

Results From the 2024 Community Alcohol Survey

The 2024 Community Alcohol Survey asked residents of Wellington, Dufferin, and Guelph aged 16 and older about their knowledge, behaviours and attitudes when it comes to alcohol.

A total of 2565 responses were included in analysis.

Behaviours

Most respondents reported drinking at low-risk. However, many reported drinking at levels that increased their risk of health harms.

In the past year, **4 out of 5** respondents reported drinking.



Most respondents reported drinking two or fewer drinks on a weekly basis.

27% drink at a no-risk level (0 drinks)

37% drink at a low-risk level (1-2 drinks)

16% drink at a moderate-risk level (3-6 drinks)

13% drink at a high-risk level (7+ drinks)

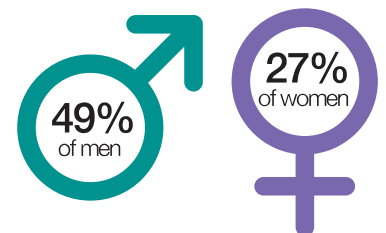
7% *did not respond/prefer not to answer*



*Risk levels for alcohol consumption were calculated using weekly averages and Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health.¹

Men and young adults are drinking at higher risk.

Nearly **1 in 2 men** reported drinking at a moderate-risk or high-risk level compared to **1 in 4 women**.



People **under the age of 30 (47%)** reported drinking at a moderate-risk or high-risk level more frequently than people **30 or older (29%)**.

Binge Drinking: is a high risk behaviour defined as consuming five or more standard drinks during a single occasion for men and four or more for women.

18%

of all respondents reported binge drinking at least once a month

- **32%** of men
- **36%** of under 30
- **16%** of women
- **16%** of 30+



Drinking and driving

Few respondents (4%) reported driving within an hour of having two drinks, however **1 in 5** drove after consuming any amount of alcohol.

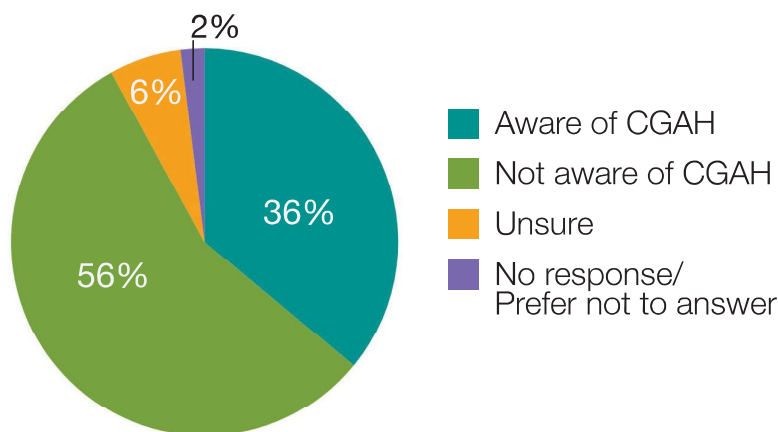
Why are people drinking? (Top 3 reasons)

- To relieve stress or relax
- For a special occasion or event
- To have fun /party

Knowledge

Respondents want to be informed about alcohol but awareness of Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health is low.

Nearly all (86%) of respondents reported it is important to be informed about the harms and risks related to alcohol. **Only 36%** of respondents reported knowledge of Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health¹.



There are several knowledge gaps related to alcohol and health. Many respondents were unaware that:



Low-risk drinking is defined as consuming 1-2 drinks per week.

39% of respondents answered incorrectly or were unsure when asked what low risk drinking is.



Alcohol can cause at least seven types of cancer.^(1,3)

14% of respondents answered incorrectly or were unsure if alcohol could increase their risk of cancer.



No amount of alcohol is beneficial to your heart health.^(1,2,3)

42% of respondents incorrectly thought that alcohol can be beneficial to cardiovascular and heart health, or were unsure.



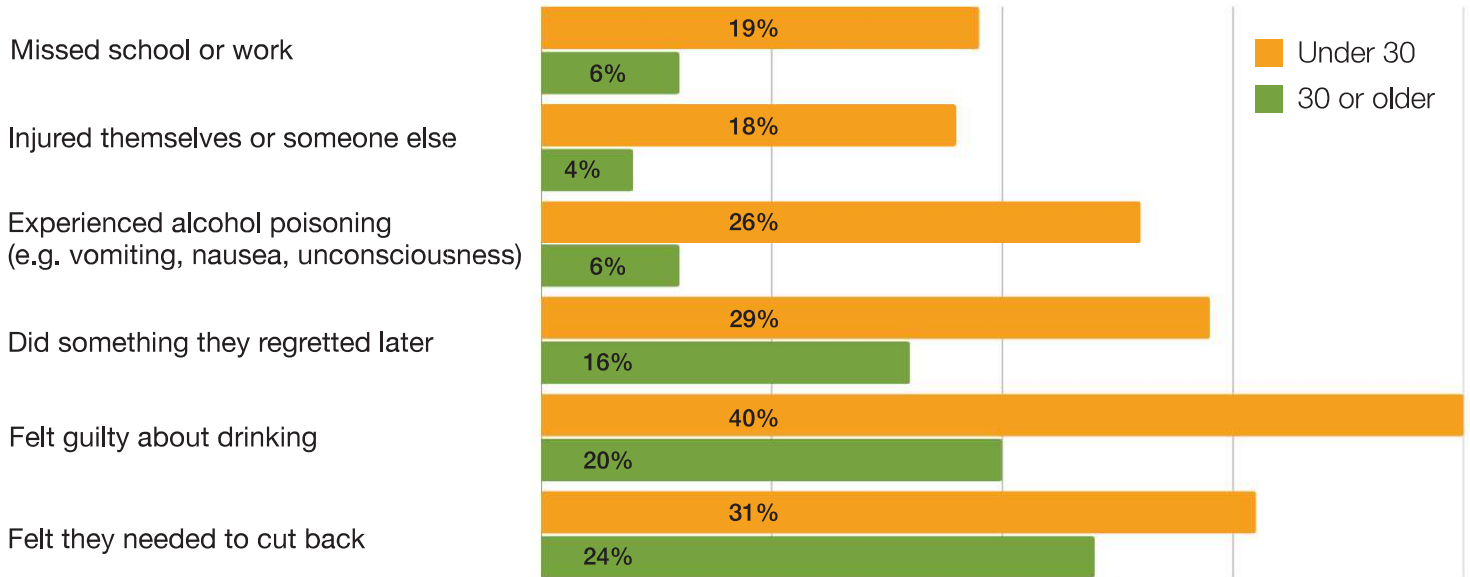
There is no known safe amount of alcohol that can be consumed during pregnancy.^(1,3)

