

8 Key Findings from the 2018 Community Cannabis Survey

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Author
Auburn Larose, Epidemiologist
Planning and Evaluation Services
research@healthunit.ca



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In the fall of 2018, the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (NBPSDHU) surveyed residents of Nipissing and Parry Sound districts, aged 16 and older, to learn about their recreational cannabis use, attitudes towards cannabis, and knowledge of harm reduction messages related to cannabis. All survey data was collected before recreational cannabis was legalized in Canada on October 17th, 2018 meaning that these results can be used to evaluate the local impacts of cannabis legalization. Information collected through this survey can also inform local cannabis-related initiatives and resources.

Overall, 961 respondents from 35 local municipalities and First Nations responded to the survey. More than half of all respondents lived in the City of North Bay, with a large number of respondents also living in West Nipissing, the Town of Parry Sound, and East Ferris. The median age of respondents was 44 years.

This report highlights the eight key findings from the survey.

FINDING #1: Survey respondents reported higher cannabis use than the local population*

79% of respondents reported using cannabis in their lifetime

38% of respondents reported using cannabis in the last year

51% of the local population reported using cannabis in their lifetimeⁱ

11% of the local population reported using cannabis in the last yearⁱ

* The local population refers to individuals who live within the Health Unit region and who completed the Canadian Community Health Survey between 2009 and 2012.

FINDING #2: The majority of survey respondents who reported using cannabis first tried it at a young age



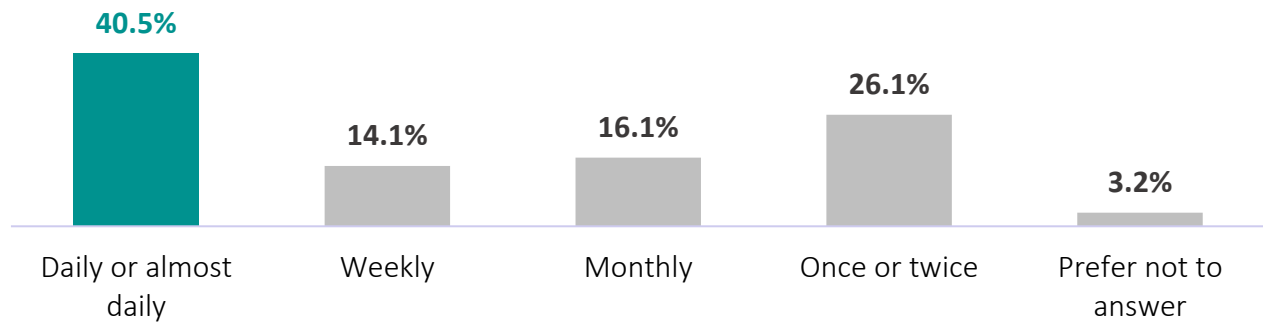
74%

of respondents who reported using cannabis tried it for the first time before the age of 19

Did you know...

Our brains develop until our mid-20s. Regular use of cannabis before then can affect memory, thinking, and attention. It increases the risk of mental health problems, dependence, and lung conditions. Avoid cannabis use until adulthood.

FINDING #3: Many of the survey respondents who reported cannabis use in the last year were **daily or almost daily users**

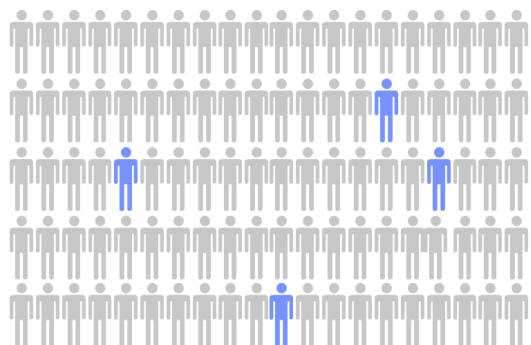


Male respondents were more likely to report daily or almost daily use while females were more likely to report using cannabis once or twice in the past year. Respondents aged 34 or younger were less likely to report daily or almost daily use when compared to respondents aged 35 and older.

Did you know...

The more a person uses cannabis, the higher their risk of health and social problems. Daily or near-daily use can cause problems with memory, learning, and decision-making. Avoid frequent, daily, or near-daily use.

