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# What people in liyiyiu Aschii say about their health

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## Results from the 2003 Canadian Community Health Survey

May 2007

## What people in Iiyiyiu Aschii say about their health

May 2007

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This report is a summary of a longer paper entitled *Highlights*.

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# Introduction

In 2003, the Board decided that it needed an up-to-date picture of health in Iiyiyu Aschii. It paid Statistics Canada to carry out a survey that had already been done in other parts of the country. This survey was called the Canadian Community Health Survey. The interviewers spoke with people age 12 and over living in all the Iiyiyu communities. All told, they spoke with 1,000 people.

1. People living in Iiyiyiu Aschii
2. People's health
3. Habits that affect health
4. How people are trying to improve their health

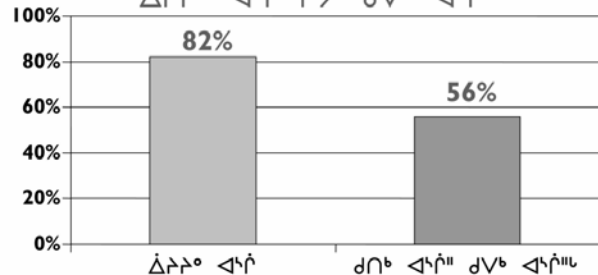
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## People living in Iiyiyiu Aschii

Almost everyone who lives in Iiyiyiu Aschii is Iiyiyiu: only 7% of people say they are non-Aboriginal. Iiyiyiu Aschii also has a much higher proportion of young people than other parts of Quebec.

### Education and employment

People have a lot more schooling than they used to. In 1991, only 4% of Iiyiyiuch had more than a high school diploma; by 2003, this had risen to 28%. But education levels are still lower than in other parts of Quebec. All told, two-thirds of Iiyiyiuch have a high school education or less, and just 5% have been to university.

Many people in Iiyiyiu Aschii have jobs that last for only part of the year. In 2003,

- ♦ 41% of working-age people in Iiyiyiu Aschii had a year-round job
- ♦ 35% had work for part of the year
- ♦ 24% were out of work all year.

More people had year-round jobs in the inland communities (Nemaska, Mistissini, Waswanipi and Ouje-Bougoumou) than in the coastal ones.

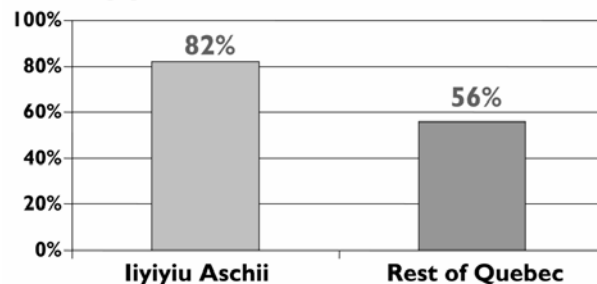
### Living arrangements

Households in Iiyiyiu Aschii are large. In Iiyiyiu Aschii, 37% of people live in a household that has six or more people; in the rest of Quebec, only 4% of people live in a household that large. Almost everyone in Iiyiyiu Aschii lives with family: only 6% of adults do *not* live with other family members.

### Community belonging

People living in Iiyiyiu Aschii think that spiritual values are important. More than two thirds (68%) of Cree say that spiritual values are a big part of their lives. They also have more sense of belonging than others in Quebec. In Iiyiyiu Aschii, 82% of people say that they have a strong feeling of being part of their community.

**Strong sense of community belonging:  
Iiyiyiu Aschii and rest of Quebec**





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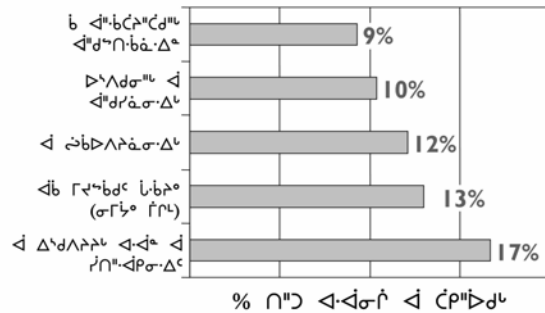
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## People's health

