

# Vermont Young Adult Survey 2020

Statewide Rates for All Survey Items  
Including Comparisons to Previous Years 2014 to 2018

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PIRE



*Information on the background and methodology of the Vermont Young Adult Survey is available on the Vermont RPP evaluation website: [www.vt-rpp-evaluation.org](http://www.vt-rpp-evaluation.org) .*

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## A. Substance Use Prevalence Rates

Substance category and specific behavior:	2014	2016	2018	2020	Statistical Significance <sup>1</sup>	
	(N=2867)	(N=3062)	(N=2365)	(N=2340)	2014-2020	2018-2020
<b>Alcohol use in past 30 days</b>						
Any use	75.5	73.5	75.7	74.7		
Any binge drinking <sup>2</sup>	56.9	49.9	51.2	44.8	***	***
Binge drank 1-2 days	38.5	44.3	48.4	51.3	***	
Binge drank 3-5 days	32.2	31.8	28.3	26.0	***	
Binge drank 6-10 days	19.3	16.3	14.8	12.8	***	
Binge drank 11-19 days	7.0	4.6	5.7	5.5		
Binge drank 20 or more days	3.0	3.1	2.7	4.4	*	*
Drove after having too much to drink (past 30 days)	3.7	3.7	3.0	1.3	***	***
Any use (ages 18-20 only)	63.2	60.7	60.9	60.2		
<b>Marijuana use in past 30 days</b>						
Any use	38.8	42.0	44.5	46.3	***	
Number of days used						
Used marijuana 1-2 days	18.0	18.8	20.6	19.1		
Used marijuana 3-5 days	14.2	13.9	12.9	14.2		
Used marijuana 6-10 days	9.8	9.0	9.5	11.2		
Used marijuana 11-19 days	9.3	7.7	12.3	11.1		
Used marijuana 20 or more days	48.7	50.7	44.7	44.5		
Methods of use						
Smoked it		95.9	93.9	88.8		***
Consumed it in food		22.9	32.6	34.8		
Consumed it in a beverage		3.9	4.3	2.8		
Inhaled it with a vaping device		23.9	35.8	30.5		**
Dabbing rig			17.4	14.3		
Capsule			3.8	0.9		***
Tincture			5.2	4.6		
Ointment or balm			7.4	7.7		
Other			1.9	1.6		
Drove after using marijuana (past 30 days)	15.7	17.0	16.5	13.5	*	**
<b>Tobacco products use in past 30 days</b>						
Used cigarettes			21.5	19.9		
Used cigarillos or little cigars			4.6	3.1		**
Used chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, or snus			4.9	2.8		***
Used any of the above tobacco products			26.1	22.7		**
<b>E-cigarettes and other vaping products use in past 30 days</b>						
Used a vaping product containing nicotine			(18.1) <sup>3</sup>	17.2		
Used a vaping product containing marijuana or hash oil				7.0		
Used a vaping product containing flavoring only				1.9		
Used a vaping product containing some other substance				0.7		
Used a vaping product (containing any substance)				20.0		
Used a vaping product containing any substance other than marijuana			20.8	18.0		**

Substance category and specific behavior:	2014	2016	2018	2020	Statistical Significance <sup>1</sup>	
	(N=2867)	(N=3062)	(N=2365)	(N=2340)	2014-2020	2018-2020
<b>Prescription drug misuse<sup>4</sup> in past year</b>						
Misuse of Rx pain relievers	7.6	6.2	3.5	2.2	***	**
Misuse of Rx sedatives	4.9	6.4	5.0	3.4	**	**
Misuse of Rx stimulants	11.6	12.0	12.4	9.8	*	**
Misuse of any Rx drug	17.5	17.3	16.0	11.7	***	***
<b>Other drugs used in past year</b>						
Used hallucinogens			15.3	16.4		
Used any form of cocaine				8.5		
Used heroin	2.3	1.8	0.8	0.6	***	

<sup>1</sup>Statistical significance for difference between 2020 and previous years (2014 and 2018): \* (p<.10) \*\* (p<.05) \*\*\* (p<.01)

<sup>2</sup>Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more drinks (if male) or 4 or more drinks (if female) on a single occasion.

<sup>3</sup>For the 2018 survey, this percentage includes only respondents who reported that the vaping product usually contained nicotine and therefore is probably a slight underestimate of any use of a vaping product containing nicotine.

<sup>4</sup>Used Rx drugs that had not been prescribed or used at higher dosages or for different purposes than prescribed.

Note: All percentages reported in this table are based on weighted data. The N shown for each column is the unweighted sample size for each year and may be lower for some measures due to missing response data.

