

About Health Canada



Health Canada is the Federal department responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health, while respecting individual choices and circumstances.

What is Health Canada's Goal?

According to our [mission and vision](#), Health Canada's goal is for Canada to be among the countries with the healthiest people in the world.

To achieve this goal, Health Canada:

- Relies on high-quality scientific research as the basis for our work.
- Conducts ongoing consultations with Canadians to determine how to best meet their long-term health care needs.
- Communicates information about disease prevention to protect Canadians from avoidable risks.
- Encourages Canadians to take an active role in their health, such as increasing their level of physical activity and eating well.

Health Canada into the Future

Health Canada believes that prevention and health promotion can hold health care costs down and improve quality of life in the long term. To this end, the Department is committed to meeting the challenges of tomorrow by supporting research and fostering partnerships with researchers across the country and the world. We also work collaboratively with the provinces and territories to test ways in which the Canadian health care system can be improved and ensure its sustainability for the future.

What Information is Available?

This section contains an overview of Health Canada and provides you points of entry to many Health Canada-specific related topics. From here you can learn more about how the Department is structured, where our offices are situated and who our ministers are. You can also find out about our strategies and initiatives, as well as the budget estimates for our programs.

This section also provides information about health-related legislation and activities, including commissions and inquiries. From here, you can access a complete repository of all reports and publications available on this Web site and find a list of health-related conferences and events, including our consultations with Canadians.

Mission and Vision

Health Canada is the federal department responsible for helping the people of Canada maintain and improve their health.

Health Canada is committed to improving the lives of all of Canada 's people and to making this country's population among the healthiest in the world as measured by longevity, lifestyle and effective use of the public health care system.

Core Values - Our Values in Action

The Dialogue on Values and Ethics resulted in the identification and description of the following core values for Health Canada. In pursuing and fulfilling our vision and mission, we achieve personal, organizational and public good by:

Taking Pride in What We Do

We are motivated and guided by our personal integrity.

- A. We recognize our potential
- B. We take the initiative to improve ourselves and the way we do things
- C. We act with sound judgment

Building a Workplace Community

We respect each other and work together in a healthy environment.

- A. We embrace diversity and nurture empowering relationships
- B. We communicate honestly and effectively
- C. We create an environment that promotes learning and innovation

Caring for the People of Canada

We advance the public good with purpose and passion while honouring democratic values.

- A. We provide credible information, reliable advice and quality services
- B. We establish and maintain good working relationships with our stakeholders
- C. We responsibly and wisely manage resources entrusted to us

By being accountable for our values and their integration in our work, we lay the foundation for excellence at Health Canada.

Objectives

By working with others in a manner that fosters the trust of Canadians, Health Canada strives to:

- Prevent and reduce risks to individual health and the overall environment;
- Promote healthier lifestyles;
- Ensure high quality health services that are efficient and accessible;
- Integrate renewal of the health care system with longer term plans in the areas of prevention, health promotion and protection;
- Reduce health inequalities in Canadian society; and
- Provide health information to help Canadians make informed decisions.

What We Do

Health Canada plays five core roles in order to realize our vision. In fulfilling these roles, our Department draws on our strengths as a science-based department. We generate knowledge through the research, analysis and evaluations that we conduct, partner in and support. We also draw on the knowledge that is being generated around the world to help us and others make informed, effective choices across all five roles.

- Leader/Partner
- Funder
- Guardian/Regulator
- Service Provider
- Information Provider

Core Roles

Leader/Partner through the administration of the *Canada Health Act*, which embodies the key values and principles of Medicare.

Funder through policy support for the federal government's Canada Health and Social Transfer, replaced on April 1, 2004 by the new Canada Health Transfer. Health Canada also transfers funds to First Nations and Inuit organizations and communities to deliver community health services and provides grants and contributions to various organizations that reinforce the Department's health objectives.

Guardian/Regulator through a stewardship role that involves both protecting Canadians and facilitating the provision of products vital to the health and well-being of our citizens. Our Department regulates and approves the use of thousands of products, including:

- Biologics,
- Consumer Goods,
- Foods,
- Medical Devices,
- Natural Health Products,
- Pesticides,
- Pharmaceuticals, and
- Toxic Substances.

We deliver a range of programs and services in environmental health and protection, and have responsibilities in the areas of substance abuse, tobacco policy, workplace health and the safe use of consumer products. As well, Health Canada monitors and tracks diseases and takes action where required.

Service Provider through the provision of supplementary health benefits to more than 849,000 eligible First Nations and Inuit to cover:

- Pharmaceuticals,
- Dental services,
- Vision services,
- Medical transportation,
- Medical supplies and equipment, and
- Short-term crisis intervention mental health counselling.

We support the delivery of public health and health promotion services on-reserve and in Inuit communities. We also provide primary care services on-reserve in remote and isolated areas, where there are no provincial services readily available.

Information Provider through performing high quality science and research, we support policy development, regulate increasingly-sophisticated products and provide the services, information and management essential to affordable and world-class health care for

Canadians. Through research and surveillance, we provide information that Canadians can use to maintain and improve their health.

Strategic Outcomes and Program Activities

In order to ensure that the Department is working to achieve tangible results for Canadians, Health Canada has established three strategic outcomes and key areas of program activities.

Strategic Outcome #1 A Health System Responsive to the Needs of Canadians

Strategic Outcome #2 Canadians are informed of and protected from health risks associated with food, products, substances and environments, and are informed of the benefits of healthy eating

Strategic Outcome #3 First Nations and Inuit communities and individuals receive health services and benefits that are responsive to their needs so as to improve their health status

Additional Information

See the [Health Canada Reports on Plans and Priorities](#) for details on the Department's annual program activities, strategic outcomes and planned expenditures.



Branches and Agencies

Choose one of the blocks on Health Canada's organizational chart to learn more about our roles and responsibilities. You can also obtain more information from the [list of branches and agencies](#).

