

Story Behind the Numbers: Youth Cannabis Use in Minnesota

FINDINGS FROM THE 2025 MINNESOTA STUDENT SURVEY

KEY FINDINGS:

92% of Minnesota students say they have **never** used cannabis.

Student cannabis use in Minnesota has continued to drop since 2013.

Despite fewer students reporting cannabis use each year, those who do are trying it at younger ages, often starting in early adolescence.



40.5% of students reported starting cannabis at ages **13-14**.

8th graders were more likely to report starting use at age **12 or under**.

TRUSTED ADULTS:

STARTING THE CONVERSATION EARLY CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE.

Because some young people come across cannabis earlier than others, it can help to start the conversations sooner. These talks can feel tough, but being informed, staying open, and approaching the topic with curiosity and care, rather than judgment, can make a big difference. The findings below can help you feel more prepared as you take that next step.

MOST COMMON METHODS OF CANNABIS USE AMONG MINNESOTA STUDENTS:



Smoking

33.5%



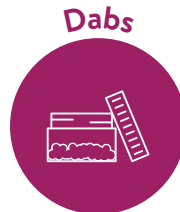
Vaping

32.2%



Edibles

18.6%



Dabs

7.4%



Beverages

5.6%

POLYSUBSTANCE USE: ALCOHOL AND CANNABIS

Polysubstance use means using more than one substance at the same time, and it is common in youth. When teens use cannabis, they often use it along with alcohol or commercial tobacco.

Minnesota teens are using alcohol and cannabis together, and how often this happens varies by age. Most who use both say they combine them only “sometimes.”

8th graders were more likely to report “**usually**” using alcohol and cannabis together.

11th graders were more likely to report “**never**” using the two together.

CANNABIS AND YOUTH HEALTH: WHAT TO KNOW



YOUNG BRAINS ARE STILL GROWING

Teens' brains are still developing, and cannabis can mess with that process.

Starting use before age 15 is linked to more serious long-term health problems, like depression, anxiety, and even psychosis.



YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF CANNABIS

Students are overestimating how many of their peers use cannabis. Eighth, 9th, and 11th graders estimated that more than half of students (54%) use cannabis, even though **92% reported never using it.**

More students now view using cannabis once or twice a week as moderately to greatly harmful, reversing the trend seen from 2013 to 2022.

These perceptions show why early, honest conversations with trusted adults matter.



LEARNING AND THINKING CAN BE AFFECTED

Regular use can make it harder to focus, remember, learn, and solve problems. It can also slow reaction time and affect coordination and attention.

These changes can make driving, schoolwork, and daily tasks harder and increase the risk of accidents.



MENTAL HEALTH RISKS INCREASE

Some teens use cannabis to cope with stress, but frequent use can worsen mental health symptoms over time.

Youth who use cannabis are more likely to develop substance use disorders later in life.



LUNG HEALTH CAN BE HARMED

Smoking or vaping cannabis can affect the lungs and cause coughing, breathing problems, and illnesses like bronchitis.

Vaping cannabis has been linked to serious lung injuries, including EVALI (a vaping-related lung disease).

Learn more

For more information about cannabis and how it can affect health, including for kids and teens, visit [MDH – Cannabis \(www.health.mn.gov/cannabis\)](http://www.health.mn.gov/cannabis).

The findings in this fact sheet come from data collected in the 2025 Minnesota Student Survey (MSS). The MSS is a statewide survey that asks students about their health, wellbeing, and experiences in school and their communities. Schools that participate help provide important information about substance use trends, student perceptions, and other factors that guide future education and prevention efforts across Minnesota. To learn more about data for your county, district, or region, contact ipmh.mdh@state.mn.us.