14% of survey respondents (29% of people under the age of 30) answered incorrectly or were unsure if there is a known safe amount of alcohol that someone can have while pregnant.

Did you know: Even low amounts of alcohol can increase the risk of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.

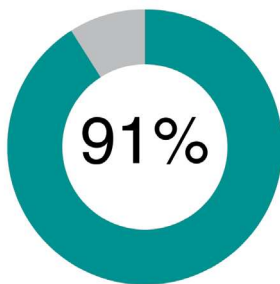
Alcohol Outcomes

Among respondents who drink, some reported negative personal experiences with alcohol in the past 12 months. Respondents under 30 experienced more negative outcomes compared to those 30 or older.

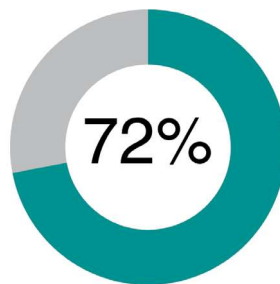


Alcohol Attitudes

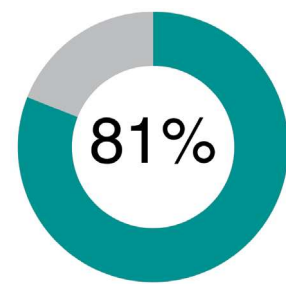
Respondents are concerned about alcohol in the community.



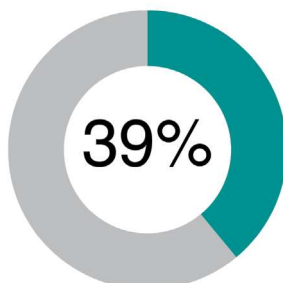
are concerned about drinking and driving in their community.



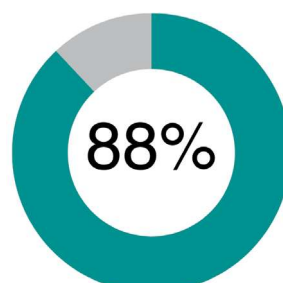
are concerned about the sale of alcohol to underage groups.



are concerned about alcohol related violence in their community.



are concerned about their personal risk of developing cancer.



agreed that drinking alcohol is socially acceptable.

Alcohol Access

Alcohol is easily accessible

More than half of respondents live within 1 km of an alcohol retailer, or a 15-20 minute walk*



Did you know: Increased density of alcohol retailers has been correlated to a higher number of emergency department visits in Ontario.⁴

Where do people buy alcohol?

- 67% at the LCBO
- 40% at a restaurant or bar
- 38% at a grocery store
- 27% at a beer store
- 25% at a brewery or winery

*This survey was conducted prior to the expansion of alcohol sales in convenience stores and additional retailers.

References

1. Paradis, C., Butt, P., Shield, K., Poole, N., Wells, S., Naimi, T., Sherk, A., & the Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines Scientific Expert Panels. Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: Final Report. Ottawa, Ont.: Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. [Internet]. 2023. [cited 2025 Jun 1]. Available from: <https://www.ccsa.ca/canadas-guidance-alcohol-and-health>
2. Arora, M., ElSayed, A., Beger, B., Naidoo, P., Shilton, T., Jain, N., ... Champagne, B.M. The impact of alcohol consumption on cardiovascular health: Myths and measures. Global Heart, 17(1), Article 45. [Internet]. 2022. [cited 2025 Jun 1]. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.5334/gh.1132>
3. Moore K. Balancing Act An All-of-Society Approach to Substance Use and Harms. 2023 annual report of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario; [Internet]. 2024. [cited 2025 Jun 1]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-04/moh-cmoh-annual-report-2023-en-2024-04-02.pdf>
4. Myran, D. T., Chen, J. T., Giesbrecht, N., and Rees, V. W. (2019) The association between alcohol access and alcohol-attributable emergency department visits in Ontario, Canada. Addiction, 114: 1183–1191.[Internet]. 2019. [cited 2025 Jun 1]. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/add.14597>

These findings are representative of this survey's respondents and not necessarily the larger Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph population. The survey was online, anonymous and voluntary | Open to Residents of Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph Ages 16+ | Survey conducted from August 1 – September 18, 2024. For more information about this survey and findings, please contact WDG Public Health research team at surveyhelp@wdgpublichealth.ca or call us at 1-800-265-7293 ext. 7006. Read the Alcohol Survey report at https://wdgpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/bh.01.mar0525.r04_-_alcohol_survey.pdf