

**CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING**

**Perception and Behaviour of  
Canadians With Regards to  
Drinking Water**

**Report**



## 1.0 Study Report

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- Close to one-third of Canadians do not feel confident about the quality of their drinking water.

Do you feel VERY CONFIDENT, RATHER CONFIDENT, NOT VERY CONFIDENT or NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT about the quality of tap water?

n=1504	Very confident	Rather confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	DNK/Refusal
	32.0%	35.8%	19.7%	10.5%	2.0%

- More than half of Canadians regularly drink tap water.

Do you REGULARLY, OCCASIONALLY or NEVER drink tap water?

n=1504	Regularly	Occasionally	Never	DNK/Refusal
	51.2%	31.3%	17.2%	0.3%

- Residues of antibiotics in the environment may affect the quality of the drinking water, yet...

Do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following opinion: "Antibiotic residues in the environment may affect the drinking water to the point that it leads to a human resistance to antibiotics."

n=1504	Agree	Disagree	DNK/Refusal
	57.1%	24.4%	18.5%

What do you normally do with your expired medication? Do you...?

n=1504	... throw it out in the garbage, down the drain or down the toilet	... give it to your pharmacist	Other	DNK/Refusal
	55.3%	25.0%	12.8%	6.9%

## 2.0 Results

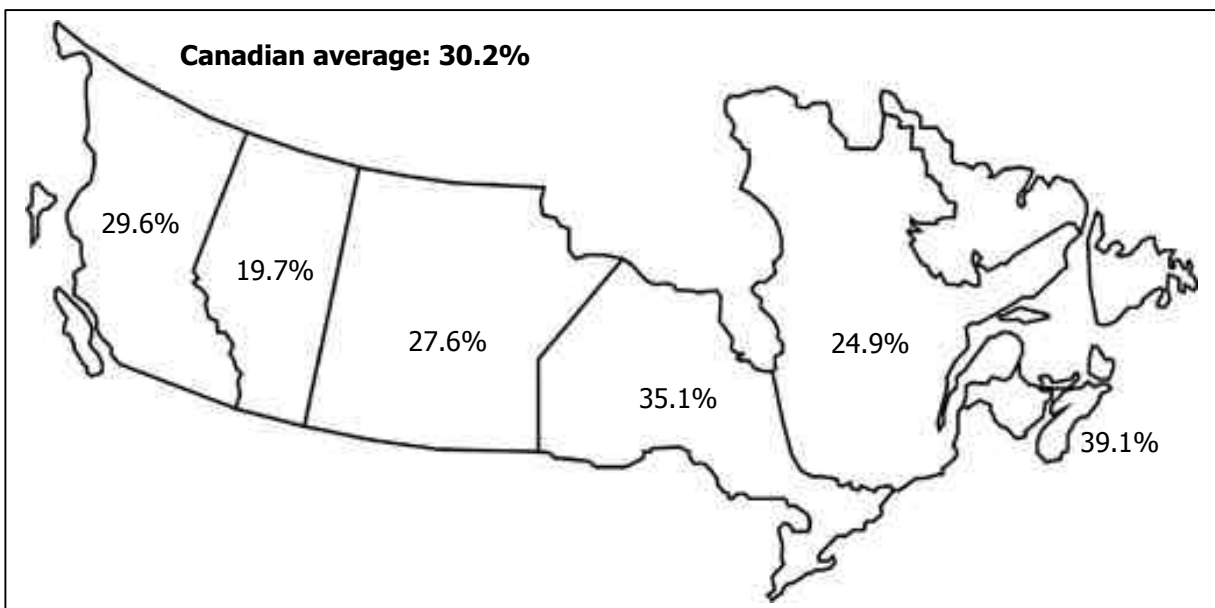
### 2.1 Close to One-Third of Canadians Do Not Feel Confident About the Quality of the Drinking Water

30.2% of Canadians do not feel confident about the quality of tap water (19.7% do not feel very confident and 10.5% do not feel confident at all). However, 67.8% do feel confident about the quality of tap water (32.0% feel very confident and 35.8% rather confident).

Albertans displayed the highest level of trust with 78.7% of them expressing confidence while residents of the Atlantic provinces (39.1%) and Ontarians (35.1%) felt the least confident about the quality of drinking water.

Q1 Do you feel VERY CONFIDENT, RATHER CONFIDENT, NOT VERY CONFIDENT or NOT AT ALL CONFIDENT about the quality of tap water? n=1504	CONFIDENT	NOT CONFIDENT	Don't know/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	59.7%	39.1%	1.2%
Quebec	74.7%	24.9%	0.4%
Ontario	61.9%	35.1%	3.1%
Prairies	67.2%	27.6%	5.1%
Alberta	78.7%	19.7%	1.6%
British Columbia	69.1%	29.6%	1.2%
Canada	67.8%	30.2%	2.0%

#### Percentage of Canadians who do not feel confident about the quality of tap water



However, 54.2% of Canadians who drink tap water expressed negative comments about it. It was therefore noted that 32.8% of respondents found that tap water tastes too much like chlorine, 12.5% that it contains too much limestone, 17.7% that it is not quite transparent and 25.8% that it is sometimes cloudy.

