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**HOW HAS CANNABIS LEGALIZATION
IMPACTED PUBLIC HEALTH IN CANADA?**

How has cannabis legalization impacted public health in Canada?

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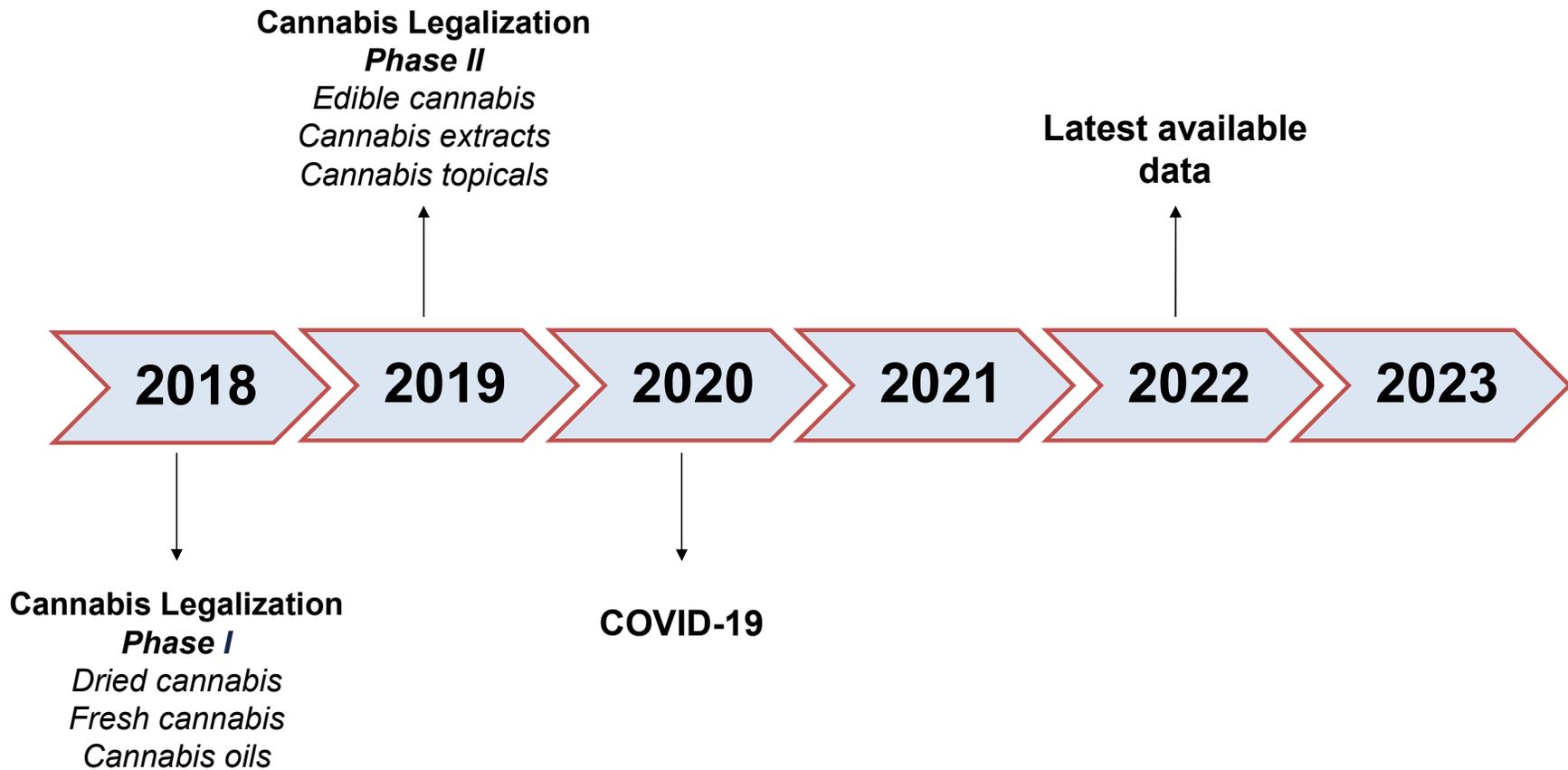


