

Building a Healthy Community:

Bonnyville



Our Report to You

Healthy Alberta Communities is a five-year project, funded by Alberta Health and Wellness, and delivered by the Centre for Health Promotion Studies in the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. Since 2005, we have been working with organizations and people in Alberta towns and cities to build communities that promote and support healthy living. Your community is one of four project communities. The purpose of this report is to tell you what your community has done to become a healthy Alberta community. **We're excited by the changes we have seen in Bonnyville – and we want you to get excited too!**



The Healthy Alberta Communities Project

The purpose of *Healthy Alberta Communities* is to develop, implement and evaluate an approach to preventing chronic disease and improving health that has worked in other provinces and countries. Our goal is to create a uniquely Albertan approach that can be used by other communities across the province. To do that, we sponsor a community coordinator in Bonnyville and provide “seed money” to invest in community activities and facilities that help make it easier to eat healthy, stop smoking and get active. This small investment has returned great dividends to your community!

Getting Started

In the first six months, the community coordinator got to know your community by listening to people, making connections, participating in events and investing in activities. With this solid grounding, the project hosted a community workshop to get people excited about *Healthy Alberta Communities*. The workshop brought together potential partners from municipal government, health region staff, community organizations and interested individuals. Together, we set out a road map that would take us to a healthier community.

Measuring the Baseline

In 2006, we did a telephone survey to learn more about the health of people in Bonnyville. We also set up a clinic to measure height, weight and other health indicators of people who agreed to participate. Your community is using this information to set priorities and take action where it will make the most difference. Our team will also use these baseline measures to answer the question, “Did we make a difference?” (See pages 2-3: *The Measure of Health in Bonnyville*)

“We appreciate all that you (Healthy Alberta Communities) have done for the Community Gardens project.”

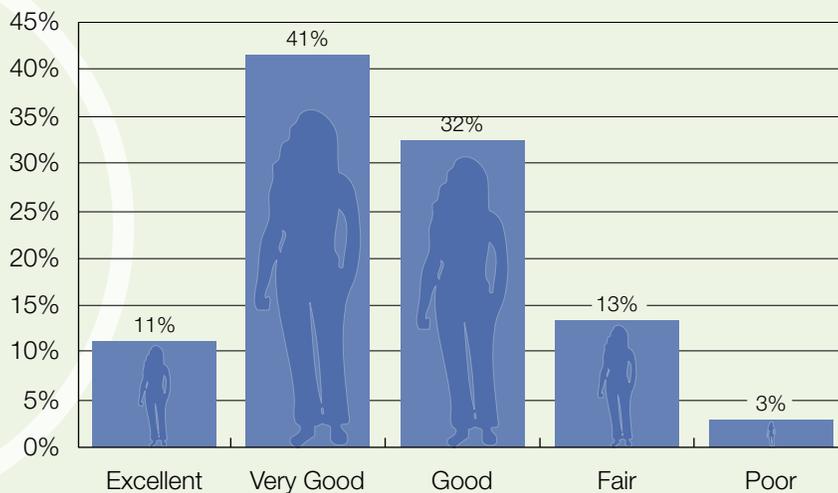
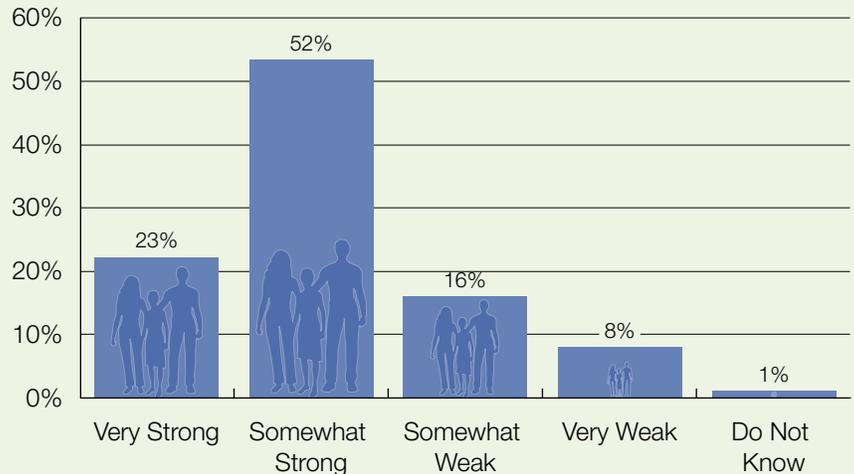
Community Learning Council



The Measure of Health in Bonnyville

Community Belonging

Most adults in Bonnyville feel a strong sense of community belonging.

