

New research brought to you by Sun Life

The gender health gap: its impact on working women in Canada



Women's health has long been overlooked both clinically and culturally. This in turn has created a gender health gap. This is harmful for both employee and workplace health.

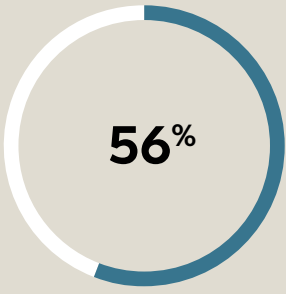
The gender health gap affects women physically, mentally and emotionally. It can also vary for each

woman depending on her unique situation. This includes physiological differences, cultural challenges, socio-economic status, education and more.

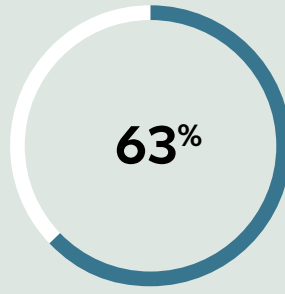
Through our research with Ipsos, we heard directly from Canadian women on their health needs, challenges, and wants.

Mental Health is a growing concern, but not the only one

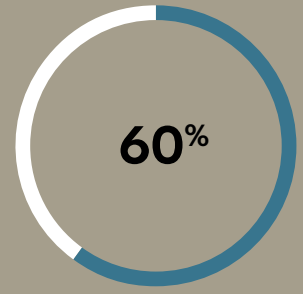
Mental Health is a top health concern for Canadian women right now, across all age groups.



56% of women said mental health was their top health concern.



63% of women are also concerned about chronic diseases such as migraines and other headaches, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and bone health and autoimmune disorders.

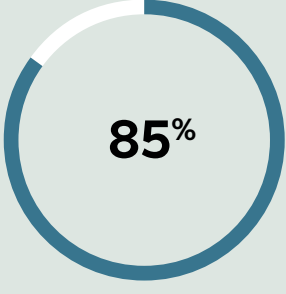


60% said that health issues around menstruation, menopause, and reproductive health could affect a woman's career advancement abilities.

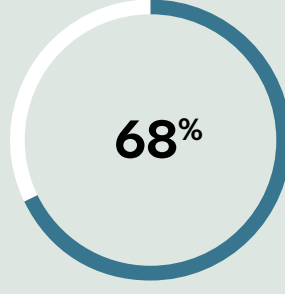
Addressing the health needs of women should be of importance to employers and the health system. Yet it falls short.

Societal expectations and workplace bias

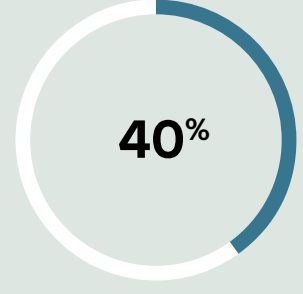
Societal expectations about a woman's role have a measurable impact on the workplace.



85% said they bear a greater burden of household and childcare responsibilities compared to men.



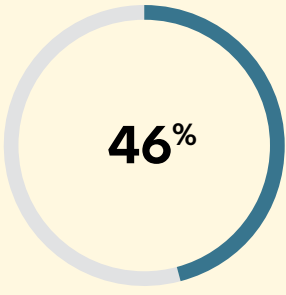
68% believed women are at a workplace disadvantage compared to men if they take a leave of absence.



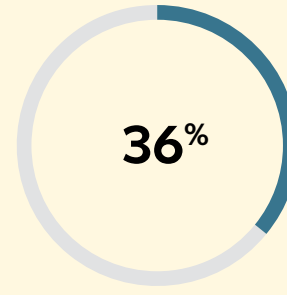
Four in 10 working women said they've made career-limiting decisions to care for their family or for health-related concerns.

This shows how societal expectations and gender norms have a significant impact on women's career growth.

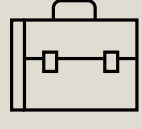
Benefits are important, but not meeting their needs



Only **46%** said their employer benefits cover mental health treatments.



36% say that their mental health benefits do not provide enough coverage to meet their needs.

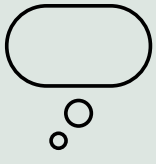


Many aren't aware of the benefits they have. Here are the percentages of women who are unaware of various benefits

- Contraceptive coverage (**31%**)
- Pelvic floor physical therapy (**43%**)
- Fertility treatments (**42%**)
- Family building (**45%**)
- Menopause support (**43%**)
- Breastfeeding support (**46%**)

Taking action

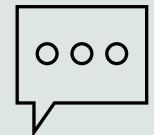
Employers can build awareness, reduce stigma and provide access to care. Here's how:



Conversations. Greater openness from leaders to talk about and support women's health issues.



Coverage. Provide a customizable plan with adequate coverage helps plan members meet their specific needs.



Communications. Create communications that clearly showcase the women-specific benefits and coverage levels available in your workplace.

Learn more in our latest research report, [The gender health gap: its impact on working women in Canada](#).

Our [website](#) provides information and guidance on how you can get started supporting women's health in Canadian workplaces.