

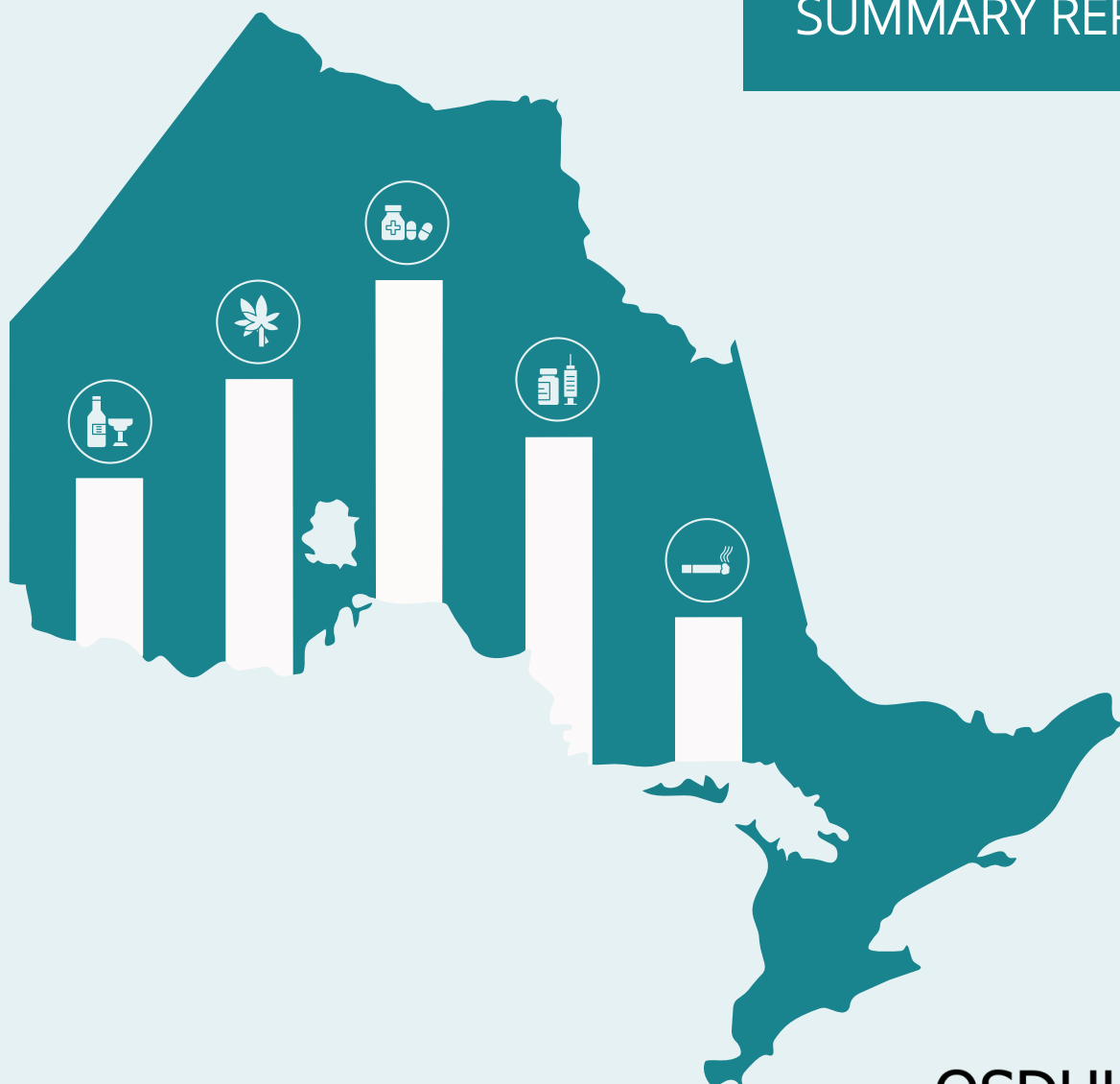
DRUG USE

Among Ontario Students

1977- 2025

Findings from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey

SUMMARY REPORT



camh

OSDUHS
Ontario Student Drug
Use and Health Survey

THE 2025 OSDUHS DRUG USE REPORT SUMMARY

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey* (OSDUHS) has been conducted every two years since 1977, making it the longest ongoing school survey of adolescents in Canada, and one of the longest in the world. This report describes the 2025 results for use of alcohol, tobacco, vaping devices, cannabis, illicit drugs, prescription drugs, as well as changes over time. Also examined are harms related to drug use, and perceptions of risk and availability.

A total of 11,108 students in grades 7 to 12 in 1,147 classes in 246 schools in 42 school boards across Ontario participated in the 2025 cycle of the OSDUHS. All data are based on self-reports derived from anonymous questionnaires. The survey was administered in classrooms between December 2024 and June 2025.