## B. Substance Use Risk Factor Prevalence Rates

Risk factor:	2014	2016	2018	2020	Statistical Significance <sup>1</sup>	
	(N=2867)	(N=3062)	(N=2365)	(N=2340)	2014-2020	2018-2020
<b>Perceived ease of obtaining substances</b>						
Very easy or somewhat easy for underage persons to buy alcohol in stores	26.7	28.6	33.6	33.2	***	
Very easy or somewhat easy for underage persons to buy alcohol in bars and restaurants	16.5	14.9	20.1	18.6	*	
Very easy or somewhat easy for persons the age of respondent to obtain marijuana	83.3	84.2	88.0	84.3		***
<u>Very easy</u> for persons the age of respondent to obtain marijuana	50.4	52.3	56.0	52.6		**
Very easy or somewhat easy for persons the age of respondent to get Rx pain relievers w/o prescription	39.4	36.9	33.0	17.7	***	***
Very easy or somewhat easy for underage persons to buy cigarettes				47.4		
Very easy or somewhat easy for underage persons to buy e-cigarettes or other electronic vapor products				56.8		
<b>Low perceived risk of harm from using substances</b>						
No risk or slight risk from having five or more drinks once or twice a week	27.4	27.0	24.6	25.9		
No risk or slight risk from smoking marijuana once or twice a week	74.4	78.8	80.2	79.4	***	
<u>No risk</u> from smoking marijuana once or twice a week	43.9	46.7	43.6	40.7	**	*
No risk or slight risk from vaping marijuana products once or twice a week				59.0		
No risk or slight risk from smoking cigarettes once or twice per week				22.1		
No risk or slight risk from using e-cigarettes or other EVDs once or twice a week				31.1		
No risk or slight risk from using Rx pain relievers that were not prescribed a few times a year	14.3	11.7	13.2	9.7	***	***

<sup>1</sup>Statistical significance for difference between 2020 and previous years (2014 and 2018): \* (p<.10) \*\* (p<.05) \*\*\* (p<.01)

Note: All percentages reported in this table are based on weighted data. The N shown for each column is the unweighted sample size for each year and may be lower for some measures due to missing response data.

### C. Awareness of Safe Drug Storage and Disposal Messages and Resources

Media campaigns and drop boxes – Exposure and awareness:	2014 (N=2867)	2016 (N=3062)	2018 (N=2365)	2020 (N=2340)	Statistical Significance <sup>1</sup>	
					2014-2020	2018-2020
<b>Exposure to safe storage/disposal info</b>						
Recall seeing or hearing information about safe storage/disposal of Rx drugs in past year	32.2	37.6	54.9	50.5	***	***
<b>Availability of Rx drug drop box within 5 miles of residence</b>						
Yes			24.6	28.6		***
No			11.5	9.9		*
Don't know			63.9	61.6		

<sup>1</sup>Statistical significance for difference between 2020 and previous years (2014 and 2018): \* (p<.10) \*\* (p<.05) \*\*\* (p<.01)

Note: All percentages reported in this table are based on weighted data. The N shown for each column is the unweighted sample size for each year and may be lower for some measures due to missing response data.

### D. Changes in Substance Use Behaviors and Emotional Distress Due to COVID-19 Pandemic (Data available for 2020 only)

**D.1 Ways in which the COVID-19 emergency has influenced respondents' use of alcohol and other drugs (compared to the month before the emergency began). Percent of respondents reporting each response:**

Influence...	Substance				
	Alcohol	Marijuana	Cigarettes	Vaping (products with nicotine)	Prescription drugs (misuse)
Stopped using	6.4 } 23.6	5.3 } 12.4	3.9 } 8.4	4.5 } 7.4	1.7 } 2.3
Decreased use	17.3 } 23.6	7.1 } 12.4	4.5 } 8.4	2.9 } 7.4	0.6 } 2.3
Started using	1.6 } 23.6	1.0 } 21.3	1.1 } 9.2	0.7 } 5.1	0.6 } 1.0
Increased use	22.0 } 23.6	20.4 } 21.3	8.0 } 9.2	4.4 } 5.1	0.5 } 1.0
None of the above	52.8	66.3	82.4	87.5	96.7
(Total)	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

**D.2 Emotional distress reported in the two weeks before the COVID-19 emergency and now (i.e., in the past two weeks). Percent of respondents reporting various types of emotional distress...**

Emotional distress indicators:	Before COVID	Now
Little interest or pleasure in doing things	26.5	41.5
Felt down, depressed, or hopeless	32.7	50.1
Felt nervous, anxious, or on edge	48.7	58.8
Was not able to stop or control worrying	23.9	32.6
None of the above	41.8	26.1

Note: All percentages in the two tables above are based on weighted data. The sample size for the 2020 Young Adult Survey was 2340, although the sample size for each item is somewhat lower (and varies across items) due to missing response data.