### Long-term health problems

One person in two has some kind of long-term health problem. And one person in five says that the problem is bad enough to limit the kinds of things they can do. The health problems that people report are:

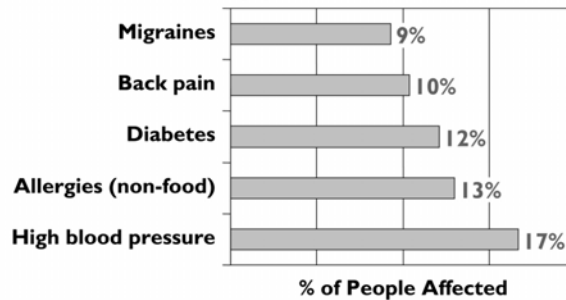
- ♦ high blood pressure – 17% of people
- ♦ allergies (other than food allergies) – 13%
- ♦ diabetes – 12%
- ♦ back pain – 10%
- ♦ migraines (bad headaches) – 9%
- ♦ breathing problems (asthma, emphysema, or chronic bronchitis) – 7%
- ♦ arthritis or rheumatism – 7%
- ♦ mood disorders – 5%

Many of these problems are less common in Iiyiyiu Aschii than in other parts of Quebec. But diabetes and high blood pressure are more common in Iiyiyiu Aschii than elsewhere.

Some of these health problems are more common now than they were in 1991. Breathing problems, diabetes, high blood pressure and migraines all seem to affect more people than before.

### Dental health

Top five long-term health problems in Iiyiyiu Aschii



One person in three says that their dental health is poor. As in the rest of Quebec, about 4% of people are unable to chew solid food.

### Mental health

Just over half the people in Iiyiyiu Aschii (53%) say that their mental health is excellent or very good. This is not as good as in the rest of Quebec, where 79% of people say their mental health is good.

Most people in the region report low or medium levels of stress – a better picture than in other parts of Quebec. But 15% of people say that their stress levels are high. Women seem to have higher stress levels than men. This may be because the number one source of stress that people mention is family responsibilities. Problems with money, work or school come second.



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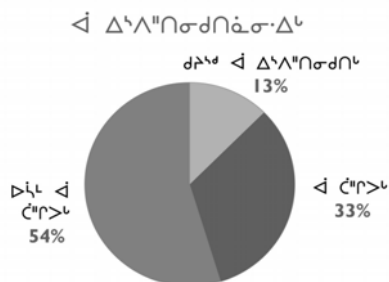
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## Habits that affect health

### Exercise

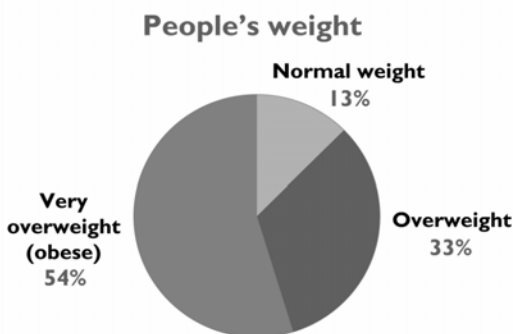
People can get exercise through sports, in their jobs, or by walking or biking to things. The survey found that about a third of adults (age 18+) in Iiyiyiu Aschii get enough exercise. Many adults get some exercise, but less than they need. And a quarter of all adults – especially women – get almost no exercise.

Youth (age 12-17) tend to be more active than adults. But even youth are less active than they should be.

### Weight

Most people living in Iiyiyiu Aschii are overweight. The survey found that 84% of adults, and 48% of youth (age 12-17), weighed more than ideal.

When people are very overweight (obese), they are more likely to have health problems. More and more people in Iiyiyiu Aschii are obese. In 1991, 41% of adults were obese, but by 2003 this had risen to 55%.



### Smoking

Almost half (46%) the people in Iiyiyiu Aschii smoke. One-third smoke every day and another 12% smoke sometimes. Almost everyone in the region has smoked at some time in their lives, even if they no longer do.

Smoking rates are higher in Iiyiyiu Aschii than in the rest of Quebec. But smokers in Iiyiyiu Aschii tend to smoke fewer cigarettes per day.