Past Year Drug Use (%) for the Total Sample, by Sex,[†] and by Grade, 2025 OSDUHS (N=11,108)

	Total	Males	Females	G7	G8	G9	G10	G11	G12
Grades 7-12									
Alcohol	31.9	29.7	34.1 *	8.0	12.4	21.3	36.8	46.3	55.7 *
Prescription Opioids (NM)	13.6	11.3	16.0 *	12.9	14.8	17.9	12.1	16.3	8.4 *
Cannabis	12.3	10.5	14.1 *	1.5	2.9	5.8	12.3	19.2	26.5 *
Vapes/Electronic Cigarettes	10.5	7.0	14.0 *	3.0	4.3	6.3	12.4	16.3	17.3 *
Cough/Cold Medication (NM)	7.5	7.9	7.0	13.7	9.9	7.0	5.8	5.4	4.6 *
Nicotine Pouches	5.8	6.7	4.8	s	s	2.6	6.2	9.3	11.7 *
Tobacco Cigarettes	3.5	3.4	3.6	s	s	1.2	s	7.1	6.3 *
ADHD Drugs (NM)	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.3	1.8	1.8	1.6	2.6	1.3
Grades 9-12^{††}									
Mushrooms (Psilocybin) or Mescaline	2.7	3.2	2.1 *	--	--	s	2.0	4.0	3.5 *
Tranquillizers/Sedatives (NM)	1.2	0.8	1.6	--	--	1.5	1.2	1.7	0.6
Ecstasy (MDMA)	0.7	0.5	s	--	--	s	s	s	s
Cocaine	0.6	0.5	0.7	--	--	s	s	s	s
Methamphetamine	0.6	s	s	--	--	s	s	s	s
LSD	0.5	0.5	s	--	--	s	s	s	s
Any NM Use of a Prescription Drug	14.6	12.8	16.7	--	--	18.3	14.2	17.9	9.3 *
Any Drug Use	16.8	15.8	17.8	--	--	17.8	14.8	19.2	15.5

Notes: [†] refers to sex at birth; ^{††} not asked of 7th and 8th graders; * statistically significant sex or grade difference (p<.05), *not* controlling for other factors; N=total sample size; s=estimate suppressed due to unreliability; estimate for alcohol excludes "a sip"; estimates for tobacco cigarettes and vapes/electronic cigarettes exclude smoking a few puffs; NM=nonmedical use, without a doctor's prescription; "Prescription Opioids" refers to examples such as Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol #3, Demerol, Dilaudid, codeine, hydromorphone, oxycodone, tramadol, morphine; "Any NM Use of a Prescription Drug" is a composite measure defined as past year nonmedical use of opioids, Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) drugs, or tranquilizers/sedatives; "Any Drug Use" is a composite measure defined as past year use of any one of 11 drugs (excludes alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and cannabis); heroin and fentanyl are not shown due to suppressed estimates.

2025 Subgroup Differences in Drug Use

Differences in past year drug use according to sex at birth (hereafter, sex), grade, and four regions of the province are presented in the report.

- Among the individual drugs asked about in the 2025 survey, females are significantly more likely than males to use four drugs, as shown in the table below. Males are more likely to use mushrooms (psilocybin).

↑ Males are more likely to use	↑ Females are more likely to use
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mushrooms (psilocybin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol • Prescription Opioids (NM) • Cannabis • Vapes/E-cigarettes

NM=nonmedical use

- The survey design divided the province into four regions: Greater Toronto Area; Northern Ontario (Parry Sound District, Nipissing District and farther north); Western Ontario (Dufferin County and farther west); and Eastern Ontario (Simcoe County and farther east).
- Only two drug use measures showed significant regional differences. Compared to the average, students in the Greater Toronto Area are less likely to use cannabis and nicotine pouches. Students in the North region are more likely to use cannabis.

- Past year use of several drugs significantly differs by grade, as shown in the table below. In general, the percentage reporting use in the past year increases with grade, peaking in grade 11 or 12. Nonmedical prescription opioid use is lower among older students. The nonmedical use of cough/cold medication decreases incrementally with grade.

↑ Use increases with grade	↓ Use decreases with grade
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol • Cannabis • Vapes/Electronic Cigarettes • Nicotine Pouches • Tobacco Cigarettes • Mushrooms (psilocybin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescription Opioids (NM) • Cough/Cold Medication (NM)

NM=nonmedical use

Trends in Past Year Drug Use

2025 vs. 2023

Among the total sample of students, four drugs showed a decrease in past year use between the previous survey in 2023 and the 2025 survey.

- Vaping (any type) significantly decreased from 13.4% in 2023 to 10.5% in 2025.
- Cannabis use significantly decreased from 17.6% in 2023 to 12.3% in 2025.
- The nonmedical use of prescription opioids significantly decreased from 21.8% in 2023 to 13.6% in 2025.
- The nonmedical use of over-the-counter cough or cold medication (used to “get high”) decreased from 9.6% to 7.5%.

No other drug showed a significant change among the total sample between these two survey cycles.