## E. Responses to Open-ended Question Regarding Survey Topics or the Survey Itself (2020 Only)

Comments (Coded and Organized by General Topic) <sup>1</sup>	Number of Comments	Percent of all comments received <sup>2</sup>
<b>Comments on scope or seriousness of substance use in state or community</b>		
Level of alcohol use (and/or availability) is a problem / has negative consequences	6	2.4
Hard drug use, Rx drug misuse, multiple other drugs, addiction, availability, and/or drug-related crime, is a problem	9	3.6
Level of tobacco/vaping use (and/or availability) is a problem / has negative consequences	9	3.6
Alcohol and/or drug use is common (and/or access is easy), but no problem was implied	12	4.8
Drugs in VT have been portrayed as a bigger problem than they really are	2	0.8
Miscellaneous comments	2	0.8
<b>Comments on need for different approaches and perspectives</b>		
Marijuana should be legalized / is not harmful or a problem	9	3.6
Legal age for buying/using alcohol (and/or other products) should be lowered	5	2.0
Do not support the "war on drugs" / focus should be on reducing harms, not imposing fines or incarceration	2	0.8
Marijuana is helpful for certain medical conditions / Respondent uses marijuana for health and/or medical reasons	4	1.6
Age limits and other policies restricting vaping encourages cigarette use and/or use of unsafe off-market vaping products	3	1.2
More research on marijuana is needed	3	1.2
State should be collecting and using tax money from marijuana sales	3	1.2
Youth need more prevention education / more information	5	2.0
Need enhanced enforcement and/or harsher punishment	3	1.2
Youth are bored / need more alternative activities	3	1.2
Miscellaneous comments	8	3.2
<b>Comments about ADAP media campaigns or campaign ads</b>		
Negative comment on campaign messages or ads (don't like the content, they play too much/are annoying) / suggestion for ads	4	1.6
Positive comment about the campaign messages or ads	2	0.8
<b>Comments about the survey</b>		
Would like to change something about the survey / disliked some of the questions or found them to be confusing	54	21.5
Liked the survey / thanks for doing this research	45	17.9
<b>Other topics</b>		
Explanation of answer(s) / personal anecdote	50	19.9
Miscellaneous comments	8	3.2

<sup>1</sup>Comments were coded into discrete categories based on their content and then organized by topic.

<sup>2</sup>The number of comments received and coded was 251. Comments were provided by 205 respondents.

## F. Respondent Demographics

<b>Characteristic:</b>	2014 (N=2867)	2016 (N=3062)	2018 (N=2365)	2020 (N=2340)
<b>Age group</b>				
18 to 20	42.4	42.4	42.4	42.4
21 to 25	57.6	57.6	57.6	57.6
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	51.5	51.5	51.5	51.5
Female	48.5	48.5	48.5	48.5
<b>Gender and Sexual Minority (GSM)<sup>1</sup> status</b>				
Any response indicating sexual and gender minority self-identification		21.3	24.3	26.9
Self-identified as “straight” only		78.7	75.7	73.1
<b>Student status</b>				
Not a student	48.7	49.7	45.7	44.9
Yes, in college or vocational school, full-time	35.5	33.5	37.9	40.3
Yes, in college or vocational school, part-time	6.4	6.8	5.8	4.7
Yes, in high school or a GED program	7.5	8.1	8.1	8.1
Yes, in some other type of school	2.0	1.9	2.4	2.0
<b>Employment status</b>				
Employed for wages (full-time)	34.8	43.6	40.4	32.6
Employed for wages (part-time)	36.5	32.2	34.9	29.1
Self-employed	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.0
Not employed and looking for work	16.7	13.8	12.0	22.7
Not employed and not looking for work	9.2	7.1	9.1	12.6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
White		91.0	90.5	88.1
Black or African American		1.1	1.1	1.1
Hispanic or Latino		1.3	1.3	1.2
Asian				2.1
American Indian or Alaskan Native		2.3	2.4	0.1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander				0.1
Bi-racial, Multi-racial, or other		4.4	4.7	7.4
<b>Maternal education</b>				
Did not complete high school		4.9	2.8	3.3
Completed high school		22.9	19.3	17.8
Attended some college		24.6	23.8	18.6
Completed college		32.7	37.5	37.6
Completed graduate or professional school after college		14.9	16.6	22.6
<b>U.S. Armed Services member</b>				
Yes		3.4	3.3	2.5
No		96.6	96.7	97.5

<sup>1</sup>This terminology is consistent with recommendations from a number of organizations including the National Institutes of Health. For this report, SGM status was determined by respondents identifying themselves as gay or lesbian, bisexual, trans, transgender, or gender non-conforming, or other or unsure.

Note: All percentages reported in this table are based on weighted data. The N shown for each column is the unweighted sample size for each year and may be lower for some measures due to missing response data.