FINDING #4: Few survey respondents would give cannabis to a person under the age of 19



4%

of all respondents reported they would give cannabis to a person under the age of 19, the legal age for cannabis consumption in Ontario

FINDING #5: Several survey respondents reported either driving under the influence of cannabis or being driven in a vehicle by someone who was

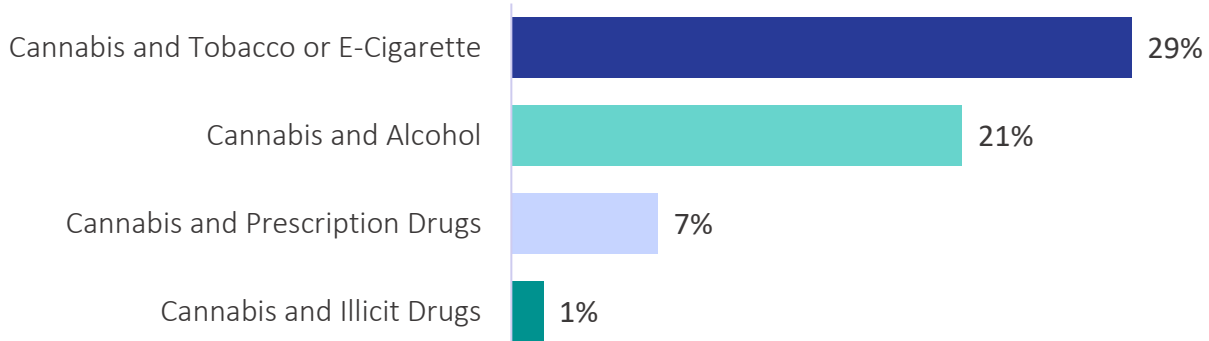
27% of cannabis users reported driving within two hours of using cannabis

15% of all respondents reported being a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone under the influence of cannabis

Did you know...

Cannabis impairs your ability to operate a vehicle and its effects can last up to six hours depending on the person and the product used. [Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines](#) recommends not driving while still affected by cannabis.

FINDING #6: Nearly one third of cannabis users reported using cannabis and tobacco or e-cigarettes at the same time



Did you know...

Using cannabis with alcohol can increase anxiety, nausea, vomiting, and fainting. Using cannabis with tobacco can increase harm to your lungs and lead to nicotine addiction. Avoid using cannabis with other substances.

FINDING #7: A large number of survey respondents were limited in their knowledge about cannabis

Respondents were provided with cannabis-related statements and asked if they were true or false. Below are some statements, a note about whether they are true or false, and the percentage of respondents that correctly identified the accurate response.

Statement Given to Respondents	Percent Correct
Deep inhaling and breath holding increases your high [FALSE]	18%
Cannabis smoke has many of the same cancer-causing chemicals as tobacco smoke [TRUE]	37%
You can spread infections like meningitis and Hepatitis C by sharing joints, bongs and vaporizers [TRUE]	48%
Using cannabis may result in dependence or addiction [TRUE]	52%
Using high doses of cannabis can cause psychosis (i.e., losing touch with reality) [TRUE]	52%
Using cannabis while breastfeeding can cause harm to your baby [TRUE]	61%
Using cannabis while pregnant can cause harm to the fetus/child [TRUE]	67%

Among respondents, 2.8% correctly identified that when cannabis is eaten, it can take more than two hours before the full effect is felt. Similarly, 8.8% of respondents knew that when smoked or vaped, cannabis users typically feel the full effect within 15 to 20 minutes.

FINDING #8: The majority of survey respondents had not heard of *Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines*

92% of respondents had not heard of [*Canada's Lower Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines*](#)

These guidelines were developed by the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health (CAMH) and include 10 ways to reduce the harms associated with cannabis use.

For more information about the guidelines, or other cannabis-related resources, visit the [cannabis page](#) on Health Unit's website.

ⁱ Public Health Ontario Snapshots. Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) 2009/2010 - 2011/2012 (Combined), Age-standardized rate. Statistics Canada, Ontario Share File, Distributed by Ontario MOHLTC. Available at: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/DataAndAnalytics/Snapshots/Pages/Illicit-Drug-Use.aspx>