

NATIONAL SURVEY SHOWS CONFIDENCE

Winnipeg, Manitoba – According to a new national survey, Canadians have more confidence that the water they drink today is safer than it was eight years ago, when seven people died in Walkerton, Ontario after drinking *E. coli*-contaminated water.



Titled, *A Clear Perspective of Canadians and their Drinking Water (2008)*, this national research study details Canadians' views on key drinking water issues including public confidence in drinking water supplies, evolving patterns of tap and bottled water consumption and awareness of drinking water sources and systems. Undertaken on behalf of subscribers from both government and private sector organizations, the research report also monitors the degree of public support for various drinking water-related policies and practices and tracks attitudes and behaviours from earlier studies conducted in 2002, 2004, and 2006. Several new areas of enquiry that are explored this year include Canadians' awareness of the impact of global warming on future drinking water supplies, environmental concerns over empty bottled water container disposal, and views on the condition of local water infrastructure. The study also provides comparative Canadian and American data for several key areas and highlights unique features that differentiate consumers from these two neighbouring markets.

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These findings emerged from a national telephone survey of Canadian adults taken by Probe Research, Inc. between April 17th and May 22nd, 2008 among a random and representative sampling of 2,260 Canadian adults.

"We've seen a marked improvement in Canadians' perceptions about the quality and safety of their local tap water supplies in our most recent research" confirms Mary Lou Mendro, the director of Syndicated Studies at Probe Research Inc.

Canadian Water Supplies Perceived to be Safer Today

Canadians were presented with the following question: "As you may recall, the Walkerton tragedy that occurred in May 2000 was Canada's worst ever outbreak of *E. coli*-contaminated water where seven people died and hundreds more suffered. Do you believe that the safety of your own local tap supplies today is better, worse or the same as it was eight years ago?"

Almost one-half of Canadians (48 per cent) shared the impression that their tap water was "safer" today than it was eight years ago, while only a small handful of Canadians surveyed coast to coast believe that the safety of their water supplies has worsened over the past eight years (6 per cent "worse"). Four in ten households (40 per cent) felt there has been no change in the safety of their tap water since the Walkerton event.

This Canadian drinking water study conducted by Probe Research Inc. examined variations in behaviours and attitudes among different population groups. As noted below, residents of Saskatchewan and Ontario were most likely to state that their drinking water is safer today than in 2000 (56 per cent and 55 per cent respectively), while residents of Quebec were less likely than other Canadians to note an improvement in the safety of their drinking water (41 per cent).

IN DRINKING WATER RISING

	Canada (n=2,260)	B.C. (n=390)	Alta. (n=200)	Sask. (n=200)	Man. (n=200)	Ont. (n=610)	Que. (n=460)	Atl. (n=200)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Better	48	44	44	56	49	55	41	50
Same	40	45	45	38	39	36	42	39
Worse	6	5	3	2	6	3	12	4
Unsure	6	6	8	5	7	6	5	7
Margin of Error (95% certainty)	±2.2%	±6.5%	±7.0%	±7.0%	±7.0%	±4.5%	±4.7%	±7.0%

Canadians' Perceptions About Tap Water Quality

"As you may recall, the Walkerton tragedy that occurred in May 2000 was Canada's worst ever outbreak of *E. coli*-contaminated water where seven people died and hundreds more suffered. Do you believe that the safety of your own local tap supplies today is better, worse or the same as it was eight years ago?"

The study revealed that those earning \$75,000 a year or more were more likely than those earning less than \$40,000 a year to say their water had improved (54 per cent vs. 46 per cent respectively). As well, the study revealed that municipal system users were more likely than well water users to believe the quality of their

drinking water had improved (52 per cent vs. 45 per cent respectively) since the Walkerton tragedy.

Probe Research Inc. is a fully Canadian-owned public opinion and marketing research organization based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Since 2002, Probe Research has been carefully monitoring the North American drinking water marketplace and has become the most prolific and authoritative voice on this dynamic issue. The company has worked extensively with all levels of government, as well as with some of North America's most prestigious corporations and not-for-profit organizations and has become the most authoritative voice on the drinking water marketplace in North America.

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- Mary Lou Mendro,
Director of Syndicated Studies,
Probe Research Inc.

For more information on this national survey, please contact:

Scott MacKay

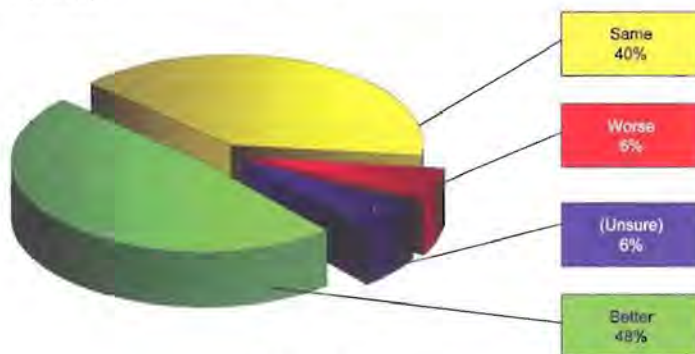
President
Probe Research, Inc.
850-125 Garry Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3P2
Tel.: (204) 926-6565
Cellular: (204) 955-9777
Fax: (204) 926-6566
Email: scott@probe-research.com

Mary Lou Mendro

Director of Syndicated Studies
Probe Research, Inc.
850-125 Garry Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 3P2
Tel.: (204) 926-6565
Fax: (204) 926-6566
Email: marylou@probe-research.com

Perceptions of Drinking Water Safety

Q.F5. "As you may recall, the Walkerton tragedy that occurred in May 2000 was Canada's worst-ever outbreak of *e-coli* contaminated water where seven people died and hundreds more suffered. Do you believe that the safety of your own local tap supplies today is better, worse or the same as it was eight years ago?" (n=2260)



- All Respondents -