Purpose and Objectives of the *Cannabis Act*

The purpose of the *Act* is to protect public health and public safety and, in particular, to:

1. Protect the health of young persons by restricting their access to cannabis;
2. Protect young persons and others from inducements to use cannabis;
3. Provide for the licit production of cannabis to reduce illicit activities in relation to cannabis;
4. Deter illicit activities in relation to cannabis through appropriate sanctions and enforcement measures;
5. Reduce the burden on the criminal justice system in relation to cannabis;
6. Provide access to a quality-controlled supply of cannabis; and
7. Enhance public awareness of the health risks associated with cannabis use

Setting the stage

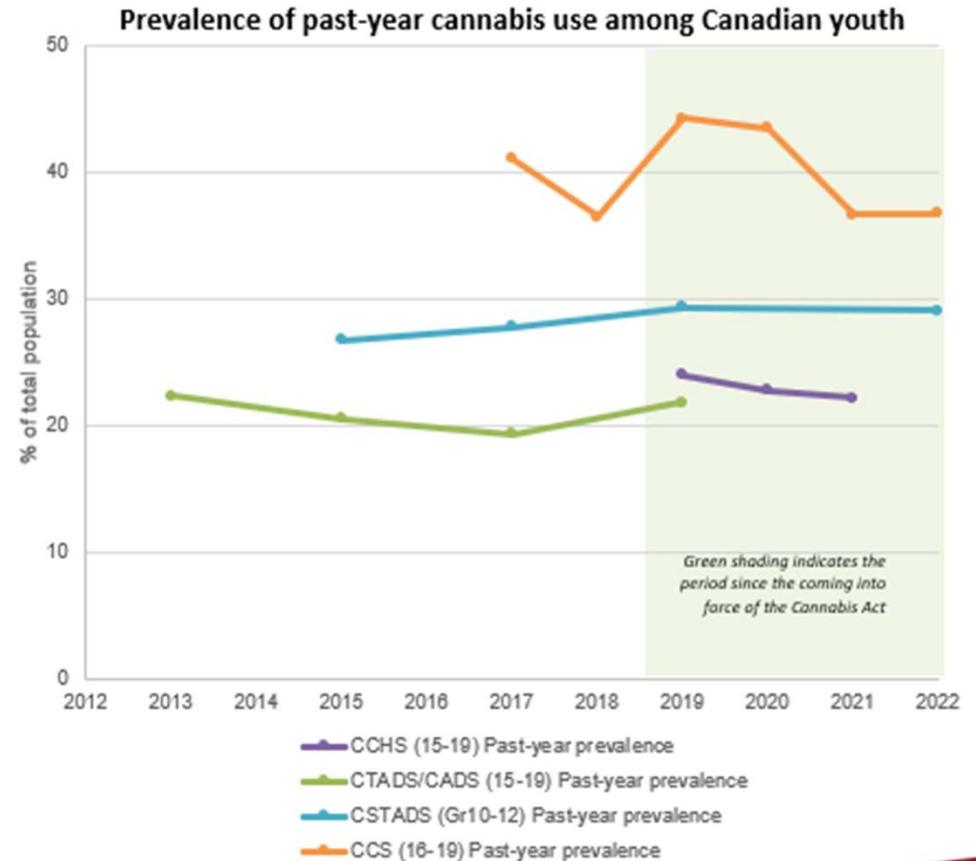


Youth CANNABIS USE

- No change in past-year use (multiple sources)
- No change in daily/almost daily use (multiple sources)

Prevalence remains high

- 29% of youth in grades 10-12 reported past-year use (Canadian Student Alcohol and Drug Survey, 2022)
- 21% of youth who used cannabis in the past-year reported daily / almost daily use (Canadian Cannabis Survey, 2022)