	2023 past year use		2025 past year use
Vapes/E-Cigarettes	13.4%	↓	10.5%
Cannabis	17.6%	↓	12.3%
Prescription Opioids (NM)	21.8%	↓	13.6%
Cough/Cold Medication (NM)	9.6%	↓	7.5%

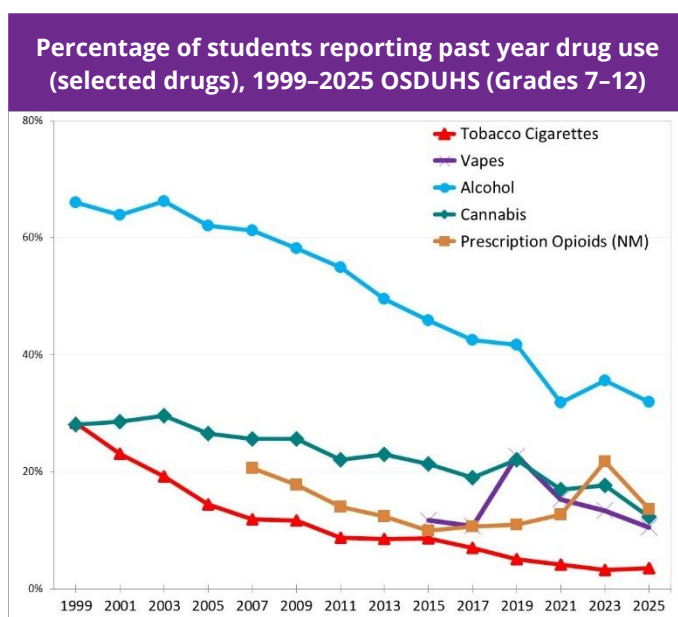
NM=nonmedical use

1999–2025

The study was redesigned in 1999 to include all grades between 7 and 12, making 1999 a key marker in the study’s history. In this section, we highlight significant changes between 1999 and 2025.

In general, most past year drug use measures show a significant downward trend during the period between 1999 and 2025:

- alcohol: from 66.0% to 31.9%
 - cannabis: from 28.0% to 12.3%
 - tobacco cigarettes: from 28.4% to 3.5%
 - mushrooms:[†] from 17.1% to 2.7%
 - sedatives (NM use):[†] from 2.5% to 1.2%
 - cocaine:[†] from 5.7% (2003) to 0.6%
 - ecstasy (MDMA):[†] from 7.9% (2001) to 0.7%
 - LSD:[†] from 8.8% to 0.5%
 - methamphetamine:[†] from 6.3% to 0.6%
 - heroin:[†] from 2.1% to < 0.5%.
- Abstaining from any drug use (including alcohol, tobacco/nicotine, and cannabis) significantly increased between 1999 and 2025, from 27.2% to 48.3%, among students in grades 7–12.



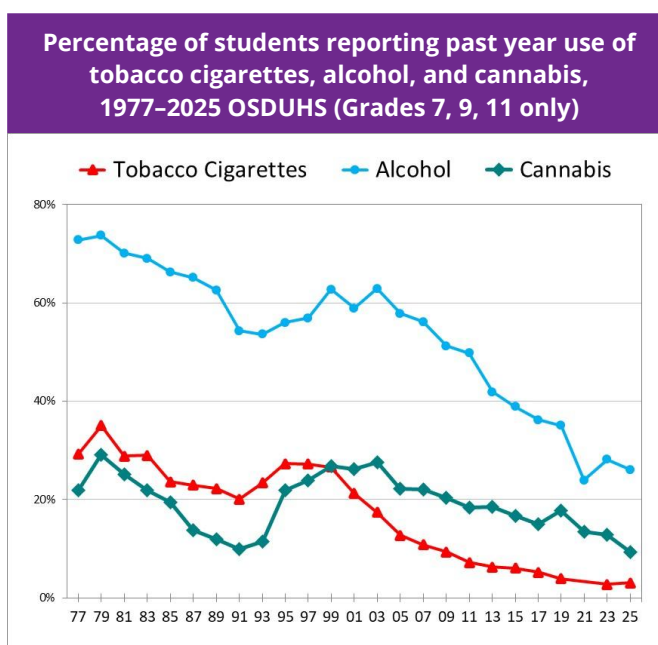
[†] among grades 9-12 only (not asked of grade 7 and 8 students)

Other drugs show differing patterns of past year use over time:

- The nonmedical use of prescription opioids shows a decrease between the late 2000s and 2021, an increase in 2023, followed by a decrease in 2025. The current level is higher than levels seen just before the COVID-19 pandemic, but lower than the level seen when monitoring first began in 2007.
- The nonmedical use of cough/cold medication shows a decrease between the late 2000s and 2021, an increase in 2023, followed by a decrease in 2025. The current level is similar to the level seen when monitoring first began in 2009.
- The use of vapes/electronic cigarettes significantly increased between 2015 (the first year of monitoring) and 2019, but has decreased since then. The current level is similar to the level first seen in 2015.
- The nonmedical use of drugs typically used to treat ADHD (e.g., Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta) remained low and relatively stable and shows no dominant trend since monitoring began in 2007.

