

# Nine in Ten Ontarians (90%) Familiar with Smoke-Free Ontario Legislation, Most Agree With Recommendations for Further Action

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## **Nine in Ten Ontarians (90%) Familiar with Smoke-Free Ontario Legislation, Most Agree With Recommendations for Further Action**

**Toronto, ON** - Nine in ten (90%) Ontarians claim to be 'familiar' (29% very/45% somewhat/16% a little) with the provincial government's 'Smoke-Free Ontario legislation which was enacted in May, 2006, to protect non-smokers from exposure to second-hand smoke and to prevent young people from starting to smoke', according to a recent Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Johnson and Johnson. Just one in ten (10%) say they're not at all familiar with the legislation.

Through the Smoke-Free Ontario initiative, the Ontario government has put in place some of the strictest tobacco controls in North America. Rates of smoking have decreased since the initiative began 5 years ago, fewer young people are taking up smoking and Ontario has one of the lowest smoking rates of any province in Canada. However, over 16 per cent or 2.1 million Ontarians continue to smoke on a regular basis. Knowing this, most (93%) 'agree' (58% strongly/34% somewhat) that 'the Ontario government should continue to support Smoke-Free Ontario and other tobacco control initiatives' - including 81% of smokers - while just 7% 'disagree' (2% strongly/5% somewhat), overall.

Ontarians appear to appreciate many benefits from the legislation. Most (87%) 'agree' (67% strongly/20% somewhat) that the legislation has 'increased their enjoyment of dining out at a restaurant or visiting a bar', while three quarters (74%) 'agree' (42% strongly/32% somewhat) that it 'encouraged them to visit restaurants and bars more often or stay longer'. Nine in ten

(90%) also 'agree' (55% strongly/33% somewhat) that it has 'made them more aware of smoking in public places'.

Most (86%) 'agree' (50% strongly/36% somewhat) that 'the Ontario government has a duty to ensure young people are not exposed to tobacco products and second-hand smoke'. Furthermore, eight in ten (81%) 'agree' (38% strongly/43% somewhat) that 'the government should continue to fund tobacco control research studies to monitor tobacco use in Ontario and find ways to reduce it'. In fact, seven in ten (70%) 'agree' (41% strongly/29% somewhat) with the premise that 'limiting the number of places cigarettes can be purchased will help keep young people from starting or continuing to smoke'.

Ontarians were asked their attitudes about the role of Government when it comes to regulating smoking, and this is what they thought:

- 88% 'agree' (41% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'government measures to curb smoking have made our community a better place to live'.
- 80% 'agree' (36% strongly/44% somewhat) that 'further government measures to curb smoking are necessary to protect public health'.
- 77% 'agree' (31% strongly/46% somewhat) that 'government should do more to help people quit smoking'.
- 76% 'agree' (25% strongly/51% somewhat) that 'government measures can help people stop smoking'.
- 74% 'agree' (21% strongly/53% somewhat) that 'government measures are helpful in stopping teens from taking up smoking'.

- 49% 'agree' (9% strongly/40% somewhat) that 'government measures will do little or nothing to change people's social behaviour and second-hand smoke'.
- 30% 'agree' (7% strongly/23% somewhat) that 'government measures to curb smoking have unfairly damaged small businesses'.
- 28% 'agree' (8% strongly/20% somewhat) that 'there's too much regularly of tobacco use already'.

In the fall of 2010, a group of health experts presented a report to the Ministry of Health Promotion on tobacco use and control in Ontario. The report contained a number of recommendations to curb tobacco use in Ontario. Respondents were asked the extent to which they agree or disagree with the following recommendations:

- Nine in ten (89%) 'agree' (71% strongly/18% somewhat) with a recommendation to 'prohibit smoking in areas where children are playing, such as parks, playgrounds and athletic venues'.
- A similar proportion (88%) 'agrees' (44% strongly/44% somewhat) with a recommendation to 'invest a proportion of provincial cigarette taxes into comprehensive tobacco control efforts'.
- Eight in ten (82%) 'agree' (62% strongly/20% somewhat) with a recommendation to 'prohibit smoking on restaurant patios and entry ways'.
- Three quarters (75%) 'agree' (50% strongly/25% somewhat) with a recommendation to 'increase taxes paid on cigarettes and tobacco products in Ontario'.



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*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between May 9 and 14, 2011, on behalf of Johnson and Johnson. For this survey, a sample of 1,081 Ontarians from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and political composition to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/- 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Ontario been polled. 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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