

The Impact of the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program (CPNP) on the Health and Wellbeing of Program Participants

What is the CPNP 2018 Participant Study?

The CPNP Participant Study examines the following questions:

- Who participates in CPNP?
- Does the program help participants to gain knowledge, skills, positive health behaviours and/or improve health and wellbeing?
- Do some participants experience more benefits than others from the program?
- Do participants have a positive experience with the program? (e.g., do they feel welcome and respected?)

The Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program

CPNP is a national community-based program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

Launched in 1995, CPNP aims to increase access to health and social services to promote healthy pregnancies for vulnerable pregnant women and improve infant outcomes.

Approximately **45,000 pregnant women, parents and caregivers** participate in the program each year at over 200 projects across Canada.

To answer these questions, paper-based surveys were completed by CPNP participants (pre- and post-natal women) attending CPNP projects during a one-month period (November 2018). CPNP participants completed one of two surveys:

1. **A Demographic Survey:** This survey collected sociodemographic information from participants.

OR

2. **An Outcome Survey:** This survey collected sociodemographic information from participants, information about program participation as well as information on the following outcomes:
 - knowledge and skills;
 - positive health practices;
 - information about pregnancy and birth; and
 - experience with the program.

How many projects and participants participated in the study?

Surveys from 3,916 participants were received from 194 projects across the country (excluding CPNP projects in Quebec).

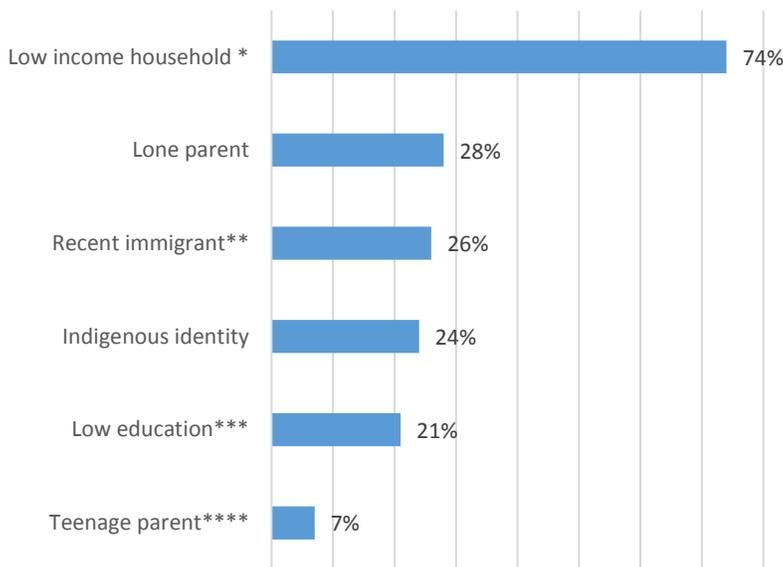
The data collected on the surveys was statistically weighted* to be representative of the CPNP participant population.

**The purpose of data weighting is to adjust the number of responses by project to mirror annual project participation figures.*

Main Findings

CPNP participants report **experiencing conditions of risk and other challenges** that may affect their health and wellbeing.

Sociodemographic Profile of CPNP Participants



Other Challenges Experienced by CPNP Participants

Challenge	%
Stress	84%
Employment	38%
Feeling isolated	32%
Food security	31%
Housing	29%
Family violence	14%
Drug/Alcohol use in family	9%

* At or below low income measure

** Living in Canada 10 years or less

*** Less than high school

**** 19 years of age or less

Participants describe their **experience with the program as positive and supportive.**