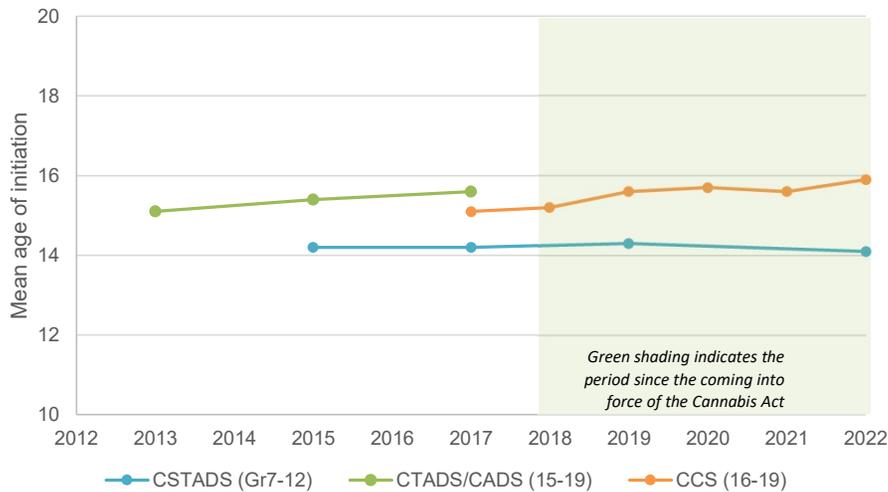


Youth

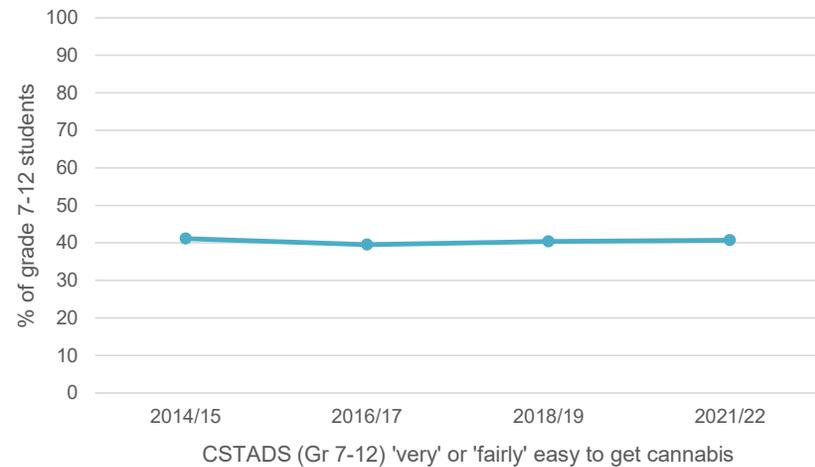
AGE OF INITIATION - PERCEIVED EASE OF ACCESS

- No change in age of initiation (multiple sources)
- Average age of initiation is **~14 years** old (Canadian Student Alcohol and Drug Survey, 2022)
- No change in perceived ease of access (Canadian Student Alcohol and Drug Survey)

Age of initiation to cannabis use



Ease of accessing cannabis ('very' or 'fairly' easy)

