



Heart and Stroke Foundation media backgrounder

The Heart and Stroke Foundation, a volunteer-based health charity, leads in eliminating heart disease and stroke and reducing their impact through the advancement of research and its application, the promotion of healthy living, and advocacy. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada (HSFC) is a federation of 10 provincial Foundations, led and supported by a force of more than 130,000 volunteers.

Research

The Heart and Stroke Foundation leads the way in funding life-saving research to reduce the burden of heart disease and stroke and improve the lives of Canadians and in transferring the resulting knowledge to the public and to health professionals:

- HSFC is a leading funder of heart and stroke research in Canada. In 2008, we invested over **\$127 million** in peer reviewed heart disease and stroke research, health promotion and community programs
- HSFC has invested more than **one billion dollars** into Canadian heart and stroke research in the last 50 years – and currently funds more than **900** researchers and research teams across Canada.
- As a leading and early partner with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, HSFC has partnered in research initiatives with all 13 of the CIHR institutes.

Health promotion and public policy

The Heart and Stroke Foundation brings a strong message to all Canadians of the importance of healthy lifestyles, healthy communities, and healthy public policy to prevent heart disease and stroke:

- Health Check™, Canada's first not-for-profit food information program, helps millions of Canadians identify healthier food choices every day through the Health Check™ symbol on food packaging and restaurant menus. Since 1999, Health Check™ has grown to over 120 brands and over 1,800 products.



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- HSFC partners with the Canadian Cancer Society on the 5 to 10 a Day education and public awareness campaign.
- HSFC co-chaired the Trans Fat Task Force with Health Canada.
- The Foundation's health promotion programs and resources are at work across Canada to help people learn how to live healthier lives.
- HSFC leads the Canadian Stroke Strategy, designed to provide all Canadians with the best stroke care possible, regardless of where they live, by 2010, in partnership with the Canadian Stroke Network.
- HSFC led in the development of the Canadian Heart Health Strategy and Action Plan.
- HSFC sets the Canadian Guidelines for CPR, defibrillation, and other aspects of emergency cardiovascular care in Canada. HSFC CPR training materials are used across the country to teach Canadians how to save a life.

Advocacy

A committed and powerful health advocate, the Heart and Stroke Foundation has a long and successful history of working with government, health care professionals, other voluntary organizations, and industry to advocate for public policy change to improve the health of Canadians.

When we see the need for change, we act. Over the last 50 years, our advocacy leadership and ongoing public awareness initiatives have helped pave the way towards remarkable achievements in key areas such as tobacco control, healthy nutrition and active living. Current specific areas of focus include obesity reduction, increasing awareness among women of their risk of heart disease, and trans fat reduction. A key vehicle to achieve these goals involves the development of a national heart health strategy.

The Foundation undertakes a number of activities to position the above issues with federal parliamentarians, including: Regular appearances before House of Commons Standing Committees; preparation of briefs and other materials for parliamentarians, and; regular meetings with parliamentarians.