

The ways women use cannabis

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The green circles indicate the % of girls and women who use this method, from the Canadian Cannabis Survey 2021



70%
smoke (e.g., a joint, bong, pipe, blunt)

Smoking

- » Smoking cannabis can be harmful to the respiratory system and can negatively affect lung and heart health.
- » Females who are dependent on cannabis are more likely than males to experience withdrawal symptoms (i.e., feel nauseous, nervous, restless, sweaty).
- » Smoking cannabis when pregnant may increase risk of lower birth weight in newborns.



8%
use a non-portable vaporizer

27%
use a vape pen or e-cigarette

Vaping

- » Vaping has been linked to stronger 'highs', anxiety and nervousness, restlessness, and heart racing in females, compared to males.
- » Females have reported significantly higher rates of dry mouth and irritated throat when using vaporized CBD, compared to males.



23%
use cannabis oil for oral use (e.g., in a dropper/syringe, softgel/capsules, spray bottle)

Oils and Tinctures

- » Vaping oils may contain harmful additives compared to dried cannabis flower.



58%
use edibles (e.g., brownies, cakes, cookies or candy)

Edibles

- » Edibles can take longer to have an effect compared to vaping or smoking, which can result in a longer and more intense high than expected.
- » Women are more likely to use edibles for managing pain, compared to men.
- » Teenage girls who have not used cannabis yet have reported they would be more interested in using edibles over vaping, compared to teenage boys.
- » When oils are heated in a vaping device they pose a risk of burns as well as heart and lung issues compared to cannabis oils or tinctures from a dropper.
- » Consuming cannabis oil in food can delay the 'high' compared to taking it under the tongue, where it enters more quickly through the bloodstream.
- » Using oil on the skin is a less direct route for cannabis to enter the body, and may create fewer health risks.
- » Women with endometriosis have reported hemp/CBD oil as one of the most effective strategies for pain management.



15%

consume cannabis-infused drinks (e.g., sparkling water, tea, dissolvable powder)



11%

apply cannabis to skin (e.g., salves, creams, topicals)

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- » How do you use cannabis (smoking, vaping, edibles...)? What are the benefits and harms you experience?
- » After learning about the different methods of using cannabis listed here, will you make any changes in your use?

Drinks

- » Like edibles, it can take longer to feel the 'high' effects of cannabis in drinks, which can make it easy to take more than recommended or desired.
- » Females may feel greater effects at lower doses because of factors like metabolism, so monitoring pace and dose i.e., 'start low and go slow' is important for managing intake.

Creams

- » Skin creams have lower levels of cannabis and are a less direct route for cannabis to enter the body, so overall risks are low compared to other forms of use. But there is little research on this way of consuming cannabis.
- » People with arthritis report using creams, and women have used cannabis creams for managing reproductive health-related pain, but effectiveness is mixed.



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