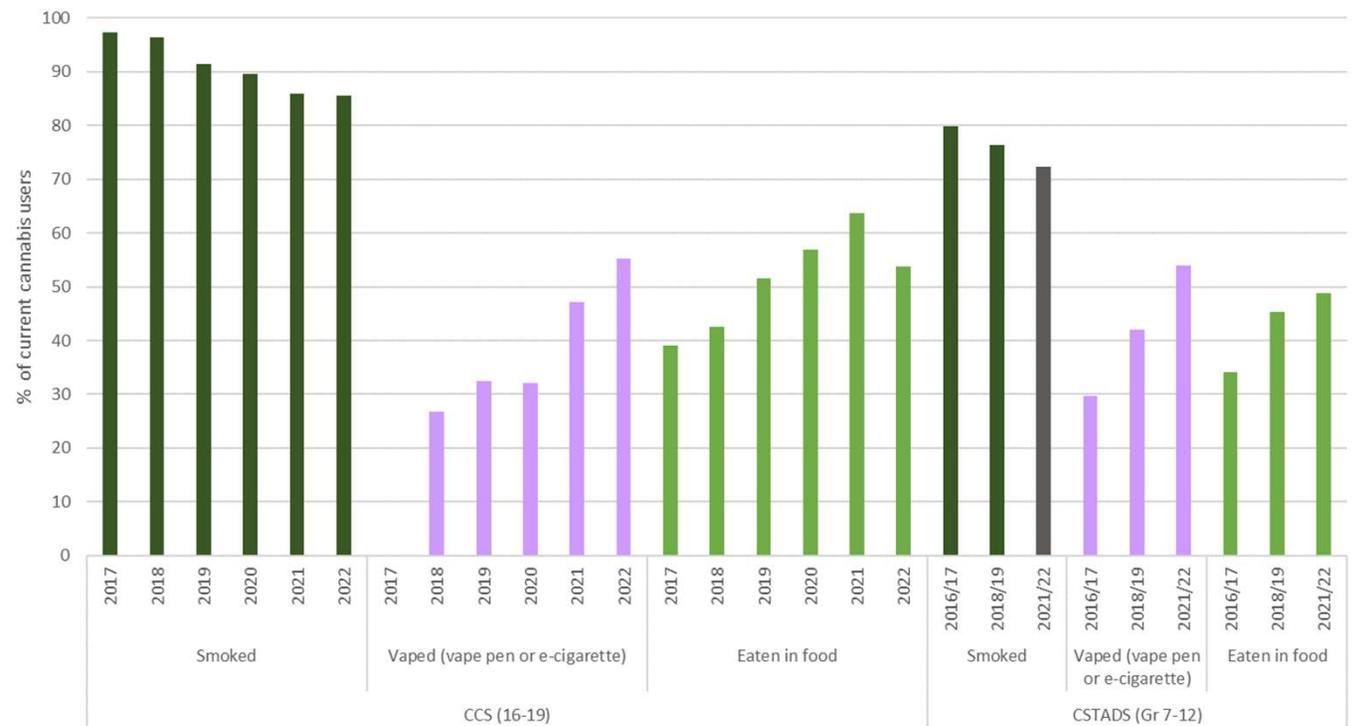


Youth

CONSUMPTION METHOD

- Decrease in smoking cannabis, mirrored by increases in ingesting and vaping of cannabis
- Smoking cannabis remains the leading consumption method
- Increase in vaping cannabis ‘extracts’ a particular concern

Cannabis consumption methods in past year, among youth consumers

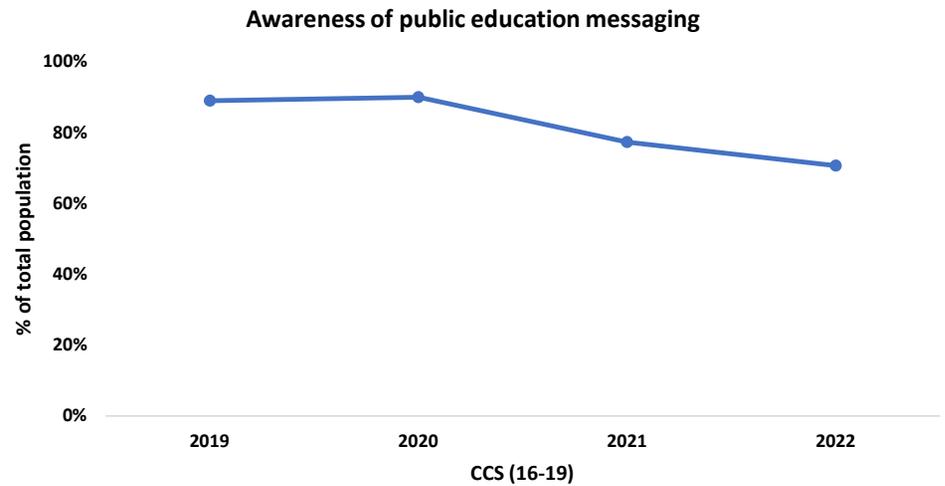
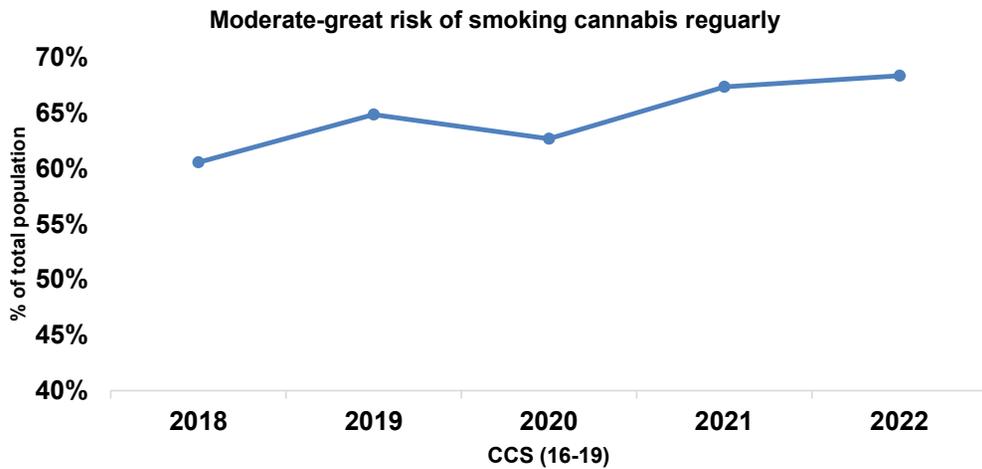


