



# Health Awareness Canada

<https://healthawarenesscanada.org/>

## Immigrant Health in Canada: What is the Problem?

- Research shows that immigrants arrive Canada healthy, in fact, recent immigrants are actually healthier than the native-born Canadians
- This pattern is referred to as **Healthy Immigrant Effect**
  - *Healthy Immigrant Effect* refers to the pattern that immigrants enter the host country healthier than the native-born population
- However, immigrants' health deteriorates over time (eroding *Healthy Immigrant Effect*)
  - As immigrants resided longer in Canada, research showed that their risk for various types of chronic diseases eventually converged and even surpassed that of native-born population
  - This is problematic and we need to pay more attention to this issue

## Why should we Care about Immigrant Health?

- With significant proportion of Canada's population being immigrants, this makes it particularly important for us to focus on immigrant health – as it is directly related to various issues such as *the cost and adequacy of the Canadian healthcare system*
- Moreover, with international migration being identified as a critical strategy for Canada's economic development, newcomers' health and well-being are important for Canada's future; *as good health and well-being is a key outcome of successful immigration settlement and integration*

## Health Literacy among Immigrants: Insufficient Focus on Food Literacy

-With greater focus on immigrant health in Canada, there has been a growing focus on improving the health literacy among the immigrant population

- The term **health literacy** describes the ability to obtain, understand and use health information
  - Keeping up with the latest health information and what they mean in our daily lives is challenging for everyone – but more so for newcomers with limited English proficiency and little experience in Canada
- However, very little attention has been paid on *food literacy*
- Enhancing health literacy applies not only to medical settings – but also to a variety of everyday settings such as making everyday food choices
  - The term **food literacy** refers to the ability of an individual to understand food in a way that they develop a positive relationship with it, including food skills and practices across the lifespan in order to navigate, engage, and participate within a complex food system

## Lack of Food Literacy: Underestimated Problem

-Lack of food literacy among immigrant population is an underestimated problem:

- Immigrants face many challenges in making healthy food choices in Canada, as they often find themselves in a new food environment
  - Immigrant's unfamiliarity with grocery stores, lack of awareness of Canadian nutrition discourse, and lack of learned cooking skills present challenges for them
  - This nutrition transition may contribute to the gradual decline in immigrant health

## About Health Awareness Canada (HAC)

**Health Awareness Canada (HAC)** is a registered nonprofit organization with a mission of helping newcomers (e.g. immigrants and refugees) to maintain their health and well-being in Canada – by raising awareness of the importance of food literacy.

### Our Mission:

- Our mission is to help the newcomers (e.g. immigrants and refugees) to maintain their health and well-being in Canada. We strive to fulfill this mission by raising awareness of the importance of food literacy.

### Our Motivation:

- With a significant proportion of Canada's population being immigrants, this makes it particularly important for us to put greater focus on immigrant health – as it is directly related to various issues such as the cost and adequacy of the Canadian health system.

### Our Goals:

- Health Awareness Canada (H.A.C) aims to raise an awareness of how food literacy may affect immigrants' health and well-being
- One of our goals is to create a health information hub for everyone – to collaboratively work together in helping the newcomers
- We envision becoming a bridge organization to bring together the settlement agencies, community organizations, government ministries, social and health services, and educational institutions

## 3C Project: Connect and Change the Community (C.C.C.)

3C PROJECT:  
CONNECT AND CHANGE THE COMMUNITY

SO THAT NEWCOMERS CAN  
LIVE A HEALTHY LIFE IN CANADA



-Through *Connect and Change the Community (C.C.C.) Project*, Health Awareness Canada (HAC) seeks **to bridge the gap** between the immigrant service providers and community health organizations so that more collaborative efforts can be made in providing newcomers with culturally appropriate health interventions.

### • What is this project trying to address?

- Despite the existence of many health organizations providing various programs (e.g. workshops on healthy eating etc), many immigrants have difficulties in navigating these resources
- As immigrants experience difficulties in navigating these resources, these programs are highly underutilized by the immigrant population
- **Our solution:** Through 3C Project, we aim to build an online database **to achieve synergies between different stakeholders** – including researchers, community organizations, governments and other relevant partners.
- This online database will provide an online information hub; where different stakeholders can share information about the programs which they offer, discuss the needs of their clients (e.g. immigrants and refugees), and also to seek partnerships for new programs or research etc.



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

-Visit:

<https://healthawarenesscanada.org/>

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