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(38%), Food (37%), Pests (35%) and Cigarettes (22%)*

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While Most (78%) Say they Try Reasonably Hard to Conserve It, Items that Canadians Have Flushed Down the Toilet Include Hair (38%), Food (37%), Pests (35%) and Cigarettes (22%)

Toronto, ON - Three quarters (72%) of Canadians admit to having used the toilet as a convenient garbage can, flushing away items that could have just as easily gone in the garbage can, according to the 4th annual Canadian Water Attitudes Study conducted by Ipsos Reid and commissioned by RBC and Unilever Canada and sponsored by the UN Water for Life Decade.

Across the country, Albertans (83%) are the most likely to say they have used the toilet as a convenient garbage can, followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (76%), British Columbia (73%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (73%), Ontario (72%) and, finally, Quebec (65%). Younger adults, aged 18 to 34, are much more likely to say they have done this (84%), followed by those aged 35 to 54 (71%) and those over 55 (63%).

The most common items that Canadians say they have flushed down the toilet include hair (38%), leftover food (37%), dead pests like spiders and bugs (35%), cigarette butts (22%), dead pets like goldfish (16%), women's hygiene products (16%), dental floss (11%), condoms (10%), bathroom products such as swabs and cotton balls (9%), baby wipes (7%), dead



rodents like mice (3%), or some other item (7%). Just three in ten (28%) say they haven't put any of these items down the toilet.

The average toilet in Canada uses somewhere between six and twenty litres of water per flush. Most Canadians are using their toilets as a garbage despite the fact that a majority (55%) believes that water is Canada's most important natural resource, compared to fewer who believe it is Canada's agricultural farm land (15%), forests (13%), oil (12%), fisheries (2%), base metals (2%) or coal (0%).

Furthermore, most (78%) Canadians say they try hard (21% try very hard/57% try reasonably hard) to conserve water, although this is less than the proportion of Canadians (86%) who believe they try hard (30% try very/56% somewhat) to conserve electricity. In fact, one in three (32%) Canadians say that when they use water in their home, they don't think about the energy required to treat and pump it, or the cost of that energy to the city, and ultimately to the user in the form of higher taxes. While four in ten (40%) make the connection and try to save water as a result, three in ten (29%) think a little about the connection but believe that, since they're only one person, they can't really have an impact.

Some may find it perplexing that Canadians use their toilet in this way, despite most (80%) knowing that the water that flows into your toilet is just as clean as the water that flows into your kitchen or bathroom sink. Moreover, three quarters (76%) of Canadians know that nearly half (forty-five percent) of the water used in Canadian homes is flushed down the toilet.

Sources show that Canadians use 329 litres a day, on average. The results of the survey, though, suggest that Canadians grossly under-estimate this number. One quarter (24%) believes the number is closer to 55 litres a day, while three in ten (29%) think the average



Canadian uses 132 litres of water per day. One in ten (14%) think Canadians use 226 litres per day, and just 4% choose the correct response of 329 litres. Two percent (2%) actually thought the number was higher at 408 litres per day, while one quarter (26%) of Canadians said they didn't know.

Other water-wasting habits that Canadians engage in run from leaving the water running while brushing their teeth (47%) and doing the dishes (46%), to hosing down their driveways (17%), watering their lawn when it is about to rain (2%) and using a hose to melt snow in the spring (2%).

The data also reveal that Canadians are generally in the dark when it comes to the cost of water. While most (77%) 'agree' (32% strongly/45% somewhat) that 'people should pay for the water they use', and seven in ten (70%) 'agree' (23% strongly/47% somewhat) that 'the price for water is high enough to ensure it is treated as a valuable resource', only four in ten (39%) actually know what they pay for their water usage in their home. Others say they don't pay because they're not using a utility as a water source (15%), that it's included in their rent (22%), or that they simply don't know how much they pay (24%).

The survey also revealed some good news in that Canadians' confidence in the safety and quality of Canada's drinking water has increased significantly over the past two years, rising from 72% (17% very/55% somewhat) in 2009 to 86% (29% very/57% somewhat) this year. Confidence is highest in British Columbia at 92%, and lowest in Quebec at 69%. Nine in ten (91%) Canadians who drink tap water in their home are confident (48% very/43% somewhat) in the safety and quality of the drinking water in their home. Those in Ontario (97%) are the most confident, followed by those living in BC (94%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (92%), Alberta (91%), Atlantic Canada (89%) and Quebec (83%).



When it comes to the source of water they typically drink in their home, nearly half (48%) drink tap water directly from the tap, while three in ten (28%) run it through some sort of filtration system. One in ten (14%) drink water from a large-jug cooler system, while two in ten (21%) Canadians say they drink bottled water in their home, up significantly (9 points) from two years ago.

Canadians level of confidence in the long-term supply of Canada's fresh water has also increased from 70% (15% very/55% somewhat) two years ago to 77% (21% very/56% somewhat) this year. Confidence is highest in the Prairies (85%) and British Columbia (84%), followed by Atlantic Canada (81%), Alberta (80%), Ontario (80%), and Quebec (63%).

While confidence in the quality and supply of freshwater in Canada has been on the rise over the last two years, nearly nine in ten (87%) are 'concerned' (45% very/42% somewhat) about the quality of water in the lakes in which they swim, up 4 points from last year. Furthermore, six in ten (63%) perceive the problem to be getting worse, while just 14% believe there has been an improvement and one quarter (23%) believe there has been no change.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between January 20-17, 2011, on behalf of RBC and Unilever, and endorsed by the UN Water for Life Decade. For this survey, a sample of 2,066 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-2.2 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.



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