

# Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey, 2019

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Vaping is the act of inhaling and exhaling vapour produced by a device such as an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette), vape mod, vaporizer or vape pen.

While some use these devices to curtail or to quit smoking, vaping can also have negative effects, particularly among youth. According to Health Canada, the majority of vaping products contain nicotine, and vaping can lead to nicotine addiction. Vaping may also increase the risk of exposure to other harmful chemicals.

For the first time, Statistics Canada has collected detailed information about vaping. The new Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey aims to shed light on the types of products Canadians are using, how often they are vaping and their reasons for doing so.

## **Vaping is far more prevalent among younger Canadians**

In 2019, 15% of teenagers aged 15 to 19 reported having vaped in the 30 days preceding the survey, and over one-third (36%) reported having tried it at some point in their lives.

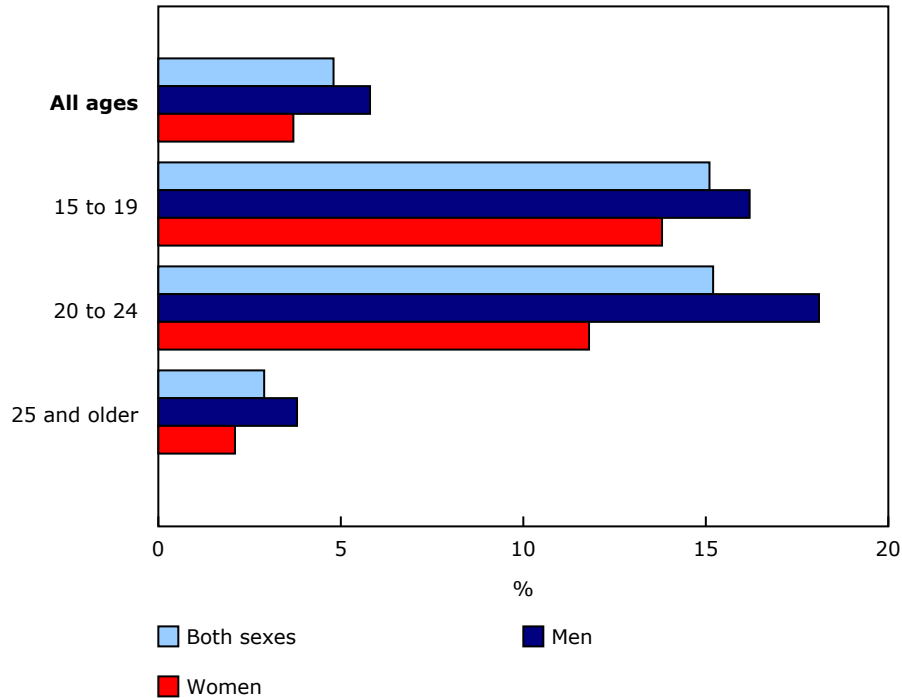
Among young adults aged 20 to 24, the proportion of those who had vaped in the 30 days preceding the survey was also 15%, and close to half (48%) said that they had tried it at some point.

In comparison, less than 3% of adults aged 25 and older reported using a vaping product in the 30 days preceding the survey, and 12% indicated that they had tried vaping at some point.



**Chart 1**

**Proportion who reported using a vaping device in the 30 days preceding the survey, by age group and gender**



Source(s): Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (5305).

For both men and women, the proportion of those who used a vaping device in the 30 days preceding the survey was higher in younger age groups. In general, men are more likely than women to vape.

**Almost all users of vaping products vape e-liquid with nicotine**

Vaping devices heat a liquid into a vapour, which then turns into aerosol. E-liquids can come in various flavours and may or may not contain nicotine.

Among those who had vaped in the 30 days preceding the survey, about 8 in 10 indicated that they had vaped nicotine. This proportion was even higher among users aged 15 to 19 (87%) and those aged 20 to 24 (86%).

In addition, about 1 in 10 users aged 15 to 19 and aged 20 to 24 reported that they once tried a vaping device without knowing whether or not it contained nicotine.

Frequency of vaping also varied across age groups. Among users aged 15 to 19, 31% vaped on a daily basis, compared with 38% of those aged 20 to 24, and over one half of those aged 25 and older.

**Younger Canadians are more likely to vape for recreational purposes**

Those responding to the survey were asked to identify their main reason for vaping in the 30 days preceding the survey. Users were classified across the following categories: (1) those who just wanted to try; (2) those who reported enjoying it; (3) those who vaped to reduce stress; (4) those who vaped to reduce or quit smoking; and (5) those who mentioned other reasons.

The most common reasons for vaping among users aged 15 to 19 were "because they wanted to try" (29%) and "because they enjoyed it" (29%). About one in five (21%) said that they vaped to reduce stress, while 9% said that they did so to quit or cut down on smoking.

