

# Older Adults and Seniors

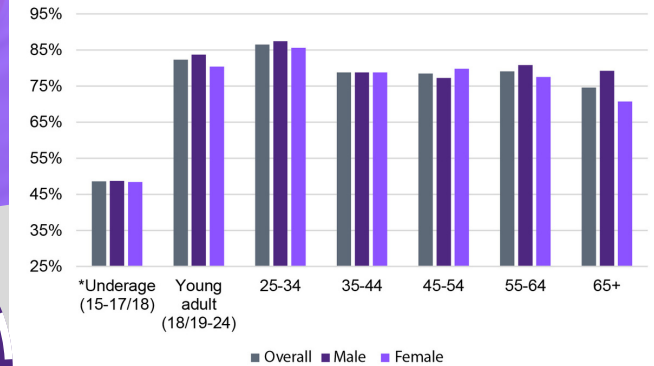
## Why is this important to talk about?

Atlantic Canadian provinces are home to the highest percentage of baby boomers (1946 - 1965) in all of Canada, (28.9% of Nova Scotians).<sup>(1)</sup>

74.6% of adults, (65yrs and older), reported drinking in the past year, 79.2% of males and 70.7% of females.<sup>(2)</sup>

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance in this age group. <sup>(3)</sup>

Figure 1: Self-reported past-year alcohol use among Canadians by age and sex (2017)<sup>5</sup>



Source: CTADS 2017

Note: Underage in Alberta, Manitoba and Quebec is 17 years old; in the rest of provinces and territories it is 18 years old.

If we don't take action

Older adults are more susceptible to the acute effects of alcohol because the drug is metabolized slower, such as.<sup>(4)</sup>

- Increased risk of injuries due to falls
- Liver damage, diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and stomach problems
- Confusion, issues with memory and mood
- Harmful reactions with medications

Long term harms <sup>(6)</sup>

- High blood pressure
- Increased risk of cancer
- Reduced resistance to infection
- Liver, brain, heart and stomach disease
- Malnourishment and vitamin deficiencies
- Anxiety and depression, including thoughts of suicide



Did you know that mixing even small amounts of alcohol while on medication can be harmful. Effects include: Drowsiness or lightheadedness, risk of injury to self (ex. falls) or others (ex. impaired driving).<sup>(5)</sup>

In 2019, cancer and heart disease were the two leading causes of death in Canada.<sup>(7)</sup>

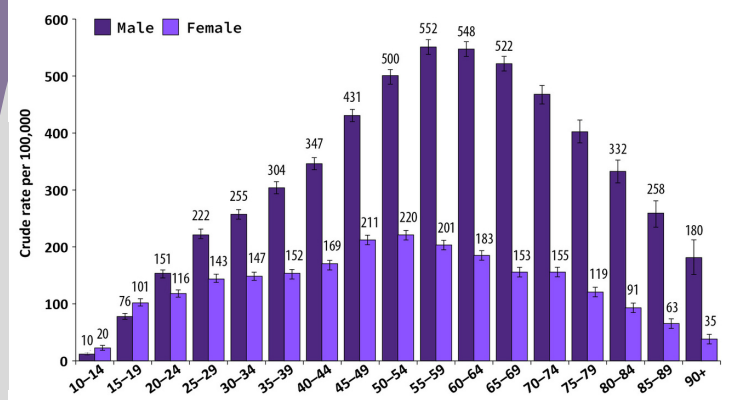
## What we can do!

Initiate conversations about alcohol use and its effects with patients, clients, friends, family and in your workplace and encourage ways to reduce alcohol use in your circle of influence.

Screening and brief interventions have been shown to:<sup>(8)</sup>

- Reduce burden of preventable disease and illness
- Quickly initiate relevant healthcare/resources when necessary (i.e., substance use disorder support)

Figure 1 Crude rates for Hospitalizations Entirely Caused by Alcohol per 100,000 population age 10+, by age group and sex, 2015-2016



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Infographic design by Artsy Fartsy™