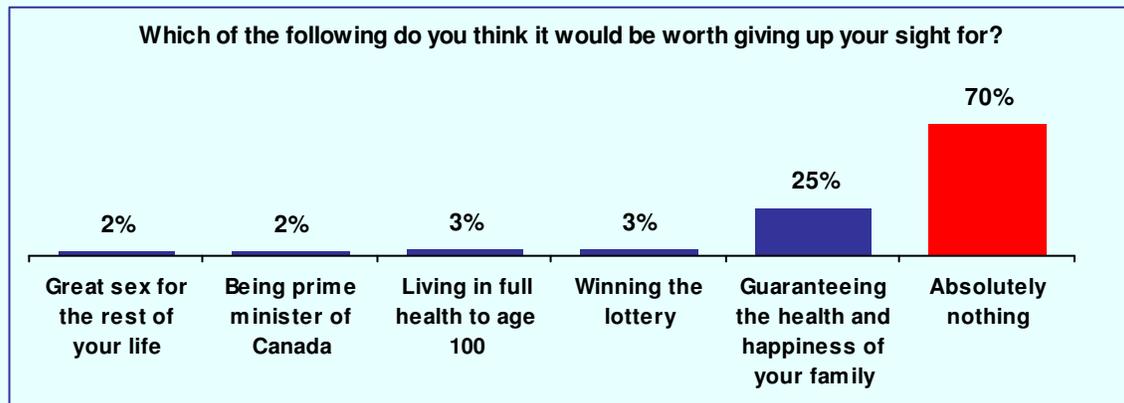
Canadians tend to think of people who wear eyeglasses as smart (32%), serious (26%) and important (11%). One in ten would go as far as to say a person with glasses looks sexy (13%) and fun (7%). Only 1% would characterize them as unattractive or nerdy, 8% bookish.



- Men are twice as likely as women to describe glasses wearers as sexy (18% vs. 9%).
- Women are more apt than men to say people look smart in glasses (35% vs. 28%).
- Younger Canadians (18-34) are the most likely to say wearers of glasses look sexy (20% vs. only 4% of 55+ Canadians), but the older generation (55+) tends more to say that people with eyeglasses look smart and important (14% vs. 9%).

Seven In Ten Canadians Believe There Is Absolutely Nothing That Would Be Worth Giving Up Their Sight For...

Seven in ten Canadians (70%) say their eyesight is so precious to them that absolutely nothing would be worth giving it up for, not even winning the lottery, living a full healthy life to the age of 100, being Prime Minister of Canada, or enjoying great sex for the rest of their lives.



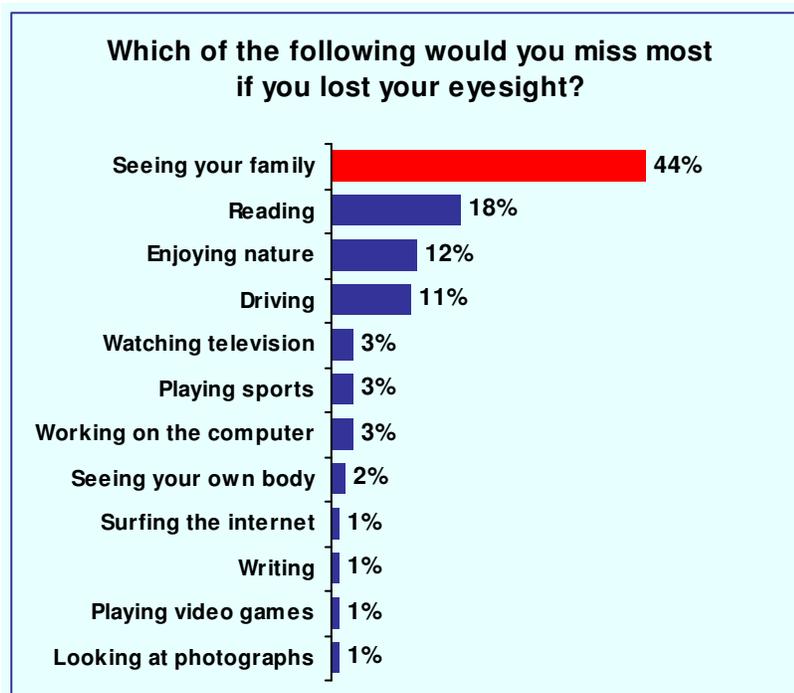
One-third (32%) of adults with children still living at home care so much about the general health and well-being of their family that they would give up their own eyesight to guarantee it. Only 22% of non-parents feel the same way.

