

YOUTH PERSPECTIVES: What parents need to know about youth vaping

In June, September, and December 2020, 28 youth researchers aged 12–18 from across BC collected over 3,500 surveys from their peers about their experiences with vaping during the COVID-19 pandemic. These are the findings the youth researchers thought all parents should know.

The percentage of youth who had ever vaped ranged from around **a third** on the June survey (34%) and September survey (35%) to **a quarter** on the December survey (25%).



Among the over 38,000 Grade 7–12 students who filled out the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey, **27%** had vaped in the past month.



How has the pandemic affected youth's vaping?

Youth were more likely to have **stopped** vaping or to have **vaped less** since the pandemic started than they were to have vaped more or to have started vaping during the pandemic.



What were youth's reasons for vaping, the last time they vaped?

I felt like there was nothing else to do/I was bored	40%
My friends were doing it	40%
I wanted to try it	37%
The taste/flavours	35%
I felt stressed or anxious	34%
I wanted to have fun	33%
The visual appeal of the vapour	25%
I am addicted to vaping/I feel hooked	24%
I felt down or sad	22%
I vaped instead of smoking cigarettes	16%
I vaped instead of using other substances	16%
A family member was doing it	8%
I was pressured into doing it/to fit in	7%

Source: December 2020 survey.
Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Youth who vaped during the pandemic were more likely than those who last vaped pre-pandemic to have vaped because they felt addicted, as well as because they felt **anxious, sad, and bored**. Youth who last vaped before the pandemic started were more likely to say it was because they wanted to try it and because their **friends were doing it**.



The more time that had passed since the pandemic started, the more likely youth were to say **their stress levels were higher now compared to pre-pandemic**.



Over half of youth had close friends who vape (56%), including 36% who had three or more such friends. **Youth were more likely to have ever vaped if they had close friends who vaped.**



When asked where they would go for reliable information about vaping, youth most commonly said an adult family member (48%).

Youth who had never vaped were more likely than those who had vaped to say they would turn to an **adult for information** on vaping, while those who had vaped were more likely to turn to their **friends, the Internet, and social media**.



Tips on talking with youth about vaping:
canada.ca/en/services/health/publications/healthy-living/talking-teen-vaping-tip-sheet-parents.html



Resources to support youth to reduce or quit vaping:
bc.lung.ca/how-we-can-help/vaping
quitnow.ca



Resources to support youth with their mental health:
heretohelp.bc.ca
foundrybc.ca

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