

## Drinking Patterns Among Ontario Adults, 1996-2005

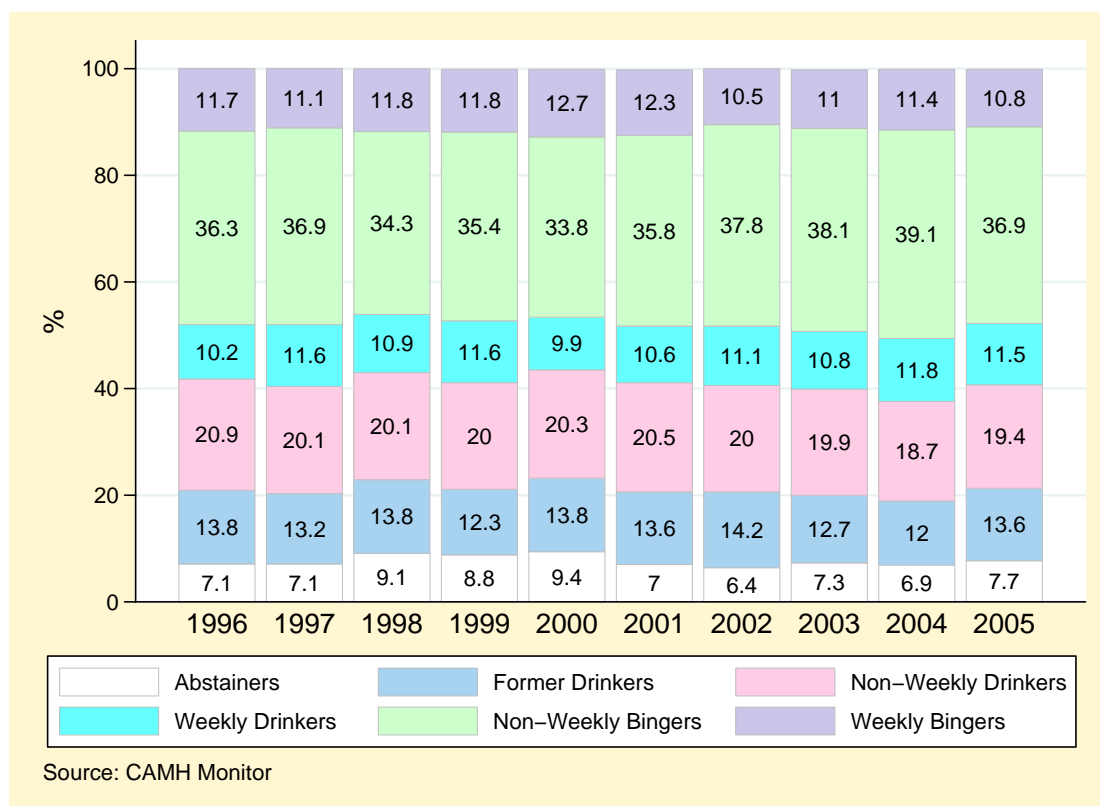
Monitoring alcohol use in the general population is key to understanding any changes in drinking patterns, and in providing the most timely data to inform population health strategies, identify programming needs, and inform public policy. The CAMH Monitor, which is the longest ongoing survey of substance use and problems in Canada, has monitored alcohol and drug use among Ontario adults since 1977. This *eBulletin* presents the drinking patterns of Ontario adults in 2005, as well as trends over the past decade.

The 2005 CAMH Monitor found that a majority (78%) of Ontario adults aged 18 and over consumed alcohol during the 12 months before survey, 14% are former drinkers, and 8% are lifetime abstainers.

Almost half of the respondents reported binge drinking (5 or more drinks on one occasion) at least once in the past 12 months. Specifically, 36.9% of adults are non-weekly binge drinkers and 10.8% are weekly binge drinkers. About 31% do not binge drink – 19.4% drink a moderate amount of alcohol less than weekly and 11.6% of adults drink once a week or more often.

Figure 1 presents the drinking patterns of Ontario adults from 1996 to 2005. Trend analysis showed no significant changes across time within any of the six patterns.

**Figure 1. Trends in Past Year Drinking Patterns, Ontario Adults Aged 18+, 1996-2005**



**Methods:**

The CAMH Monitor is an addiction and mental health random, anonymous telephone survey of the Ontario population aged 18 and older, administered by the Institute for Social Research, York University. The CAMH Monitor is conducted on an ongoing monthly basis and employs a stratified (region) two-stage (household, respondent) probability sample design. The following 6 regional strata are used: Toronto, Central East, East, Central West, West, and North. The annual sample size averages around 2,400 respondents. The results shown here are based on merged data, containing CAMH Monitor data from 1996 to 2005, inclusive. All survey estimates were weighted, and variance and statistical tests were corrected for the sampling design.

**Terminology:**

- **Abstainers:** Never drank more than a few sips of alcohol in their lifetime.
- **Former Drinkers:** Drank alcohol in their lifetime, but not during the 12 months preceding the survey.
- **Non-Weekly Drinkers:** Drank alcohol less often than once a week, and never binged (5+ drinks on one occasion) during the past 12 months.
- **Weekly Drinkers:** Drank alcohol once a week or more often, and never binged (5+ drinks on one occasion) during the past 12 months.
- **Non-Weekly Binge Drinkers:** Drank 5 or more drinks on one occasion less than on a weekly basis during the past 12 months.
- **Weekly Binge Drinkers:** Drank 5 or more drinks on one occasion on, at least, a weekly basis during the past 12 months.

**Source:**

Based on the forthcoming 2005 *CAMH Monitor* Trend Report.

**Suggested Citation:**

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. Drinking Patterns Among Ontario Adults, 1996-2005. *CAMH Population Studies eBulletin*, March/April 2007, Vol. 8, No.2. Toronto, Ontario: CAMH.

To receive future issues of the *eBulletin*, please contact Maureen Kothare via email at: [maureen\\_kothare@camh.net](mailto:maureen_kothare@camh.net)

Media Enquiries: Tel: 416-595-6015