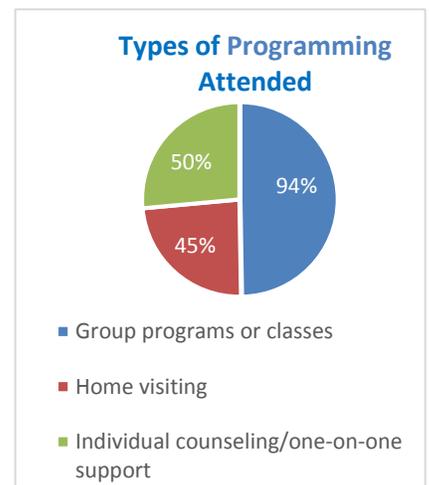
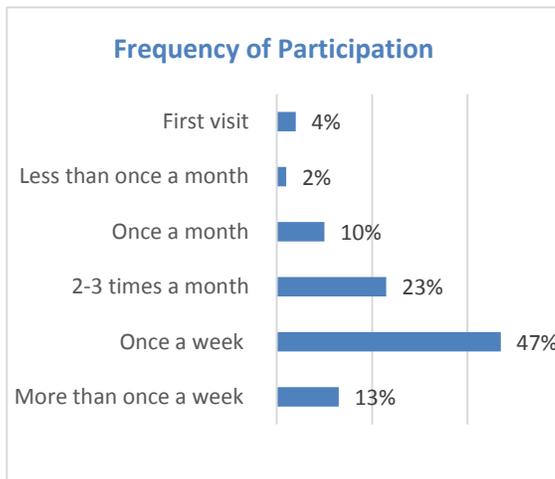
The majority of CPNP participants report a positive experience with the program. For example, participants report:

- **Feeling welcomed and accepted** at the program (96%)
- Receiving **valuable information** that helps them make decisions (96%)
- That **staff respond to their concerns** (96%)
- Their **personal and cultural beliefs were respected** by the program (95%); and
- That staff helped them to **learn how to get the resources they need** (95%).

These findings are important because research has shown that *how* support is provided to parents has an impact on the outcomes achieved. Providing services in a family friendly manner has been shown to increase parent's sense of parenting confidence and competence¹

Most CPNP participants attend the program **frequently** and **participate in several types of programming** however, the **duration² of attendance varies**.

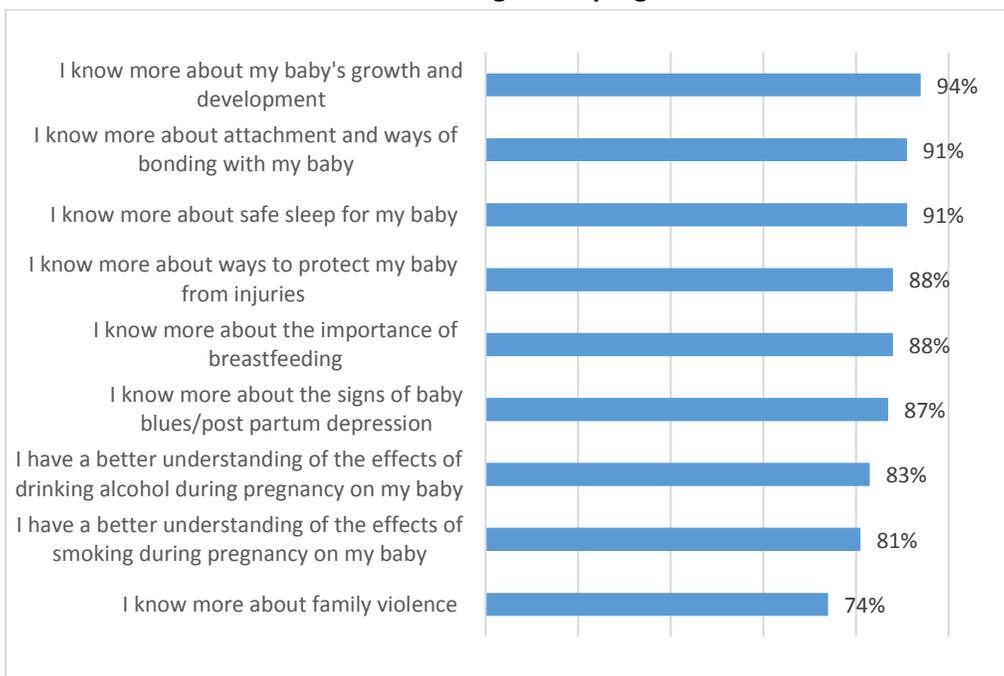
PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM



* Duration as of November 2018. Participants can join CPNP at any point in time during the year. Most women enroll in first (34%) or second (34%) trimester of pregnancy (14% during third trimester and 18% post-natally).