Eighty-one percent of those in Québec claim nothing would be worth giving up their eyesight for - vs. the national average of 70% - not even the guaranteed health of their family which only 15% say they would give up their eyesight for versus the national average of 25%.

What Canadians Would Miss Most If They Lost Their Eyesight Is The Ability To See Those Dearest To Them

Canadians believe that not being able to see their families would be the one thing they would miss most if they could no longer see.

- Men are more likely than women to miss several other vision-dependent activities, most notably the ability to drive and to use electronics like computers and video games. They would also miss playing sports more than women, and simply ‘enjoying nature’.



- Reading is also something many Canadians would miss if they lost their eyesight (much more so than the ability to write), and this is particularly true of the older (55+) generation of Canadians, 25% of whom cite reading in this context vs. only 16% of 35-54 year olds and 12% of 18-34 year olds.

Over Half Of Canadians Would Give Up Another Physical Ability To Get Their Eyesight Back If They Lost It...

The privilege of being able to see is so important to some 55% of Canadian adults that they would be willing to give up some other physical ability to regain their sight if they became blind.

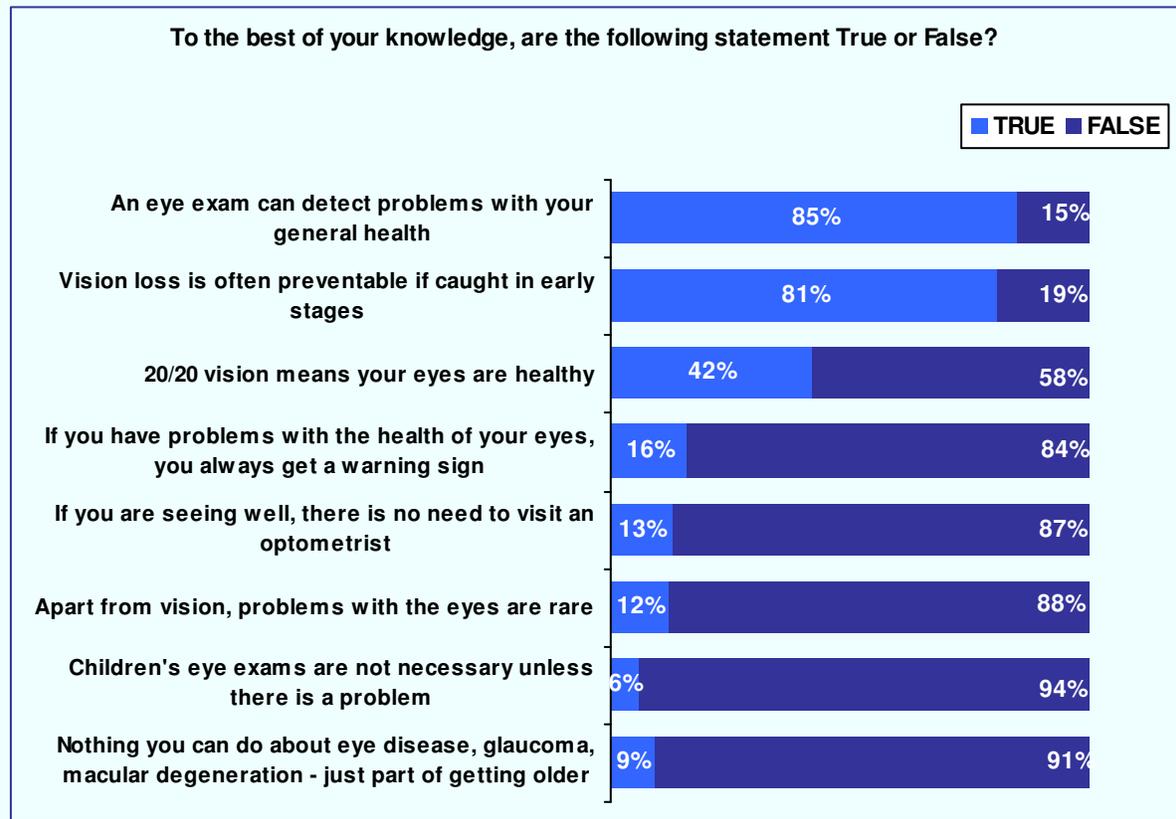
Almost one quarter (24%) would give up their natural teeth while one fifth (21%) would trade 10 years of their life. Fifteen percent (15%) would choose their ability to see over their sense of taste, and 7% would actually be willing to lose an arm or a leg to get their sight back.



