



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF GASTROENTEROLOGY
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WHAT CANADIANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GASTRO-INTESTINAL DISEASE

- The economic burden of digestive diseases exceeds that of all other disorders, including mental, cardiovascular, respiratory and central nervous system diseases and cancer.
- Digestive diseases are responsible for 15% of the total direct economic burden of Canadian health costs.
- The short-term loss of productivity that results from digestive diseases costs Canadian business and taxpayers \$1.14 billion per year.
- Studies in the U.S. demonstrate that diarrhea alone accounts for more than 3 million sick days per year with an estimated cost of \$350 million (USD). In Canada, diarrhea accounts for approximately 150,000 sick days per year with an estimated cost of \$22 million (CD).
- Hospital discharges for digestive diseases contribute 12% of all hospitalizations and 20% of all neoplasias.
- Despite the greater demand for the treatment of digestive diseases in Canada, there are more university staff members and residents dedicated to mental, cardiovascular, respiratory and neurologic disciplines.
- The Canadian government provides less support for research into digestive diseases than for cardiovascular and neurologic research.

Most common reasons for referral to a gastroenterologist *

Lower gastrointestinal bleeding	19%
Abdominal pain	17%
Dyspepsia	9 %
Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)	8 %
Upper gastrointestinal bleeding	7 %
Diarrhea	7 %
Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)	7 %
Screening colonoscopy	7 %
Chest pain	5 %
Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)	5 %
Reflux	5 %
Constipation	5 %
Anemia	4 %
Weight loss	3 %
Vomiting	2 %

* As identified through 224 consecutive referrals from the Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax