Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, many people are reporting mental health and substance use concerns. According to recent surveys conducted by Leger on behalf of the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction and the Mental Health Commission of Canada, these concerns are greater among females in households with young children (< 13 years).

Self-reported mental health and substance use concerns among households with young children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent to Very Good mental health</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to Severe anxiety symptoms</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate to Severe depression symptoms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in alcohol use</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in cannabis use</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic / risky alcohol use¹</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problematic / risky cannabis use¹</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Problematic alcohol or cannabis use refers to a pattern of use that might affect a person’s health and safety, and increase the risk of other problems related to alcohol or cannabis use.

² The Canadian Community Health Survey – Mental Health used the World Health Organization, Composite International Diagnostic Interview 3.0, to classify people with select mental or substance use disorders. This standardized instrument is typically used to assess mental disorders in population surveys, according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV) criteria.
For more information on COVID-19, mental health and substance use, visit our resource hubs:

- Mental Health and Wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Impacts of COVID-19 on Substance use

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Top 3 pandemic stresses among households with young children

**MALES**

1. Social isolation (16%)
2. Financial situation (15%)
3. Personal relationships (6%)

**FEMALES**

1. Financial situation (15%)
2. Caring for one’s children (15%)
3. Social isolation (10%)

### What you can do to cope

- **Stay active and keep yourself busy** with activities you enjoy.
- **Stay connected** with friends and family while still practising physical distancing.
- **Find balance** by staying informed but know when to take a break from COVID-19 news and topics.
- **Be kind to yourself**, this is a difficult time, and you’re doing your best to manage a challenging situation.
- **Take care of your body** by eating and sleeping well, exercising and meditating. Try this breathing exercise to calm your nervous system.
- **Reach out for help!** Talk to a family member or friend, and seek professional support, if needed. Visit Wellness Together Canada for more information.

### If you use substances

1. Monitor your use: pay attention to its frequency and context.
2. Follow Canada’s Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines.
3. Follow Canada’s Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines.
4. Avoid stockpiling alcohol, cannabis, and other substances.
5. Reach out for help if you are concerned about your consumption. Visit Wellness Together Canada for more information.