- Those with children still at home are more likely than others to want to give up another physical ability to regain their sight – only 39% would want to live with their blindness vs. 47% of those without children at home. This is not surprising since 56% of parents say what they would miss most without their sight is being able to see their family (vs. only 40% of people without children at home).
- 47% of Québec residents would give up another physical ability to regain their sight if they became totally blind vs. 55% nationally and a high of 63% in the Atlantic Region.
- Younger Canadians are the most likely to want to get their sight back and are the most willing to trade 10 years of their lives for that privilege. The visual side of their life is so important to these young people that only 32% would not want to take action (vs. 47% of 35-54 year olds, and 54% of those 55+).

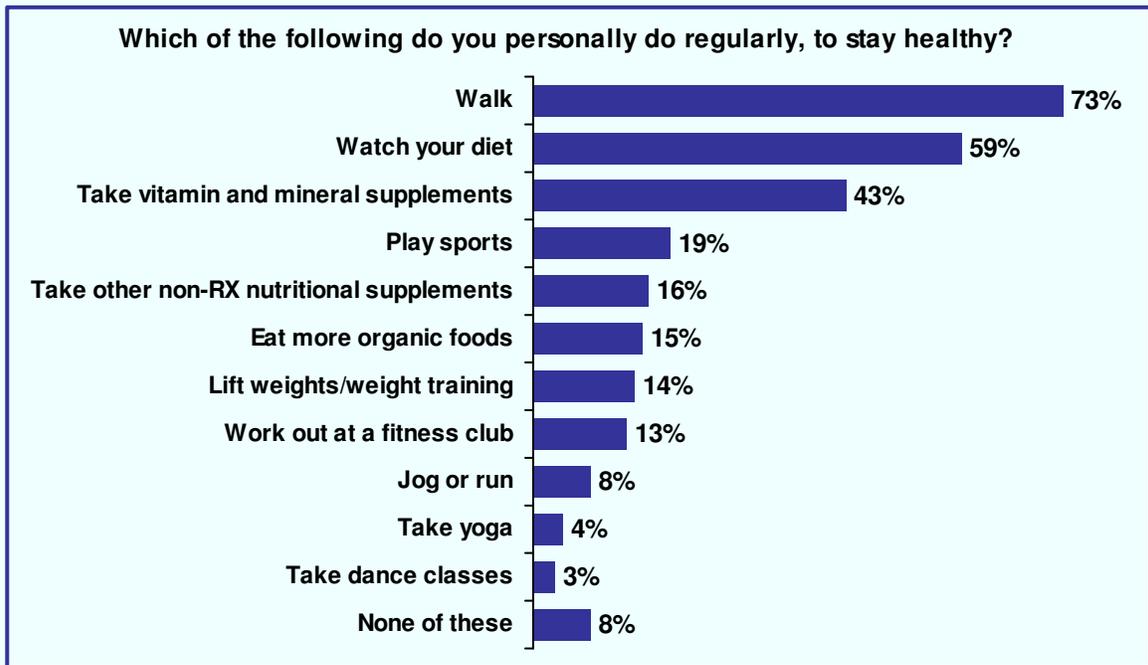
Canadians Know Eye Problems Aren't Always Evident But Remain Ambivalent About The Reassurance Provided By 20/20 Vision...

