



Tomorrow's News

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The Tomorrow Project®: Albertans Studying the Connection Between Lifestyle and Cancer

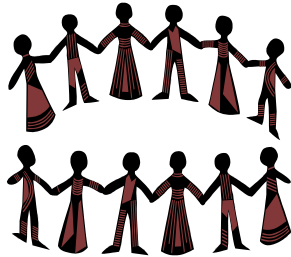
A Great Response from Great Albertans

The Tomorrow Project has grown to more than 8000 participants from all areas of Alberta. At this rate, we'll reach our goal of 10,000 people by the end of 2002. This makes the study one of the largest in Canada, and we're only in the early stages! Here are some statistics about the participants:

- More women than men have joined the study (58% vs. 42%).

- There is good representation from all age groups (36% are 35-44 yrs; 34% are 45-54 yrs; 30% are 55 or older).

- People from all areas of Alberta are participating: North (21%); Edmonton (22%); Central (23%); Calgary (9%); South (25%).



We are just finishing a pilot study of blood sampling in the Red Deer and Calgary regions. This will tell us how willing people are to provide a blood sample, what procedures for blood collection are most convenient, and how to transport samples from distant communities to our research laboratory at the Tom Baker Cancer Centre in Calgary.

The response to the request for blood has been very good. Calgary Laboratory Services collected samples from the Calgary participants and delivered them to our lab. Two laboratory services providers in the Red Deer region are helping in a similar way and the good old dependable Red Arrow bus brings the ice-packed blood tubes to us each day. So thanks to all the study 'blood donors' whose samples are now tucked away in a -80C storage freezer waiting to be used in the future.

Your responses to the Health and Lifestyle Questionnaire have provided a vast amount of information.

In March we will see the results from the first 5000 participants. The information will develop a detailed picture of the whole group of participants. In preparation for the March analysis, some of the information gathered from people in the Red Deer and Calgary regions has already been looked at. The results are highlighted in the *Participant Profile* section. Next up, we will be analyzing the information gathered from the Diet History Questionnaire.



Participant Profile

We used information from the Health and Lifestyle Questionnaire to look at a few health factors of the first 1500 participants from the rural and urban areas around Red Deer and Calgary. Here are some examples of what we learned:

- Most people (94%) say their health is Good/Very Good/Excellent, while 6% say their health is Fair to Poor.

- Most people (81%) do not smoke; 16% smoke daily and 3% are occasional smokers.

- Most women have had Pap tests (99%) and examine their own breasts for lumps (93%) but fewer women have had mammograms (66%).



When we compared these results to information about the general population aged 35-70 in the Red Deer and Calgary regions, we see that most *Tomorrow Project* participants believe, like the general population, that their health is good. However, among project participants there are fewer smokers and more women who have Pap tests, mammograms or do breast self-examinations.

In the Spotlight

The lead scientist of *The Tomorrow Project* is Dr. Heather Bryant. Dr. Bryant has dedicated her career to excellence in cancer research and care. Her goal is to reduce the burden of cancer in our communities. Firstly, with effective cancer prevention fewer people will become ill. Secondly, effective treatment will provide a longer and better quality life for people who develop cancer. Finally, compassionate care and services are essential for people who will eventually succumb to the disease.



Dr. Bryant earned her medical degree at the University of Calgary, as well as her specialty training in Community Medicine and a PhD in Epidemiology. Before coming to the Alberta Cancer Board in 1990 she was a member of the faculty in the Department of Community Health Sciences, U of C, focusing on Women's Health and Rural Health. At the same time she was also the Medical Officer of Health in Drumheller.

At the Alberta Cancer Board Dr. Bryant contributes in several important ways. In 1990 she became the Program Director of Screen Test, a province-wide program promoting breast cancer education, awareness and screening services (mammograms). There are now permanent clinics in Calgary and Edmonton and three mobile clinics that regularly travel throughout Alberta. Dr. Bryant also provides senior administrative leadership as Vice President of the Alberta Cancer Board, and as Director of the Epidemiology, Prevention, and Screening Division. In addition to the work she does in Alberta, Dr. Bryant also chairs and contributes to

numerous provincial and national committees and boards concerned with cancer research and services.

The Tomorrow Project is Dr. Bryant's newest research project and one that reflects her belief that cancer control is best achieved through prevention. By focusing on the connection between lifestyle and cancer, *The Tomorrow Project* will give us a great deal of information about what people need to know to make changes to their lifestyle in order to prevent cancer.

In keeping with her beliefs about lifestyle and cancer prevention, Dr. Bryant participates in an early morning workout before the day begins for most of us. Typically, she arrives at the 'Y' at 5:30 am, 6 days a week, with her husband, Richard, and children, Meghan and Adam. Believing that a healthy lifestyle is a good balance between work, family and community, Dr. Bryant and her family are also actively involved in their church.

With Dr. Bryant's strength, leadership and vision *The Tomorrow Project* is sure to be a success.

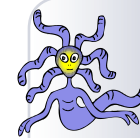
You Asked Us

Why do you ask for my body measurements?

Is there a link between body weight and cancer risk? Research indicates that a number of factors related to energy balance may affect cancer risk. These include level of energy intake (calories), adult body mass, fat distribution patterns and amount of physical activity. (BMI recommendations do not apply to children, pregnant and nursing women and athletes in heavy training.)

The evidence is convincing that high body mass increases the risk of endometrial (uterus) cancer. A high body mass probably increases the risk of postmenopausal breast cancer and kidney cancer and possibly increases the risk of cancers in the colon and gallbladder.

Evidence consistently shows that regular physical activity, which is more often associated with healthy body mass, reduces the risk of colon and breast cancers and probably prostate cancer.



Body Mass Index (BMI) is a measure of body weight adjusted for height (wt/ht^2).

High body mass is usually equated with obesity, which is defined as $BMI > 30$.

You can download a BMI calculator from the Health Canada Web site at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/nutrition/

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