Long-Term Trends in Drug Use, 1977–2025 (Grades 7, 9, and 11 only)

The OSDUHS has been monitoring student drug use for over 45 years. Many past year prevalence estimates for the 10 drugs monitored since 1977 show a common pattern of use: a peak in the late 1970s, a decline in the late 1980s or early 1990s, a second peak in the late 1990s or early 2000s, followed by another decline. Use of alcohol and tobacco cigarettes reached all-time lows in recent years.



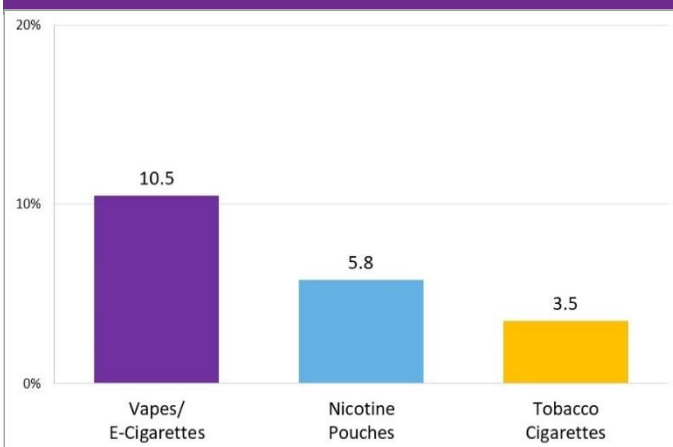
A note about the 2021 OSDUHS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario schools were closed to in-person learning during the 2020-2021 school year. Therefore, the 2021 OSDUHS pivoted to online data collection. Students could complete the questionnaire outside of school hours rather than the typical method of completions in classrooms during school hours. This change in mode and setting led to a dramatically decreased student response rate for that cycle. Although the survey weights were adjusted to minimize any potential bias from non-response, the high level of non-response in the 2021 cycle likely had an impact on estimates. Readers should be cautious in interpreting the 2021 estimates as provincially representative.

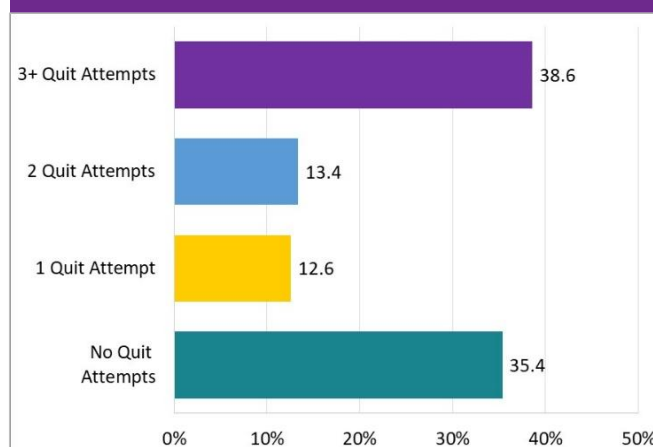
Tobacco Cigarettes, Vapes, and Nicotine Pouches

- In 2025, about 4% of students in grades 7–12 report smoking tobacco cigarettes (more than just a few puffs) during the past year. About 1% smoke cigarettes daily. The past year prevalence of cigarette smoking shows a dramatic downward trend over the decades.
- Males (3%) and females (4%) are equally likely to smoke tobacco cigarettes. The prevalence of cigarette smoking significantly increases with grade, reaching 6% to 7% among older students.
- About one-in-nine (11%) students in grades 7–12 report vaping (using an electronic cigarette) in the past year (more than just a few puffs). The past year prevalence of vaping increased between 2015 (first year of monitoring) and 2019, but has decreased since then.
- Among those who vaped in the past year, the majority (over 90%) report vaping nicotine.
- Among those who vaped in the past year, two-thirds (65%) report trying to quit at least once in the past year.
- Females (14%) are twice as likely as males (7%) to report vaping in the past year. The prevalence of vaping significantly increases with grade, from 3% of 7th graders up to 17% of 12th graders.
- About one-in-eleven (9%) students report vaping during the past month. Four percent (4%) report vaping daily during the past month.
- Among those who vape, friends are reported to be the most common source of these products.
- About 6% of students in grades 7–12 report using nicotine pouches during the past year.
- Males (7%) and females (5%) are equally likely to use nicotine pouches. The prevalence of use significantly increases with grade, reaching 12% among 12th graders.