Youth

RISK PERCEPTION & AWARENESS OF PUBLIC EDUCATION

- More youth perceiving regular smoking of cannabis to carry risk

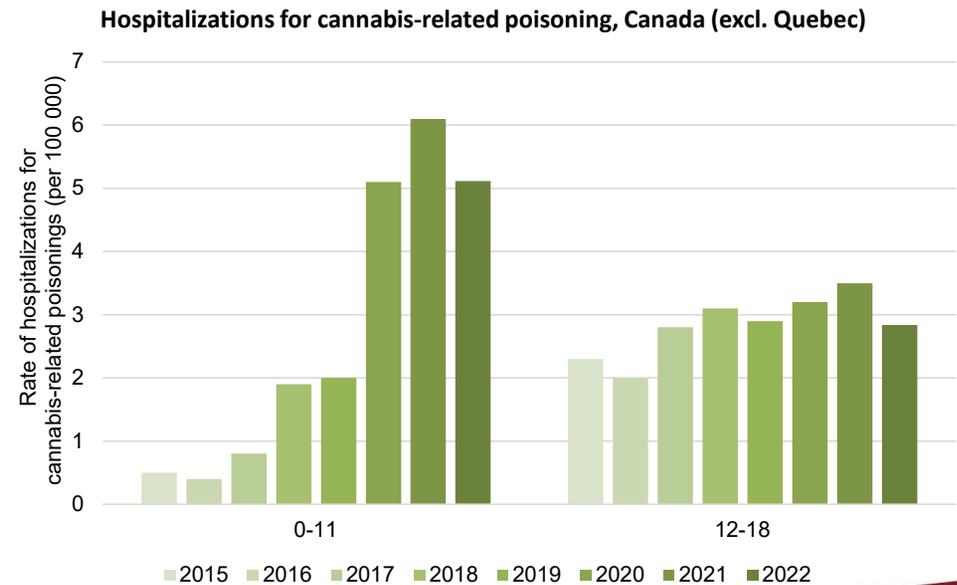
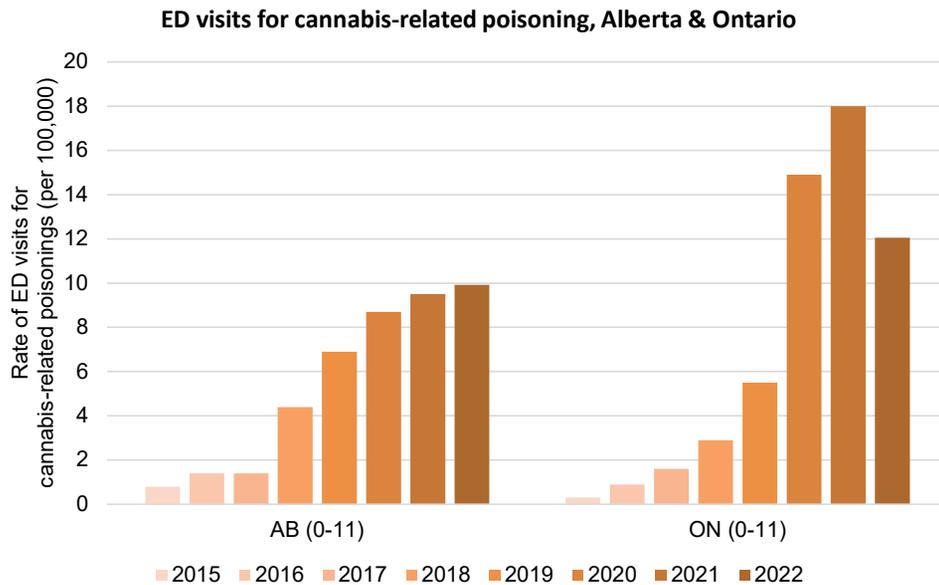
- Decrease in awareness of public education in recent years