Participants report **gaining knowledge and skills** as a result of coming to the program. The extent to which participants gain knowledge and skills relates to **participant characteristics, how long they attend for and their overall experiences of the program**.

Participants who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the following as a result of coming to the program



Participants report experiencing **greater gains in knowledge and skills** if they:

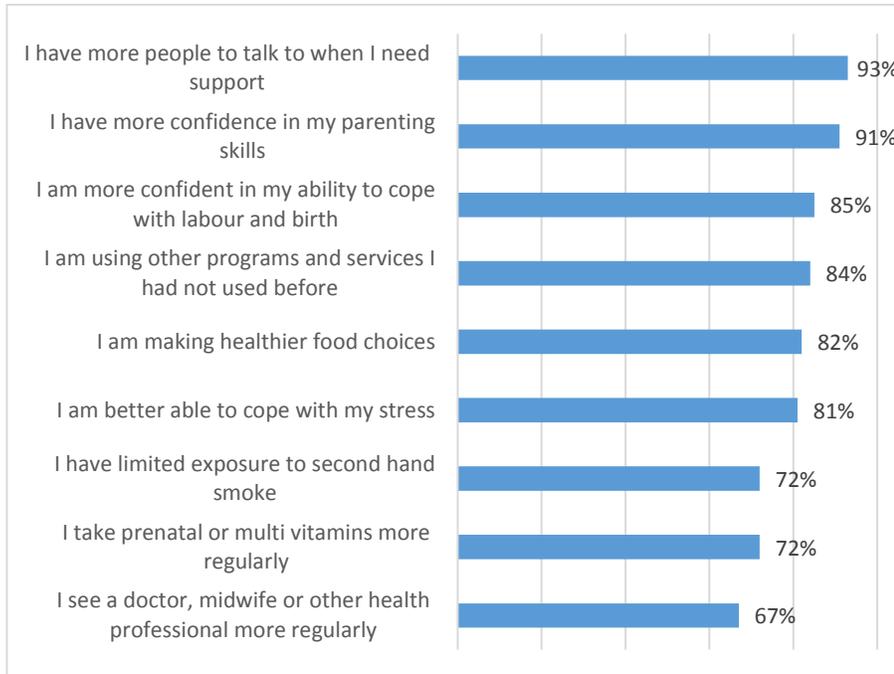
- Attend the program for a **longer duration**; or
- Have a **positive experience** with the program.

Participants report **fewer gains in knowledge and skills** if they:

- Have experienced **stress** in the past 12 months.

Participants report **adopting positive health behaviours** as a result of coming to the program. The extent to which participants adopt positive health behaviours relates to aspects of **program participation, participant characteristics and experiences with the program.**

Participants who "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the following as a result of coming to the program



Participants report **greater improvement in health behaviours** if they:

- Attend the program for a **longer length of time or more frequently**; or
- Receive **one-on-one counseling or support**; or
- Have a **positive experience** with the program.

Participants report **less improvement in health behaviours** if they:

- Have felt **stress** in the past 12 months.

Participants report that the **information and advice they receive at CPNP helps** them to **adopt healthier practices related to smoking and alcohol use.**

SMOKING DURING PREGNANCY

Of the participants who report smoking since learning they were pregnant (25%):

- 57% reduced their smoking; and
- 31% had quit smoking at the time of survey completion.

Of the participants who report reducing or quitting their smoking:

- 57% state that the information and support from the CPNP helped them to do so.