### Drinking

People in Iiyiyiu Aschii are less likely than other Quebecers to drink alcohol. Almost half (46%) had not had any alcohol in the year before the survey, and 17% had never had a drink.

But the people who *do* drink are more likely than other Quebecers to “binge” (have five or more drinks at a sitting). Over half the drinkers in Iiyiyiu Aschii “binge” at least once a month. Men are more likely than women to binge.

### Illegal drugs

More people are using drugs than in 1991. In this survey, one person in four said they had used an illegal drug in the past year. Most often, the drug was cannabis (marijuana or hashish). Cocaine or crack was the next most common choice.

### Gambling

“Gambling” can mean betting on lottery tickets, bingo, card games, casino machines, or games like darts or pool. All told, two-thirds of people in Iiyiyiu Aschii gamble in some way, and women gamble as often as men do. Younger adults are much less likely than older people to gamble.

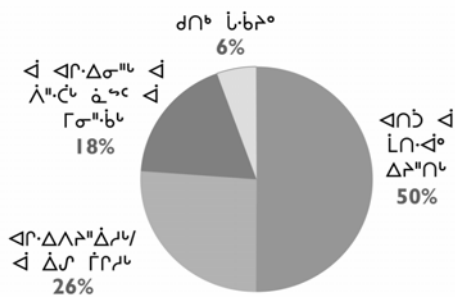
Gambling can be a problem if it gets in the way of family life, friendships, and things like work or school, or if people bet more than they can afford to lose. According to this survey, 9% of people in Iiyiyiu Aschii either have a gambling problem or are at risk of developing one.

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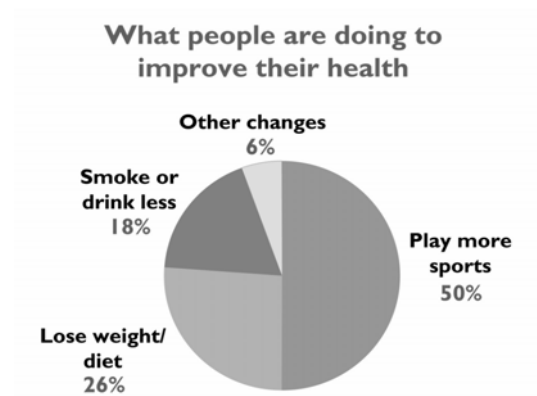
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## How people are trying to improve their health

### Improving habits

Over half the people in Iiyiyiu Aschii say that they did something to improve their health in the past year. Of those who made changes,

- ◆ half played more sports
- ◆ 26% tried to lose weight or change their diet
- ◆ 18% cut back on their smoking or drinking



### Preventing problems

People also do things to *prevent* health problems. For instance, more than half the people in Iiyiyiu Aschii said they had had a flu shot in the year before the survey. This was much higher than in other parts of Quebec.

Three quarters of women in Iiyiyiu Aschii have had a Pap test at least once in their lives. The Pap test helps prevent cancer of the cervix (the opening of the womb) by finding changes at an early stage, when they can still be treated.

Only half the people in Iiyiyiu Aschii say that they regularly wear a seatbelt. This is much lower than in the rest of Quebec, where over 90% of people wear a seatbelt.

Of the people who use all-terrain vehicles (four-wheelers), about half say that they wear a helmet most or all of the time. Men and younger adults are most likely to wear a helmet. Helmets also seem to be more common in the inland communities.

### Getting health care

In the year before the survey, 87% of people saw someone about their health at least once. Most people saw either a doctor or a nurse.

About one person in four (24%) says that they have a regular doctor. This is much lower than in other parts of Quebec. People in Iiyiyiu Aschii also see dentists less often than other Quebecers. Just over half said that they had seen a dentist in the past year.

About half (56%) the people who had had health care said that it was “very good” or “excellent.” This is a lower rating than in other parts of Quebec, where three-quarters of people describe the care they got as very good or excellent. People in Iiyiyiu Aschii also find it harder to get access to health care. Even so, two-thirds of those who had had care rated their access as “very good” or “excellent.”