Percentage of students reporting past year use of vapes/e-cigarettes, nicotine pouches, and tobacco cigarettes, 2025 OSDUHS

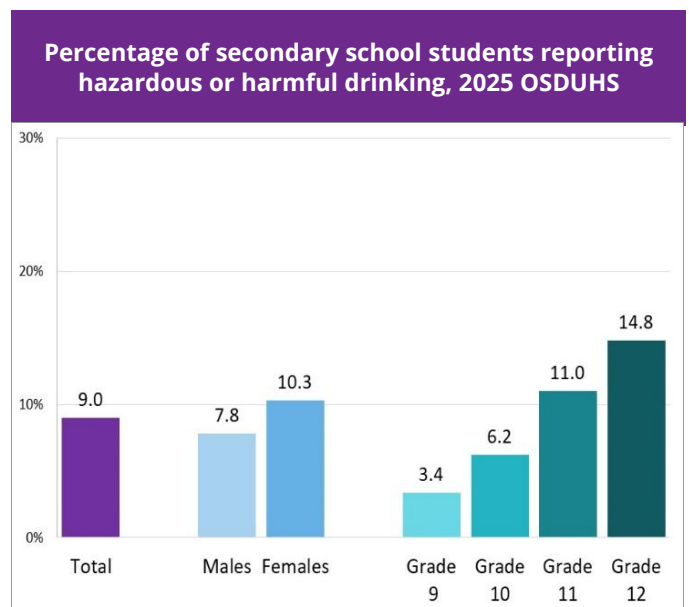
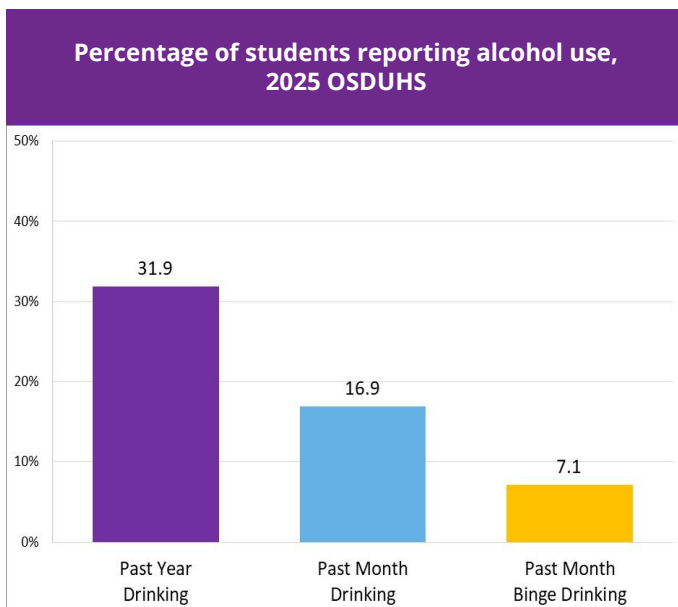


Percentage of students who vaped in the past year reporting attempts to quit, 2025 OSDUHS



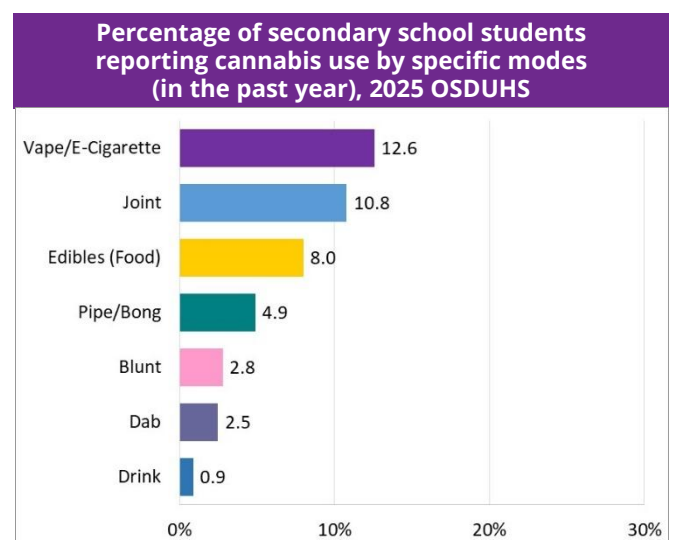
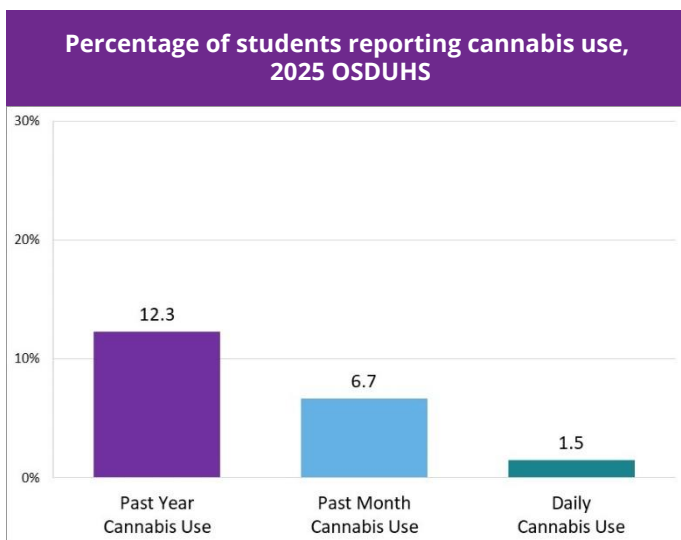
Alcohol