Youth

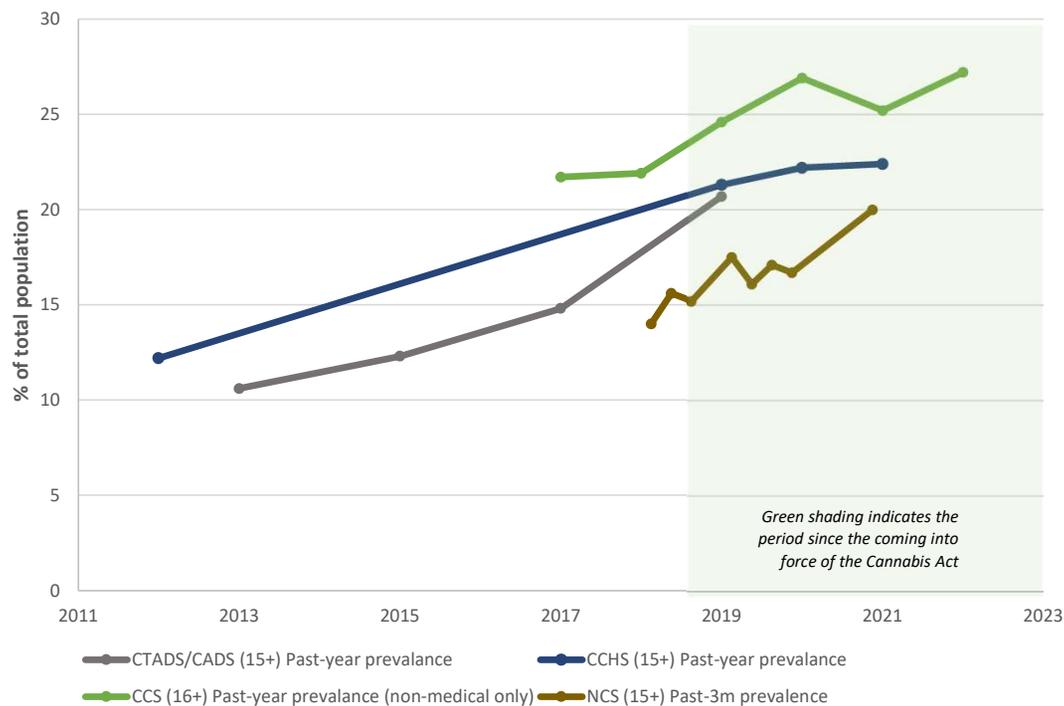
EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT VISITS /HOSPITALIZATIONS

- Increases in ED visits and hospitalizations among **children ages 0-11** due to cannabis poisonings (National Ambulatory Care Reporting System/ Discharge Abstract Database, Canadian Institute for Health Information)
- Academic literature supports findings (e.g., increases in ICU admissions/poison centre calls), further attributing increases to **accidental ingestion of cannabis edibles**, sources that are **illegal or unknown**, and among children **younger than 5**