A majority of Canadians (84%) clearly know that there are not always warning signs of problems with the eyes, and that seeing well doesn't mean you don't need to visit an optometrist (87%). They also know an eye exam can detect problems with their general health (85%), that vision loss is preventable if caught early (81%), that there are not always warning signs of a problem (84%), that even if you are seeing well, there is still a need to see an optometrist and that eye disease isn't just about getting older (87%).



Canadians Do Many Things To Stay Healthy...

Canadians are doing many different things to stay healthy. Mostly they're walking (73%), playing sports (19%), lifting weights and weight training (14%), working out at fitness clubs (13%), jogging or running (8%). They're also paying attention to their diet (59%), taking vitamins and supplements (43%), other non-prescription nutritional supplements (16%) and eating more organic foods (15%).



... But Eye Exams Are Not As Embedded In Those Routines As Visits To Family Doctors And Dentists

A majority also believe that yearly visits to a family doctor, and annual or semi-annual check-ups by a dentist are important to ensuring their general health. Only 38%, however, are of the opinion that they should be visiting an optometrist that frequently.

Thinking about your general health, how often should you visit the following to ensure that you have no concerns?

| | Twice a year | Once a year | Once every 2 years | Only when there is a problem |
|---------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Dentist | 51% | 28% | 6% | 15% |
| Family Doctor | 36% | 39% | 6% | 20% |
| Optometrist | 4% | 34% | 45% | 17% |
| Podiatrist | 3% | 6% | 5% | 86% |
| Dermatologist | 1% | 6% | 6% | 86% |



When it comes to actual plans to visit an optometrist in the forthcoming year, 38% of Canadians report being ‘very likely’ to take such action --another 34% claim to be “quite likely” to do so. Over one quarter (28%) admit they are unlikely to seek an eye exam in the near future.

| “Very likely” in the next year to: | Men % | Women % | 18-34 % | 35-54 % | 55+ % |
|--|-------|---------|---------|---------|-------|
| - Get eyes examined by an eye doctor | 32 | 45 | 26 | 37 | 53 |
| - Have a professional massage | 13 | 22 | 18 | 19 | 15 |
| - Have your hair coloured | 4 | 53 | 26 | 34 | 26 |
| - Have a manicure or pedicure | 3 | 26 | 14 | 14 | 17 |
| - Have a fitness test | 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 11 |
| - Seek naturopathic/alternative medicine | 3 | 9 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| - Have teeth professionally whitened | 4 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| - Visit a tanning salon | 2 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| - Have cosmetic surgery | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - |
| Optometrists should be visited: | | | | | |
| - 1-2 times a year | 31 | 44 | 31 | 35 | 46 |
| - Every 2 years | 47 | 43 | 46 | 46 | 43 |
| - Only when there’s a problem | 21 | 13 | 22 | 19 | 11 |

- Only 31% of parents with kids at home say they are ‘very likely’ to have an eye exam in the next year, vs. 42% of those without children.
- Canadians in higher socio-economic segments of society are also more likely to believe in the need for yearly eye check-ups, a fact linked in all likelihood to the greater physical need for vision correction among older Canadians.
- Regionally, the most convinced of the need for yearly eye examinations are residents of Alberta (47%), Québec (42%) and Ontario (39%). The pattern is relatively similar when it comes to actually getting out to an optometrist for an eye exam in the near future.



| An optometrist should be visited: | BC % | AB % | SK/MB % | Ontario % | Québec % | Atlantic* |
|--|---------|---------|------------|--------------|-------------|-----------|
| - 1-2 times a year | 22 | 47 | 35 | 39 | 42 | 37 |
| - Every 2 years | 55 | 37 | 51 | 45 | 40 | 46 |
| - Only when there's a problem | 23 | 16 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 17 |
| Likelihood of getting eye exam in next year: | | | | | | |
| - Very likely | 31 | 39 | 34 | 42 | 37 | 42 |
| - Quite likely | 36 | 40 | 43 | 34 | 32 | 22 |
| - Not/not at all likely | 34 | 21 | 23 | 23 | 31 | 37 |

* Note: proportionately sample base in the Atlantic exaggerates differences – only red differences are significant

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