

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

The Use of Medication Among Canadians

Report



1.0 Study Highlights

- At the time of the survey, close to three-quarters of Canadians mentioned having taken medication in the past month.

Prescription and non-prescription medication taken by Canadians

n=1503	Total
Prescription only	20%
Non-prescription only	20%
Prescription / non-prescription	32%
No medication	27%

- One Canadian out of seven has already taken expired medication.

Question: *Do you GENERALLY, OCCASIONALLY or NEVER take medication that is expired?*

n=1503	Generally	Occasionally	Never	Don't know
Canada	1%	13%	84%	1%

Question: *When you take medication, do you always respect the prescribed dosage?*

n=1503	YES	NO	Don't know
Canada	92%	7%	0%

- Three Canadians out of four believe that generic medication is just as effective as the original version.

Question: *In your opinion, is generic medication just as effective as the original version?*

n=1503	YES	NO	Don't know
Canada	74%	13%	12%

- Opinions are mixed when it comes to the effectiveness of natural products compared to regular medication.

Question: *In your opinion, is natural medication just as effective as regular medication?*

n=1503	YES	NO	Don't know
Canada	42%	33%	25%

- Mixed reactions among Canadians when they are ill or do not feel well.

Question: *The last time you did not feel well or were ill, did you...*

n=1503	Total
... take medication you had at home	27%
... see a doctor	31%
... consult the pharmacist	6%
... wait for it to pass	33%
Don't know / Refusal	3%

2. Detailed Results

2.1 Close to Three-Quarters of Canadians Mentioned Having Taken Medication in the Past Month

At the time of the survey, 72% of Canadians mentioned having taken medication other than natural products in the past month. In fact, 20% mentioned having taken only prescription drugs, 20% took non-prescription drugs and 32% took both types of medication.

In terms of prescription medication, 59% of women, 76% of those 55 years old and over, 64% of people whose income is less than \$20,000 and 77% of retirees appear to take more medication than other segments of the population.

Prescription and non-prescription medication taken by Canadians according to age group

n=1503	Total	18-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 years old and over
Prescription only	20%	13%	15%	38%
Non-prescription only	20%	24%	24%	9%
Prescription / Non-prescription	32%	26%	32%	38%
No medication	27%	37%	28%	14%

2.2 One Canadian out of Seven Mentioned Having Previously Taken Expired Medication

14% of the population in Canada has already taken medication that was past the expiration date. 1% mentioned generally doing this and 13% mentioned doing this occasionally.

It was noted that 18% of people in the higher income brackets, 20% of professionals and 21% of university graduates are more likely to take expired medication compared to other Canadians.

Conversely, 7% of Canadians mentioned not always respecting the recommended dosage. This would mostly be the case of 12% of those 18 to 34 years old. However, 98% of those 55 and over mentioned respecting the prescribed dosage.

Question: *Do you GENERALLY, OCCASIONALLY or NEVER take medication that is expired?*

n=1503	Total	18-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 years old and over
Generally	1%	1%	1%	2%
Occasionally	13%	12%	15%	11%
Never	84%	86%	83%	85%
Don't know	1%	1%	1%	2%

Question: *When you take medication, do you always respect the prescribed dosage?*

n=1503	Total	18-34 years old	35-54 years old	55 years old and over
YES	92%	87%	93%	98%
NO	7%	12%	6%	2%
Don't know	0%	1%	0%	0%

2.3 Three Canadians out of Four Believe that Generic Medication is Just as Effective as the Original Version

74% of Canadians hold the view that generic medication is just as effective as the original version, while 13% think the opposite and 12% did not share their opinion in this respect.

Those most convinced of the similar effectiveness of both types of drugs are 77% of Quebeckers, 78% of those 25-34 years old, 79% of those in the higher income brackets, 80% of professionals and 79% of university graduates. However, we find those who are less convinced of this fact among people 65 years old and over (63%), Allophones (60%), Ontarians (70%) and manual workers (68%).

Question: *In your opinion, is generic medication just as effective as the original version?*

n=1503	YES	NO	Don't know
Mother tongue: French	76%	15%	8%
Mother tongue: English	76%	12%	12%
Mother tongue: Other	60%	18%	23%
Canada	74%	13%	12%

2.4 Opinions are Mixed When it Comes to the Effectiveness of Natural Products Compared to Regular Medication

Indeed, 42% of the population feels that both types of medication are just as effective while 33% believes regular medication is more effective. 25% did not know.