- In 2025, about one-third (32%) of students in grades 7–12 report drinking more than just a few sips of alcohol during the past year. The prevalence of drinking alcohol has decreased substantially over the decades.
- Females (34%) are significantly more likely than males (30%) to drink alcohol. Past year drinking significantly varies by grade, increasing from 8% of 7th graders to 56% of 12th graders.
- About one-in-six (17%) students in grades 7–12 report drinking alcohol in the past month. About 4% drink on a weekly basis.
- About 7% of students in grades 7–12 report binge drinking (defined as five or more drinks on one occasion) at least once in the past month. Males and females are equally likely to report binge drinking in the past month. Binge drinking increases with grade, reaching 14% among 12th graders. The prevalence of binge drinking has decreased over the decades.
- About one-in-eleven (9%) secondary school students report drinking hazardously or harmfully, as measured by the *AUDIT* screener. Males and females are equally likely to report hazardous or harmful drinking. There is grade variation, increasing from 3% of 9th graders up to 15% of 12th graders. Hazardous/harmful drinking has markedly declined over the decades.
- One-in-ten (10%) secondary school students could not remember what had happened when they were drinking on at least one occasion during the past year.
- Among students who report drinking in the past year, the most common source of alcohol is a family member.



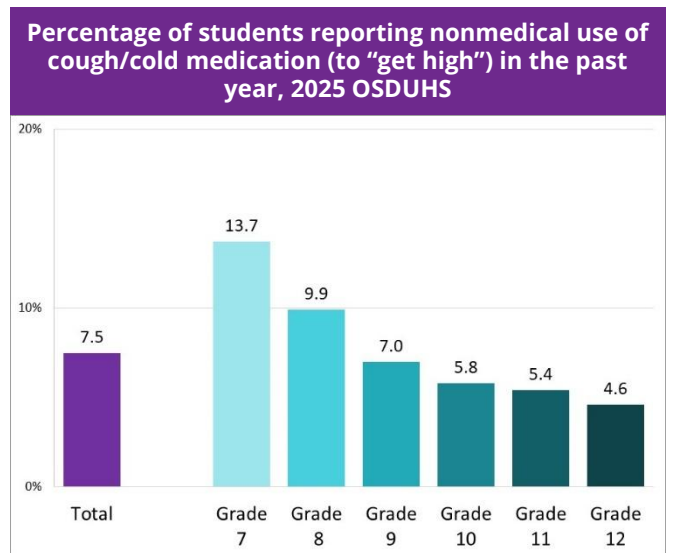
Cannabis

- About one-in-eight (12%) students in grades 7–12 report using cannabis in any way during the past year. Past year cannabis use significantly decreased since the previous survey in 2023 (18%). The current prevalence estimate is among the lowest seen since 1999.
- Females (14%) are significantly more likely than males (11%) to report past year cannabis use. Prevalence increases with grade, from 2% of 7th graders up to 27% of 12th graders.
- About 7% of students in grades 7–12 report using cannabis in the past month. About 2% use cannabis daily.
- Among secondary school students (grades 9–12), the most common ways of using cannabis are vaping it (13%), smoking it in a joint (11%), and eating it in food products such as brownies or candy (8%).
- Most of the modes of cannabis use measured among secondary school students significantly decreased since the previous cycle in 2023 (except for using cannabis in a drink).
- About 3% of secondary school students report symptoms of cannabis dependence, as measured by the *Severity of Dependence Scale*. This estimate has been relatively stable since 2007, when monitoring first began. However, symptoms of dependence among those who used cannabis in the past year is significantly higher in 2025 (20.5%) compared to estimates seen in 2019 and earlier (about 10%).
- About one-in-twelve (8%) secondary school students report using cannabis to cope with a mental health problem at least once during the past year. Females (10%) are twice as likely as males (5%) to report doing so.
- Among students who report using cannabis in the past year, the most common source of cannabis is friends.



Nonmedical Use of Prescription Drugs and Over-the-Counter Drugs

- About one-in-seven (14%) students in grades 7–12 report using a prescription opioid (such as Percocet, Percodan, Tylenol #3, Demerol, Dilaudid, codeine, hydromorphone, oxycodone, tramadol, morphine) without a prescription at least once in the past year. Females (16%) are significantly more likely than males (12%) to report using these types of opioids nonmedically. Past year use significantly decreased between 2023 (22%) and 2025 (14%). Current use remains higher than just before the COVID-19 pandemic, but lower than when monitoring first began in 2007.
- Among students who report using prescription opioids nonmedically in the past year, the most common source is a family member.
- About 2% of students in grades 7–12 report using a drug typically used to treat Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children (e.g., Adderall, Ritalin, Concerta, Dexedrine) without a prescription in the past year. Males and females are equally likely to use these drugs nonmedically. The nonmedical use of ADHD drugs has fluctuated since 2007, when monitoring first began (between 1% and 3%), showing no dominant trend.
- About 2% of secondary school students (grades 9–12) report using a sedative/tranquillizer without a prescription in the past year. Males and females are equally likely to use these drugs nonmedically. Nonmedical use of these drugs was stable for decades and has decreased slightly in recent years.
- About one-in-twelve (8%) students in grades 7–12 report using cough or cold medication to “get high” in the past year. Males and females are equally likely to use cough/cold medication to get high. Nonmedical use of these drugs significantly decreases with grade. Nonmedical use of these drugs significantly decreased between 2023 (10%) and 2025 (8%), returning to a level seen in prior years.