ALCOHOL USE DURING PREGNANCY

Of the participants who report drinking alcohol since learning they were pregnant (7.5%):

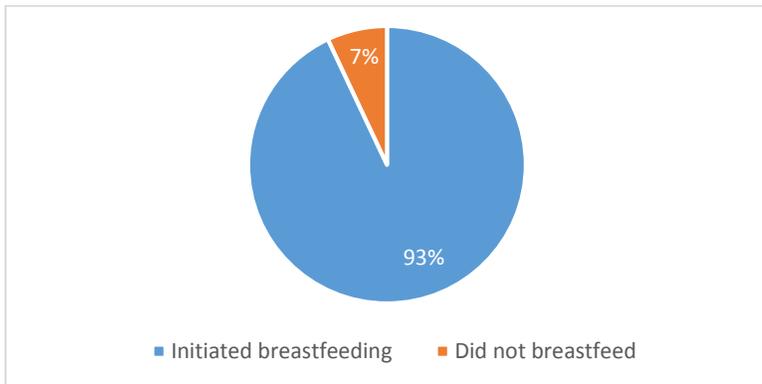
- 24% reduced drinking alcohol; and
- 74% had quit drinking alcohol at the time of survey completion.

Of the participants who report reducing or quitting their alcohol use:

- 62% state that the information and support from the CPNP helped them to do so.

The **majority** of CPNP participants report **initiating breastfeeding**.

Participants who Initiated Breastfeeding



- The majority of CPNP participants initiate breastfeeding (93%).
- Approximately 73% of participants report they receive help or advice from CPNP staff about breastfeeding.

Participants report improvements to their **health and wellbeing** as a result of coming to the program and that the program has a positive impact on their pregnancy. The extent to which participants report improvements to health and wellbeing relates to aspects of **program participation, participant characteristics** and **their experiences with the program**.

As a result of coming to the program, the majority of participants report improvement in their health and wellbeing. Specifically:

- **94%** of participants report **their health and wellbeing** improved because of coming to the program;
- **83%** of participants report **their mental health** is better because of coming to the program; and
- **95%** of participants state the program had a **positive influence on their pregnancy**.

Participants report experiencing **greater improvement in their mental health** if they:

- Have a more **positive experience** with the program; or
- Attend the program for a **longer length of time**; or
- Identify as a **recent immigrant**.

Participants report experiencing **less improvement in their mental health** if they:

- Have **experienced stress** in the past 12 months.

Participants report greater improvement to their **health and wellbeing** if they:

- Are **older**; or
- Attend **individual counselling or one-on-one support**; or
- Have a **positive experience** with the program.

In Summary

- **The CPNP program is reaching vulnerable women.** For example, many women participating in the program report living in low income households (74%) and the majority report experiencing stress (84%).
- **The CPNP program is improving participants' knowledge, skills, health behaviours and overall health and wellbeing.** For example, many parents/caregivers report gains in areas such as healthy eating and infant safety. The majority of participants report initiating breastfeeding (93%) and many participants report that the help, information and support they receive from the program helps them to reduce substance use (smoking and drinking alcohol).
- **The types of programming participants attend, the duration and frequency of participation and/or participant characteristics relate to gains in some of the outcomes in this study.** For example, attending the program for a longer duration relates to gains in knowledge, skills and positive health behaviours. Also of note, participants who report experiencing stress are less likely to report gains in knowledge and skills, health behaviours and in their mental health.
- **Participants are having a positive experience with the program. Having a positive experience with the program is the most important predictor of gains in the outcomes examined in this study.** *How* the CPNP program is delivered appears to be important in promoting gains in knowledge, skills, health practices and overall health and wellbeing.

Acknowledgements

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The survey used in this study was informed by the following surveys:

1. Benzies, K, Clarke, D, Barker, L & Mychasiuk, R. (2012). Upstart Parent Survey: A psychometrically valid tool for the evaluation of prevention-focussed parenting programs. *Maternal Child Health Journal*.
2. BC Early Childhood Development Project. The ECD Evaluation Project: Parent Survey Rationale. (March 2013).
3. FRP Canada: E-Valuation. Participant Survey.

Kelly Sears Consulting Group and **Narrative Research** were contracted to conduct the data analyses and to produce the report on which this summary is based.

References:

1. Carol M. Trivette and Carl J. Dunst, "Community-based Parent Support Programs, revised ed., in: RE Tremblay, RG Barr, and RDeV Peters, eds, *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development* [online], Montreal, Quebec: Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development and Strategic Knowledge Cluster on Early Child Development, 2009:1-7, available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.616.1988&rep=rep1&type=pdf>, accessed August 30, 2019.