

October 2014

## Fact Sheet

### A Look at the Relationship Between Socio-Economic Status and Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Alberta

The DON SCN strives to improve the health and well-being of individual Albertans and our communities through a collaborative network that: encourages uptake of best practices, promotes improvements, and champions innovation in nutrition and in the prevention and management of diabetes and obesity across the health system to promote equitable access, quality and sustainability.

Fruit and vegetables constitute an important source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of chronic diseases including diabetes and obesity<sup>1</sup>.

#### DON SCN Fast Facts

- In 2012, 4 in 10 Albertans (38%) reported consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption does not appear to vary by household income in Alberta.
- The percentage of Albertans consuming 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables per day was highest among those with the highest level of education (42%).
- Albertans who are Caucasian reported higher (39%) daily intake of 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables than persons who belong to a visible minority (33%).
- The percentage of Albertans consuming 5 or more daily servings of fruit and vegetables was lower among those with lower self-reported health status, and highest for those reporting their health status as “excellent” (44%) .

#### How Does Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Compare Across Income Levels In Alberta?

- Overall, 38% of Albertans consume the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day .
- Fruit and vegetable consumption is highest among Albertans with the lowest household income of < \$20,000 (42%). This is an unexpected finding, and may be due to social desirability bias in the survey responses.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption is lowest among Albertans with a household income between \$20,000 – \$39,999 (32%) (Figure 1).

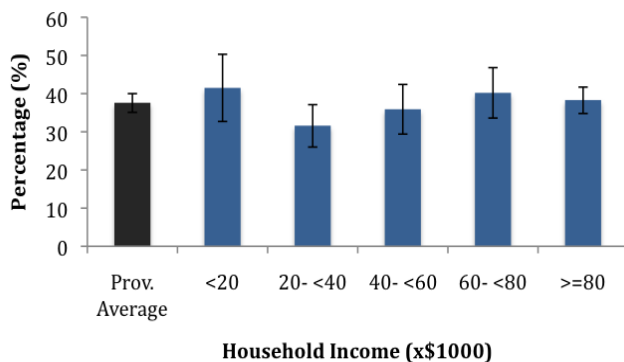


Figure 1. The proportion of persons consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day by household income levels in Alberta.

#### How Does Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Compare Across Education Level In Alberta?

- The proportion of persons consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day is highest among persons with the highest educational level (42%) (Figure 2).

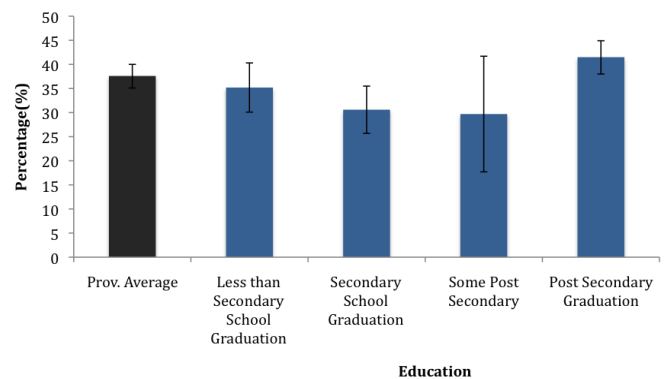


Figure 2. The proportion of persons consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day in Alberta by education level.

## How Does Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Compare Across Different Ethnicities in Alberta?

- Caucasians (39%) reported higher percentage intake of 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables compared to persons belonging to a visible minority (33%) (Figure 3).

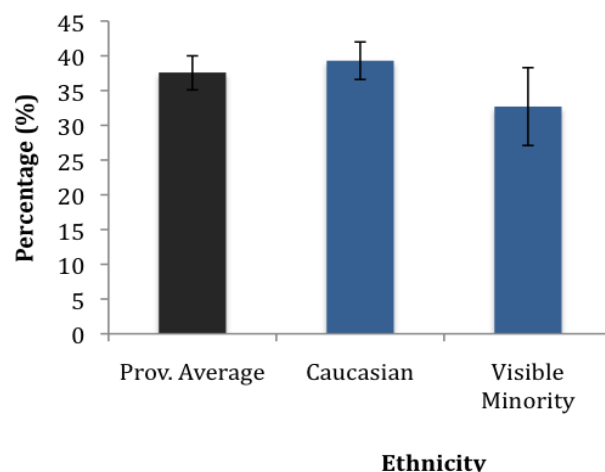
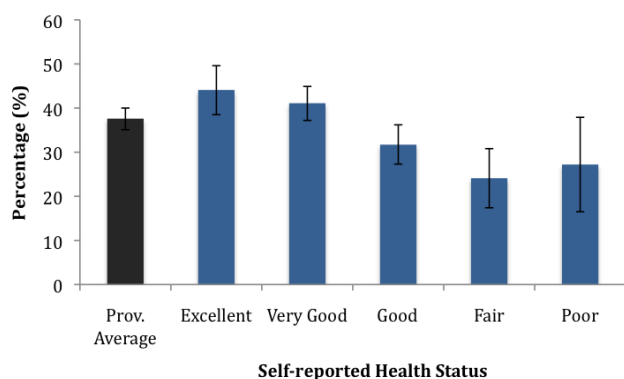


Figure 3. The proportion of persons consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day in Alberta by ethnicity.



## How Does Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Compare Across Self-Reported Health Status in Alberta?

- The proportion of persons consuming 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables decreases as self-reported health status decreases (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The proportion of persons consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day in Alberta by self-reported health status.

## How Does Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Alberta Compare to the Canadian Average?

- The proportion of Albertans consuming 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day (38%) is **comparable** to the Canadian national average (40%).
- As observed in the general Alberta population, the proportion of persons consuming 5 or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables is higher among Caucasians than among Visible Minorities across Canada.

### Data Source

We used data from the Canadian Community Health Surveys 2012 cycle. The survey included 61,707 Canadians and 5,520 Albertans. The Survey measures self-reported fruit and vegetable intake and other socio-demographic and clinical characteristics of Canadians aged 12 and older. Fruit and vegetable consumption is calculated based on survey questions that measure self-reported intake of fruit and vegetables.

### Reference

Pérez, Claudio E. 2002. "Fruit and vegetable consumption." *Health Reports*. Vol. 13, no. 3. March. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 82-003. p. 23. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/studies-etudes/82-003/archive/2002/6103-eng.pdf> (accessed October 3, 2014).