Other Highlights

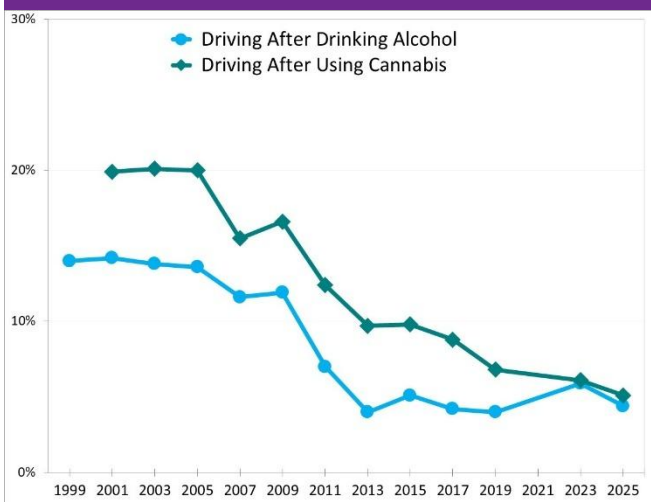
Vehicles

- About 4% of students in grades 10–12 with a G-Class driver’s licence report driving a vehicle within an hour of consuming two or more drinks of alcohol at least once during the past year. Drinking and driving among adolescent drivers has been stable for over a decade. However, the current estimate is significantly lower than estimates seen in 1999 and the 2000s (12%-14%), and is substantially lower than estimates from the late 1970s and early 1980s (when almost half of 11th graders reported drinking and driving).
- A similar percentage (5%) of drivers in grades 10–12 report driving a vehicle within one hour of using cannabis at least once during the past year. Driving after cannabis use has been stable over the past few years, but has significantly declined since 2001 (the first year of monitoring), when the estimate was about 20%.

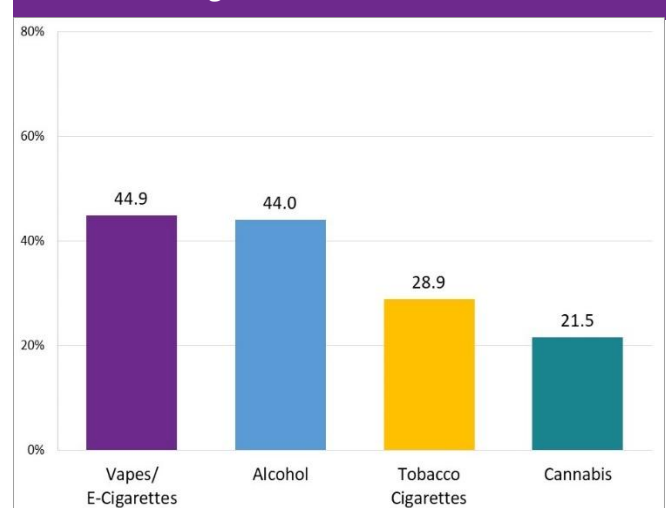
Early Initiation of Use

- Almost half (45%) of secondary school students who vaped in the past year report that they first started to vape before grade 9. A similar percentage (44%) of secondary school students who drank alcohol in the past year report that they first started to drink before grade 9. Over one-quarter (29%) of secondary school students who smoked tobacco cigarettes in the past year report that they first started to smoke before grade 9. About one-in-five (22%) secondary school students who used cannabis in the past year report that they first started to use cannabis before grade 9.
- Students today are initiating substance use at older ages than in the past, as the average age at first tobacco cigarette, first alcoholic drink, and first cannabis use has increased over the decades.

Percentage of drivers in grades 10–12 reporting driving after using alcohol and cannabis (past year), 1999–2025 OSDUHS

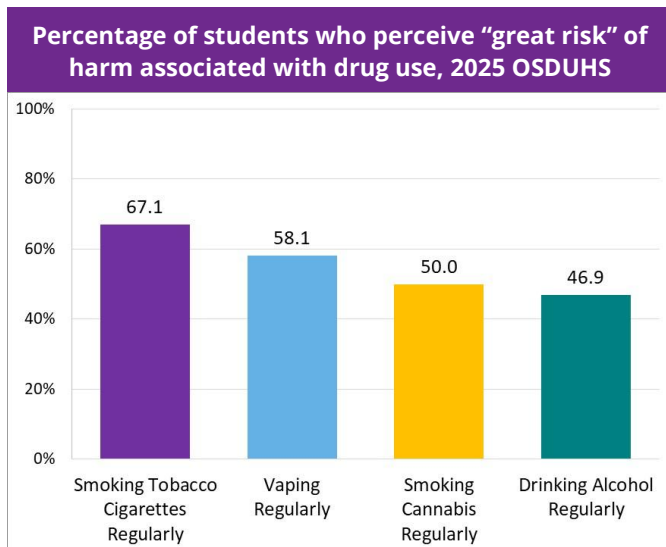


Percentage of secondary school students who used the drug in the past year reporting first use *before* grade 9, 2025 OSDUHS



