



A Growing Population

Seniors are one of the fastest growing population groups in Canada. In 2000, there were an estimated 3.8 million Canadians aged 65 and over, up 62% from 2.4 million in 1981. In fact, the senior population has grown about twice as fast as the overall population since the early 1980s.

As a result, more than one out of every 8 Canadians is now a senior. In 2000, 13% of

the population were seniors, up from 10% in 1981 and 8% in 1971; it was also more than two and a half times the figure in 1921, when only 5% of people living in Canada were seniors.

The rapid growth in the size of the senior population is also expected to continue well into the future, particularly when those born during the baby boom years from 1946 to 1966 begin turning age 65 early in the second decade of the new century.

Statistics Canada has projected, for example, that by 2021 there will be almost 7 million seniors, who will represent 19% of the total population, and that by 2041 there will be over 9 million seniors, who will make up an estimated 25% of the population.

The senior population, however, is not a homogeneous group. At least from a broad statistical perspective, people aged 65-74 more closely resemble those in age groups under age 65 than they do those aged 85 and over, while people aged 75-84 appear to be in a period of transition. Seniors aged 85 and over, on the other hand, are the most likely to be characterized by many of the conditions, such as ill health, associated with old age. This is particularly significant because the population aged 85 and over is the fastest growing segment of the overall senior population.

Population aged 65 and over

Year	People aged 65 and over			As a % of the Canadian population
	Men	Women	Total	
	000s			
1921	215.0	205.3	420.2	4.8
1931	294.6	281.5	576.1	5.6
1941	390.9	376.9	767.8	6.7
1951	551.3	535.0	1086.3	7.8
1961	674.1	717.0	1391.1	7.6
1971	790.3	972.0	1762.3	8.0
1981	1017.2	1360.1	2377.3	9.6
1986	1147.6	1589.3	2737.0	10.4
1991	1349.8	1867.4	3217.2	11.4
1996	1515.3	2066.7	3582.0	12.1
1998	1587.4	2142.3	3729.8	12.3
2000	1645.4	2204.4	3849.9	12.5
Projections				
2016	2521.2	3181.2	5702.4	16.6
2021	2989.6	3681.1	6670.6	18.9
2026	3515.5	4237.4	7753.0	21.4
2031	3950.2	4705.9	8656.1	23.6
2036	4132.7	4934.0	9066.7	24.4
2041	4197.1	5035.8	9232.9	24.9
2046	4231.4	5087.2	9318.7	25.2
2051	4257.5	5108.9	9366.4	25.4