Among those aged 20 to 24, the proportion who vaped because they wanted to quit or cut down on smoking was higher (28%). However, similar to their teenaged counterparts, more than one-quarter (27%) of users in this age group reported vaping just because they wanted to try it.

By contrast, older users were significantly more likely than younger users to report having vaped in an effort to reduce or quit smoking, with more than half of those aged 25 and older citing this as their main reason.

## Perceptions of harm vary between users and non-users of vaping products

The survey also asked all respondents whether they perceived e-cigarettes or vaping devices to be less, similarly or more harmful than cigarettes.

Among those who had vaped in the 30 days preceding the survey, 60% believed that vaping products were less harmful than cigarettes, 20% thought that they were similarly harmful, 9% felt they were more harmful, and 10% said that they did not know.

By contrast, among those who had never vaped, 13% perceived vaping as less harmful than cigarettes, 33% felt both were equally harmful, 23% thought that vaping was more harmful, and close to one-third (31%) did not know.

This pattern of divergence in perceptions between users and non-users of vaping products was similar across all age groups.

### Note to readers

Data in this release are from the 2019 Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey, which collects information about the prevalence of cigarette smoking, vaping and cannabis use. The survey was conducted in November and December 2019, and information collected from 8,600 respondents. The target population was non-institutionalized people aged 15 years and older living in Canada's provinces. Questionnaire content was developed in consultation with Health Canada.

In the context of this analysis, "vaping" includes vaping e-liquid—with and without nicotine (i.e., just flavouring)—using an e-cigarette, vape mod, vaporizer or vape pen. The analysis excludes vaping cannabis.

Respondents who reported having used a vaping product in the 30 days preceding the survey were asked about the type of product used, frequency of use and reasons for vaping, while questions about perception of harm were posed to all respondents (i.e., both users and non-users). Survey sampling weights were applied so that the analyses would be representative of the Canadian population.

Respondents were asked to select one of eight reasons for using a vaping device: (1) by curiosity, you just wanted to try it; (2) because you enjoy it; (3) to reduce stress or calm down; (4) to quit smoking cigarettes; (5) to cut down on smoking cigarettes; (6) to use when you cannot or are not allowed to smoke cigarettes; (7) to avoid returning to smoking cigarettes; and (8) "other". Because of sample size limitations and to facilitate the analysis, reasons (4), (5) and (7) were regrouped together as those who vaped in order to reduce or quit smoking, and reasons (6) and (8) were grouped together as users who vaped for "other" reasons.

For more information, please consult the Health Canada website [About vaping](#).

**Table 1**  
**Main reason reported by those who used a vaping product in the 30 days preceding the survey, by age group, 2019**

	All ages	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 and older
	%			
By curiosity, they just wanted to try it	19.8	29.4	27.0	11.9 <sup>E</sup>
Because they enjoy it	19.4	28.9	14.1 <sup>E</sup>	16.0
To reduce stress or calm you down	13.2	21.1	14.4 <sup>E</sup>	8.4 <sup>E</sup>
To reduce/quit smoking cigarettes	37.0	8.5 <sup>E</sup>	28.5	55.7
Other	10.7	12.1 <sup>E</sup>	16.0 <sup>E</sup>	8.0 <sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup> use with caution

Source(s): Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (5305).

**Table 2**  
**Perception of harm, by use of vaping products and by age group, 2019**

	Less harmful	About the same	More harmful	Do not know
	%			
<b>Never vaped</b>				
All ages	13.1	32.7	23.0	31.0
15 to 19	27.9	31.6	22.5	17.9
20 to 24	25.2	40.7	17.3	16.8
25 and older	11.6	32.4	23.2	32.6
<b>Vaped, but not in the 30 days preceding the survey</b>				
All ages	37.2	27.7	18.0	17.1
15 to 19	43.8	31.8	15.0	9.4 <sup>E</sup>
20 to 24	51.5	24.8	16.3	7.4 <sup>E</sup>
25 and older	32.0	27.5	19.1	21.4
<b>Vaped in the 30 days preceding the survey</b>				
All ages	60.2	20.3	9.2	10.3
15 to 19	52.3	21.3	14.1 <sup>E</sup>	12.4 <sup>E</sup>
20 to 24	55.0	21.1 <sup>E</sup>	16.9 <sup>E</sup>	F
25 and older	66.3	19.4 <sup>E</sup>	3.8 <sup>E</sup>	10.4 <sup>E</sup>

<sup>E</sup> use with caution

<sup>F</sup> too unreliable to be published

Source(s): Canadian Tobacco and Nicotine Survey (5305).

**Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5305.**

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact us (toll-free 1-800-263-1136; 514-283-8300; [STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.infostats-infostats.STATCAN@canada.ca)) or Media Relations (613-951-4636; [STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca](mailto:STATCAN.mediahotline-ligneinfomedias.STATCAN@canada.ca)).