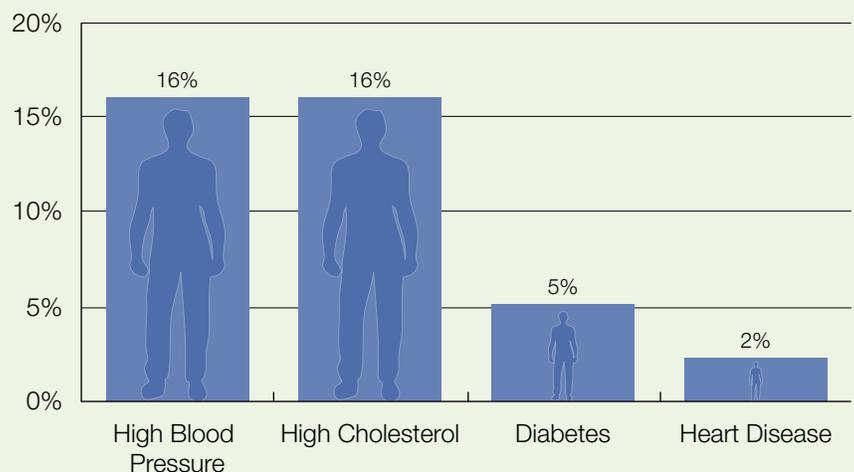


Self-Rated Health

Most adults in Bonnyville rated their health as good, very good or excellent.

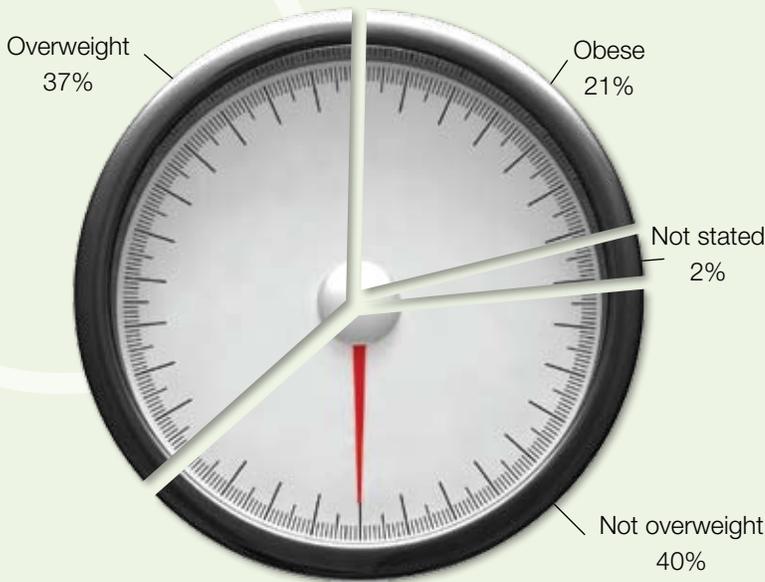
Self-Reported Chronic Disease

Less than one in five adults in Bonnyville reported that they have high blood pressure or high cholesterol, one in 20 reported diabetes and less than one in 20 reported heart disease.

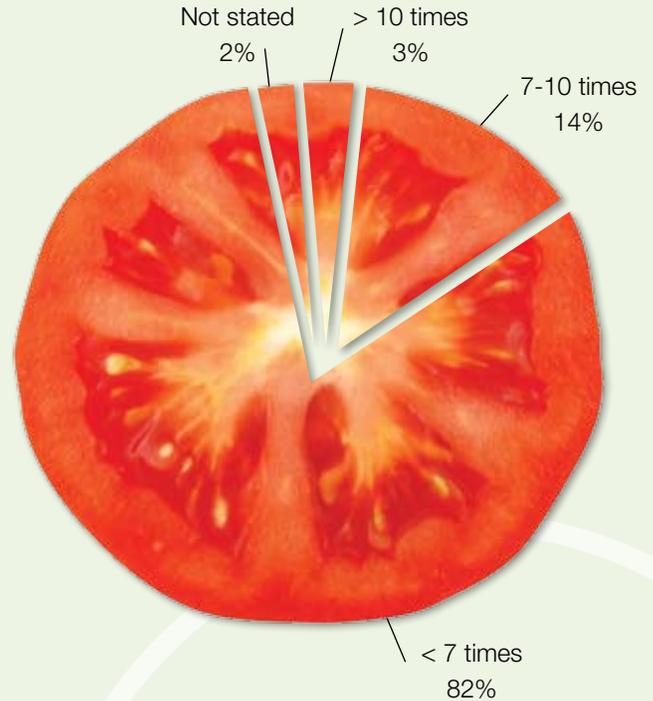


Risk Factors for Chronic Disease

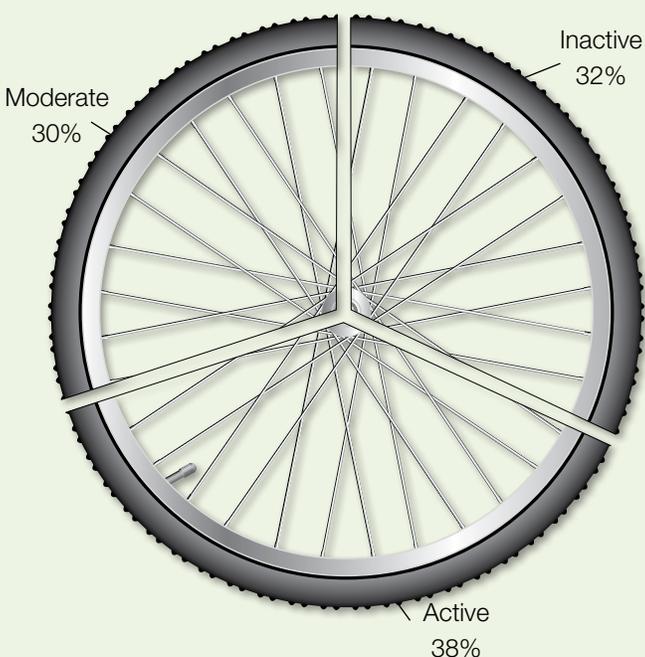
Over half of the adult population in Bonnyville reported being overweight or obese, compared to 50.5% for the province as a whole (34.7% overweight, 15.8% obese).* Men appear to be more likely than women to report being overweight.



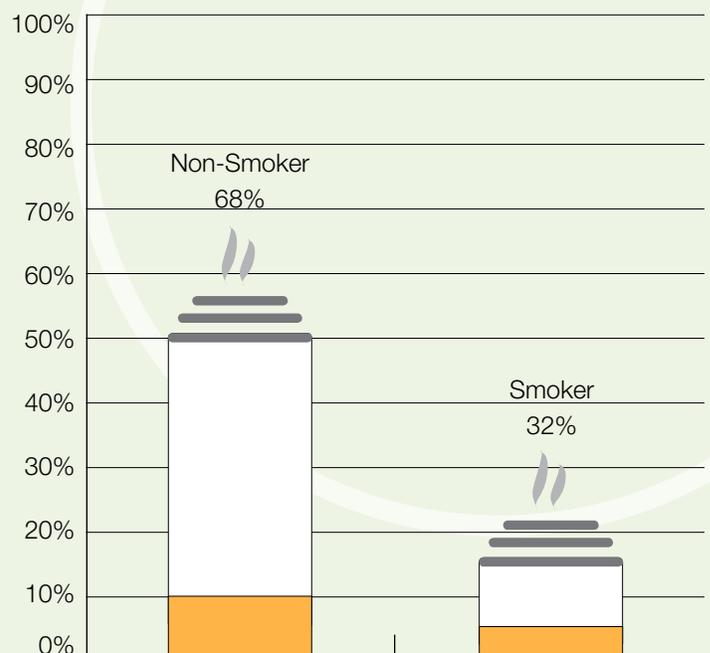
Most adults in Bonnyville do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. Less than one in five adults reported eating fruits and vegetables seven or more times a day.



Over two thirds of adults in Bonnyville reported being moderately active or active. One in three adults reported being inactive.



Almost one third of adults in Bonnyville smokes. The rate of smoking is highest among young adults, 18-34.



Setting Priorities

In June 2008, *Healthy Alberta Communities* hosted a two-day priority setting workshop with community groups and organizations in Bonnyville. The purpose of the workshop was to find out what was already working and what more could be done to remove barriers and promote healthier choices. Community participants set three main priorities:

- 1) Increase healthy restaurant options
- 2) Support drug, alcohol and tobacco reduction programs
- 3) Increase accessibility and utilization of communication recreation space

Taking Action

It's not enough to simply tell people to "eat healthy," "stop smoking" and "get active." Rather, people need to live in communities where it is easy to make healthy choices. That means creating environments where people have the things they need to be healthy. *Healthy Alberta Communities* works to influence these key environments:



Physical – Do people have access to sidewalks, trails and facilities that make it easy to get active?