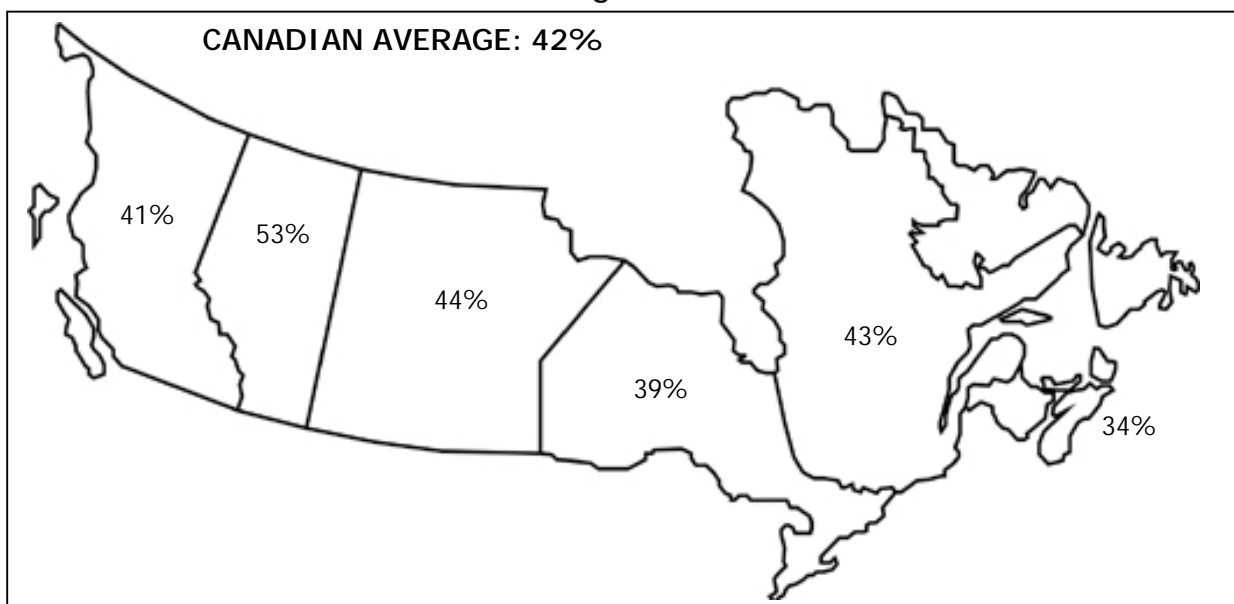
Among the Canadians most likely to think that both types of medication are as effective, we find 56% of 18-24-year olds, 55% of Allophones, 53% of Albertans, 48% of people whose income is lower than \$40,000, 55% of manual workers and 47% of those who have a high school education.

Among those who think that natural products are less effective, we find, in particular, 39% of Francophones, 41% of Quebeckers, 40% of Canadians in the upper income brackets, 39% of professionals and 43% of university graduates.

Question: *In your opinion, is natural medication just as effective as regular medication?*

n=1503	YES	NO	Don't know
Mother tongue: French	41%	39%	20%
Mother tongue: English	40%	34%	26%
Mother tongue: Other	55%	20%	25%
Canada	42%	33%	25%

Proportion of Canadians who think that natural medication is just as effective as regular medication



2.5 Mixed Reactions Among Canadians When They are Ill or Not Feeling Well

The last time they did not feel well or were ill, 33% of Canadians waited for it to pass, 31% consulted a doctor, 27% took medication they already had and 6% consulted a pharmacist.

It was noted that 40% of 55-64-year olds, 56% of those 65 and over, 37% of Francophones, 38% of Quebecers, 41% of people whose annual income is lower than \$20,000 and 61% of those who have an elementary school education are more likely to see a doctor compared to other segments of the population.

It was also noted that 36% of men, 41% of those under 35 years old, 38% of Anglophones, 41% of Albertans, 44% of professionals and 37% of those in the labour force were more likely to have waited for the illness or discomfort to pass.

Question: *The last time you did not feel well or were ill, did you...*

n=1503	Total	18-24 years old	25-34 years old	35-44 years old	45-54 years old	55-64 years old	65 years old and over
... take medication you had at home	27%	28%	29%	31%	29%	9%	19%
... see a doctor	31%	26%	20%	25%	28%	40%	56%
... consult the pharmacist	6%	5%	7%	7%	7%	8%	5%
... wait for it to pass	33%	39%	43%	35%	31%	29%	14%
Don't know / Refusal	3%	1%	1%	2%	5%	2%	6%

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1503 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between March 19 and 24, 2002. Up to ten call-backs 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 1503 respondents is of $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20.