Finally, 42.8% of Canadians feel that the quality of water has declined in the last ten years while 25.0% find it to be of better quality today and 22.5% of similar quality.

Q2 Do you think that tap water is of HIGHER QUALITY or of LOWER QUALITY compared to ten years ago? n=1504	Higher quality	Lower quality	Same quality	Don't know/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	25.7%	45.7%	24.2%	4.4%
Quebec	17.5%	28.2%	42.1%	12.2%
Ontario	25.2%	48.2%	16.6%	10.1%
Prairies	21.6%	52.6%	16.2%	9.6%
Alberta	39.6%	36.4%	12.6%	11.4%
British Columbia	29.1%	51.7%	12.6%	6.5%
Canada	25.0%	42.8%	22.5%	9.8%

## 2.2 More Than Half of Canadians Regularly Drink Tap Water

82.5% of the population drinks tap water with 51.2% drinking it regularly and 31.3% drinking it occasionally. 17.2% never drink tap water.

Q3 Do you REGULARLY, OCCASIONALLY or NEVER drink tap water? n=1504	Regularly	Occasionally	Never	Don't know/ Refusal
Atlantic provinces	55.6%	27.9%	15.3%	1.2%
Quebec	58.5%	24.4%	17.1%	0.0%
Ontario	46.0%	34.3%	19.4%	0.3%
Prairies	57.9%	23.4%	18.1%	0.7%
Alberta	52.6%	36.1%	10.6%	0.7%
British Columbia	45.4%	38.4%	16.3%	0.0%
Canada	51.2%	31.3%	17.2%	0.3%

On one hand we note that among those who feel confident about their tap water, 65.9% regularly drink it, 27.6% drink it occasionally and 6.3% never do so. On the other hand, 40.9% of Canadians who do not feel confident about tap water never drink it, 38.9% will occasionally drink water from the tap and 20.0% will regularly do so.

60.3% of people 55 years old and over regularly drink water from the tap along with 60.3% of Francophones, 58.5% of Quebeckers, 59.5% of retirees and 58.2% of Canadians who have more schooling.

In addition, 33.5% of the Canadian population drinks bottled water, 44.2% drink it occasionally while 21.9% never does so.

45.9% of Canadians 65 years of age and over, 39.4% of retirees and 37.1% of Canadians with a lower level of schooling mentioned never drinking bottled water. However, 38.3% of women, 42.7% of those 35 years old or less, 40.9% of Canadians with a household income of more than \$60,000, 40.5% of professionals and 38.1% of the active population regularly drink bottled water.

Moreover, 52.2% of Canadians who do not trust the quality of tap water mentioned regularly drinking bottled water while 31.5% drink it occasionally and 15.4% never do so.

Notwithstanding the above, 17.2% of those who regularly drink tap water also regularly drink bottled water.

## 2.3 Antibiotic Residues in the Environment May Affect the Quality of Drinking Water, yet...

57.1% of Canadians feel that antibiotic residues in the environment can affect the quality of our drinking water to the point of increasing human resistance to antibiotics. 24.4% hold the opposite view and 18.5% did not state their opinion regarding this issue.

Q4 Do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following opinion: "Antibiotic residues in the environment may affect the drinking water to the point that it leads to a human resistance to antibiotics." n=1504	AGREE	DISAGREE	DNK/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	63.3%	21.9%	14.9%
Quebec	68.4%	19.1%	12.5%
Ontario	56.2%	24.4%	19.4%
Prairies	48.9%	28.7%	22.3%
Alberta	43.9%	30.8%	25.4%
British Columbia	48.8%	28.4%	22.8%
Canada	57.1%	24.4%	18.5%

Yet, 51.2% of those who believe that this type of contamination represents a risk admit throwing out their expired medication in the garbage or down the drain while 30.2% bring it back to their pharmacist. The remainder of respondents did not indicate the manner in which they disposed of their expired medication.

Overall, 55.3% of the population throw their medication in the garbage or down the drain while 25.0% return it to their pharmacist and 12.8% use another method of disposing of it.

Q5 What do you normally do with your expired medication? Do you...? n=1504	... throw it out in the garbage, down the drain or down the toilet?	...give it to your pharmacist?	Other	Dnk/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	59.9%	21.8%	13.3%	5.0%
Quebec	48.1%	36.2%	12.1%	3.6%
Ontario	59.8%	20.2%	11.4%	8.6%
Prairies	55.3%	16.8%	18.5%	9.4%
Alberta	45.0%	39.1%	10.8%	5.1%
British Columbia	60.4%	14.8%	15.9%	8.9%
Canada	55.3%	25.0%	12.8%	6.9%

### **3.0 Methodology**

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This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1506 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal call centre between September 18 and September 23, 2001. Up to ten recalls were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1506 respondents is of  $\pm 2.6\%$ , 19 times out of 20.