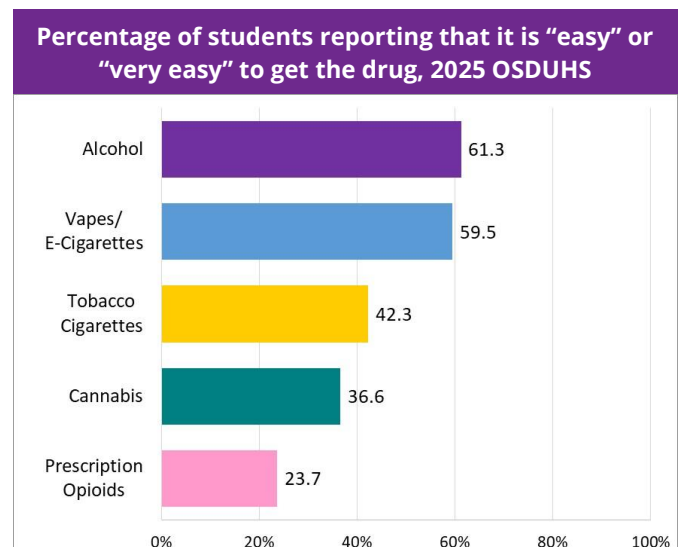
Perceived Risk of Drug Use

- Students were asked about the perceived risk of physical harm associated with smoking tobacco cigarettes regularly, vaping regularly, drinking alcohol regularly, and smoking cannabis regularly. Of these, the greatest perceived risk is associated with smoking cigarettes regularly (67%), followed by vaping regularly (58%), smoking cannabis regularly (50%), and drinking alcohol regularly (47%).
- The perceived risk of harm associated with regularly smoking tobacco cigarettes decreased between 2023 (the first year of monitoring) and 2025, from 75% to 67%.
- The perceived risk of harm associated with vaping regularly significantly decreased between 2023 and 2025 (from 63% to 58%). However, there has been a substantial increase since monitoring began in 2015, when the estimate was about 10%.
- The perceived risk of harm associated with smoking cannabis regularly remained stable between 2023 and 2025. While the current estimate is significantly higher than those from 2017 and 2019 (about 38%-40%), it is similar to the estimates seen in 1999/early 2000s (about 50%).



Perceived Availability of Drugs

- Of the drugs asked about, alcohol is perceived to be the most readily available to students in grades 7–12 (61% report that it would be "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain it), followed by vapes (60%), tobacco cigarettes (42%), cannabis (37%), prescription opioids without one's own prescription (24%), and mushrooms/psilocybin (14% among secondary school students only).
- The perceived availability of alcohol decreased between 2023 and 2025, returning to a level seen about a decade ago, but remains slightly lower than estimates seen in 1999/early 2000s (about 67%).
- The perceived availability of vapes decreased between 2023 and 2025, returning to the level seen in 2021 (first year of monitoring).
- The perceived availability of tobacco cigarettes decreased between 2023 and 2025, and is among the lowest level seen since 2005 (first year of monitoring).
- The perceived availability of cannabis decreased between 2023 and 2025, and is among the lowest level seen since 1999.
- The perceived availability of prescription opioids remained stable between 2023 and 2025, but is currently higher than in 2011 (first year of monitoring).



Methodology

The *Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey* (OSDUHS), conducted by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, is a province-wide health survey of Ontario students in grades 7 and 8 (elementary/middle school) and grades 9 through 12 (secondary school). This cross-sectional survey has been conducted every two years since 1977.

The 2025 cycle employed a stratified (by region and school level), two-stage (school, class) cluster sampling design. The final sample included 11,108 students in grades 7 to 12 from 1,147 classes in 246 schools across 42 English and French public and Catholic school boards. Schools located in First Nation communities, on military bases, in hospitals or other institutions, as well as private schools, were excluded from selection. Special Education stand-alone classes and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were excluded from selection.

Active parental consent procedures were used. Anonymous electronic or paper questionnaires were group administered in classrooms during regular school hours by staff from York University's Institute for Social Research (ISR) between December 2024 and June 2025.

To produce representative estimates, the data from the 11,108 students were weighted to reflect the population of nearly one million students enrolled in grades 7 through 12 in Ontario's publicly funded school system.

Please visit the OSDUHS webpage for reports, infographics, and FAQs:

www.camh.ca/osduhs