Economic – Does the community offer meaningful work? Can people make enough money to pay for healthy food?



Social – Do people have good friends and neighbours? Do they feel a strong sense of community belonging? Does the community offer social supports and services when people need them?



Political – Are there policies, laws and regulations in place that help create safe and healthy spaces in the community?

Here are some of the exciting ways your community is taking action on the determinants of health... and making it easier to make healthy choices!



Bonnyville Community Garden



- **Increase access to fruits and vegetables**



- **Promote leisure activities that encourage people to get active**



Community Gardens are growing in Bonnyville! These are public spaces where individuals and families come together to grow food – for themselves and others. Our community worked together to provide six individual garden plots in spring 2008 and we expect to see more.

For more information, contact: Community Learning Council, 780-826-2150

Exercise Your Options



- **Increase accessibility and utilization of communication recreation space**



People who participated in Community Registration Day were invited to Exercise Your Options by identifying new physical activity groups that they would like to see in Bonnyville. Some of the top suggestions included walking, cycling, canoeing, cross country skiing and snow shoeing. Community partners are now working to get some of these activity groups going.

Eating Healthy in the Lakeland (Healthy Restaurant Options)



- **Increase healthy restaurant options**

Bonnyville residents and visitors will soon be able to make healthier choices when eating in local restaurants. A community dietitian is working with interested restaurant owners to develop criteria that will be used to designate “healthy choice” restaurants. Healthy choice restaurants will offer whole grain breads and cereals, more fruits and vegetables, and at least three low-fat entrees. Eating healthier will be a whole lot easier!

For more information, contact: Lakeland Community Futures, 780-826-3858

Alcohol Free Family Events



- **Support drug, alcohol and tobacco reduction programs**

The Bonnyville Drug Coalition and other concerned residents are working together to promote alcohol free family events at community facilities.

The Moose Adventure Challenge



- **Increase accessibility and utilization of communication recreation space**

The Moose Adventure Challenge at Moose Lake will invite teams of 2 to 4 competitors to canoe, bike and run (with a rucksack) in a fun event for healthy living glory! The first (annual?) event will include a corporate challenge, prizes and barbeque, presented by the Town of Bonnyville, Municipal District of Bonnyville, Portage College and Healthy Alberta Communities.

For more information, contact: Town of Bonnyville, 780-826-3496

Community Health and the Built Environment



- **Increase accessibility and utilization of communication recreation space**

The Community Health and Built Environment project, supported by Healthy Alberta Communities, is working to increase access to physical activity by increasing the opportunities provided by the built environment. The built environment can include walking and cycling trails, community facilities, and planning for walkable neighbourhoods.

For more information, contact: Lakeland Community Futures, 780-826-3858

“I hope all who used (the community garden) enjoyed it, as I personally feel it is an excellent project and will try to help along in any way we can from the public works end.”

Town Employee



Creating Connections

Healthy Alberta Communities in Bonnyville works with the following networks, coalitions and organizations:

- AADAC
- Alberta Agriculture
- Alberta Employment & Industry
- Alberta Health Services Mental Health and Primary Health Care Network
- Alberta Triathlon Association (ATA)
- Aspen Health Region, Community Health Services
- Bonnyville Agriculture Society
- Bonnyville Centennial Centre
- Bonnyville Drug Coalition
- Bonnyville Farmers' Market
- Bonnyville Seniors Drop in Centre
- Catholic Social Services
- Community Learning Council
- EmployAbilities
- Family and Community Support Services
- Friendship Centre
- Ladies Auxiliary Legion
- Lakeland Ag Research Association
- Lakeland Community Futures
- Municipal District of Bonnyville
- Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD)
- Portage College
- Town of Bonnyville
- Women's Crisis Centre



Here's how you can get involved in building a healthy community in Bonnyville!

- Use and enjoy the activities that are now available in your community, including community gardens, new recreation opportunities and healthier restaurant choices.
- Support the exciting initiatives in this report by getting involved as a volunteer.
- Encourage your municipal government to make decisions and set policies that will support healthy living.
- Watch for opportunities to help set priorities for increasing healthy choices in your community.



...and if you see "Healthy AB Cmty" on your caller ID, please answer the phone! We will be repeating the telephone survey and measurement clinics in Spring 2009 and want to hear from you.

For more information, visit:

www.healthyalbertacommunities.com

Or contact:

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