

Marijuana Use Among Middle and High School Students

VERMONT YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY 2017

MARIJUANA USEⁱ

The use of alcohol or drugs early in life can have a negative impact on physical and/or emotional health. Substance use can prevent proper brain development during adolescence and impact daily brain functioning.ⁱⁱ Marijuana use among Vermont middle school students has not significantly changed since first asked in 2011. Overall, marijuana use among Vermont high school students has not significantly changed in the past decade, however, use during the past 30 days significantly increased between 2015 and 2017.

Middle School Students. Among middle school students, 7% reported ever using marijuana. One in twenty-five (4%) used it during the past 30 days.

High School Students. More than a third of high school students (37%) have tried marijuana during their lifetime. While lifetime marijuana use has not changed over the past decade, fewer students are using it at an early age. In 2017, six percent of students reported using marijuana before age 13, a significant decrease from in 2007 (9%).

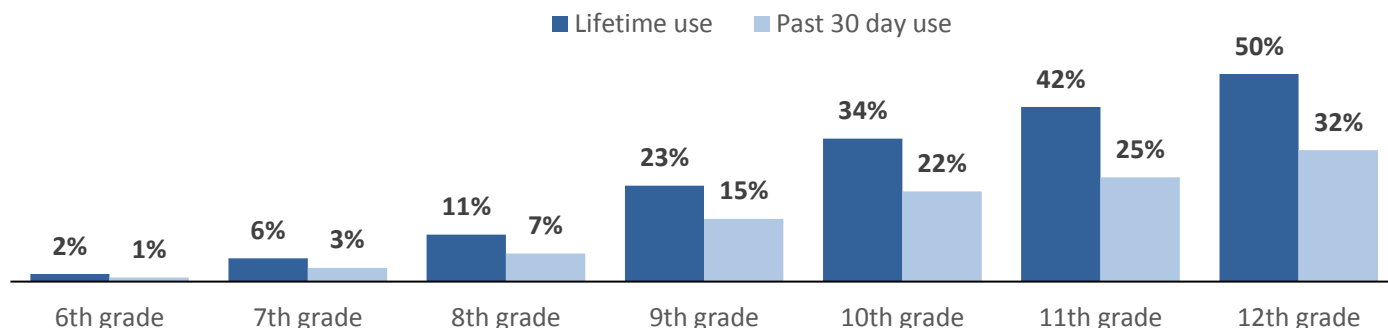
During the past 30 days, nearly one in four high school students (24%) used marijuana in 2017, a significant increase from 22% in 2015. However, fewer students who used marijuana during the past 30 days did so ten or more times during the past month compared to 2015 (42% vs 45%).ⁱⁱⁱ

Populations in Focus^{iv}: All demographic groups are at-risk for using substances such as marijuana, however, some groups report higher use than others.

Sexual Orientation. LGBT high school students are significantly more likely than their heterosexual peers to report ever using marijuana (49% vs 36%) or using it during the past 30 days (33% vs 23%). These differences are substantially greater among middle school students where LGB students are more than three times as likely as their heterosexual peers to report ever using marijuana (23% vs 6%) or using it during the past 30 days (14% vs 4%).

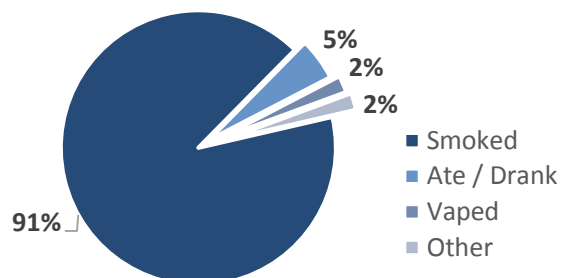
Grade. By 12th grade, half of students have tried marijuana; a third (32%) have used it during the past 30 days. Lifetime and current marijuana use doubles with each increasing grade level between 6th and 9th grade and again between 9th and 12th grade.

Lifetime and past 30 days marijuana use significantly increases with each grade.



Race and Ethnicity. Middle school students of color are twice as likely as White non-Hispanic middle school students to have ever tried marijuana (12% vs 6%) or to have used it during the past 30 days (8% vs 4%). However, marijuana use does not differ by race/ethnicity among high school students.

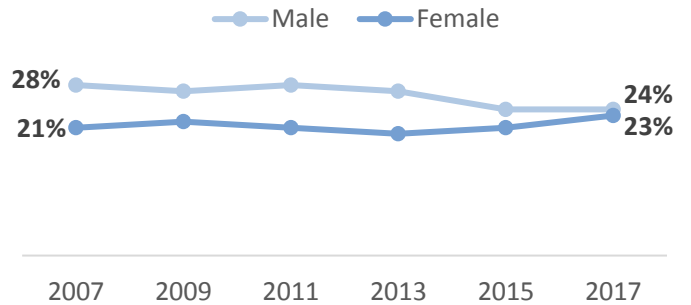
Among high school students, nine out of ten current users primarily smoked marijuana in a joint, pipe, or blunt.



Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2017

Sex. Over the past decade, differences between male and female high school student's marijuana use have become negligible. In 2017, female students were equally likely to report lifetime and current marijuana use as male students. However, male students are significantly more likely to report using it by age 13 (7% vs 5%).

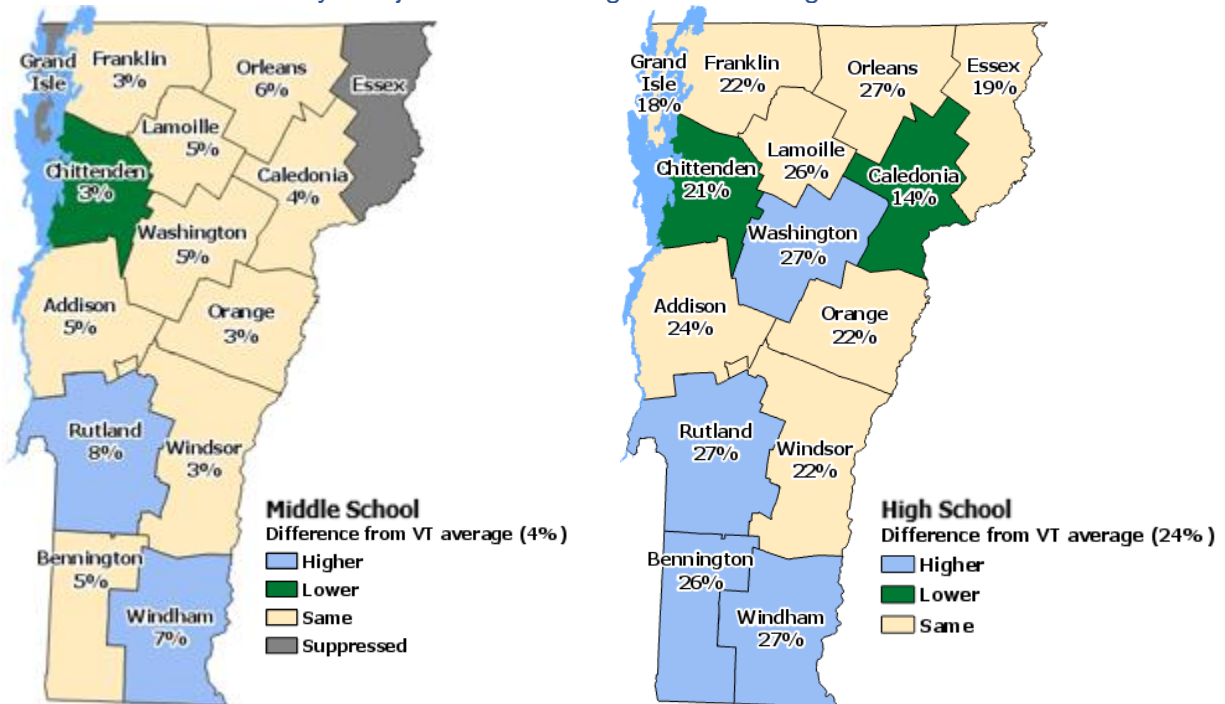
The percent of female high school students who used marijuana during the past 30 days is now equal to male students.



Marijuana use across Vermont: Past 30-day marijuana use varies by county and supervisory union. Students in Bennington, Rutland, Washington, and Windham counties report higher use, while students in Caledonia and Chittenden counties report lower marijuana use than students in the rest of the state.

Past 30-day marijuana use is significantly greater among middle school students in Rutland (8%) and Windham (7%) counties compared to the rest of the state. Students in Chittenden county (3%) report statistically lower past 30-day use.

Past 30-day marijuana use among middle and high school students.



ⁱ Conducted every other year, the Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) asks middle and high school students about their marijuana use including how old they were when first used and the frequency of use during the past 30 days. In addition, the primary way high school students used marijuana was added to the 2017 survey.

ⁱⁱ http://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2017/02/ADAP_HIA%20Update.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ The frequency of marijuana use is also associated with other risk behaviors. See the related [data brief](#) for more information on associated risk behaviors and the frequency of marijuana use among high school students.

^{iv} LBG(T) students include students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual on the middle school survey as well as students who identify as transgender on the high school survey. Use before age 13 among high school students and before age 11 among middle school students.

For more information and resources to prevent marijuana use, recovery, or on the health effects of marijuana visit: Parent Up Vermont at ParentUpVT.org or the Vermont Department of Health healthvermont.gov/alcohol-drug-abuse/alcohol-drugs/marijuana
For more information about the YRBS, please visit www.healthvermont.gov/yrbs **or contact:** Kristen Murray, PhD (Kristen.murray@vermont.gov) or Jeffrey Trites (Jeffrey.trites@vermont.gov)