General population CANNABIS USE

- Increase in past year and past 3-month cannabis use
 - Increase was evident before legalization
- Sex Gender Based Analysis plus(SGBA)+ relevance:
 - Notable increase among **young adults** (Canadian Alcohol and Drug Survey)
 - Prevalence is still higher in males than females (multiple sources)

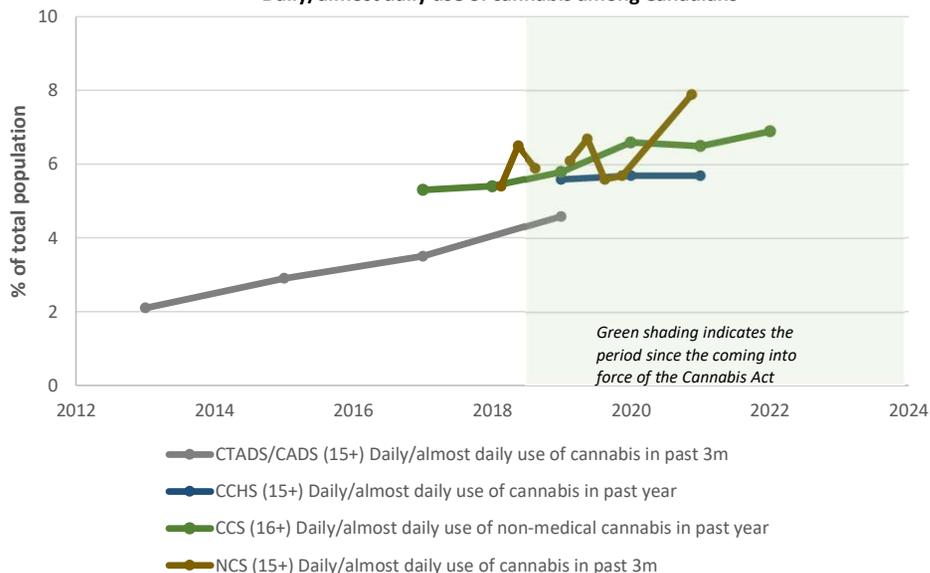


General population

FREQUENT CANNABIS USE

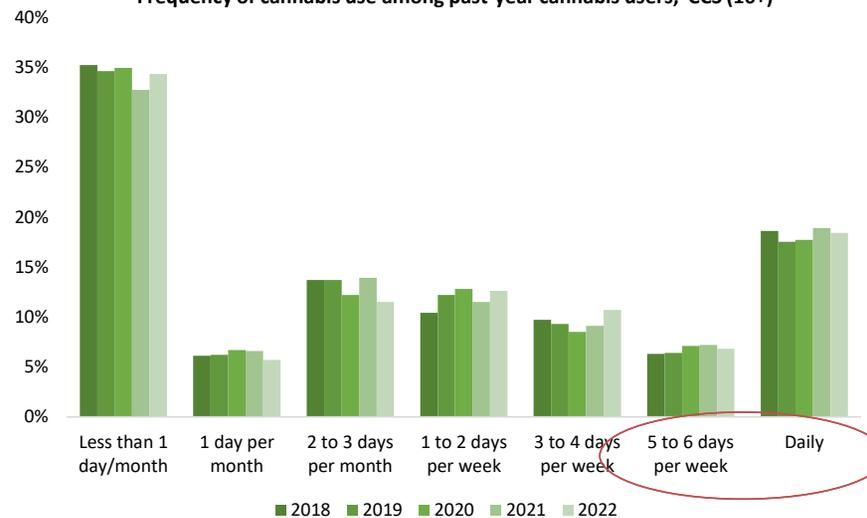
- Some indication of an increase in daily/almost daily use among the Canadian population (multiple sources)
- 6% of Canadians report daily/almost daily use (Canadian Community Health Survey, 2021)

Daily/almost daily use of cannabis among Canadians



- No change in the proportion of daily/almost daily use among Canadians using cannabis (multiple sources)
- 25% of past-year cannabis users report frequent use (Canadian Cannabis Survey, 2022)

Frequency of cannabis use among past-year cannabis users, CCS (16+)

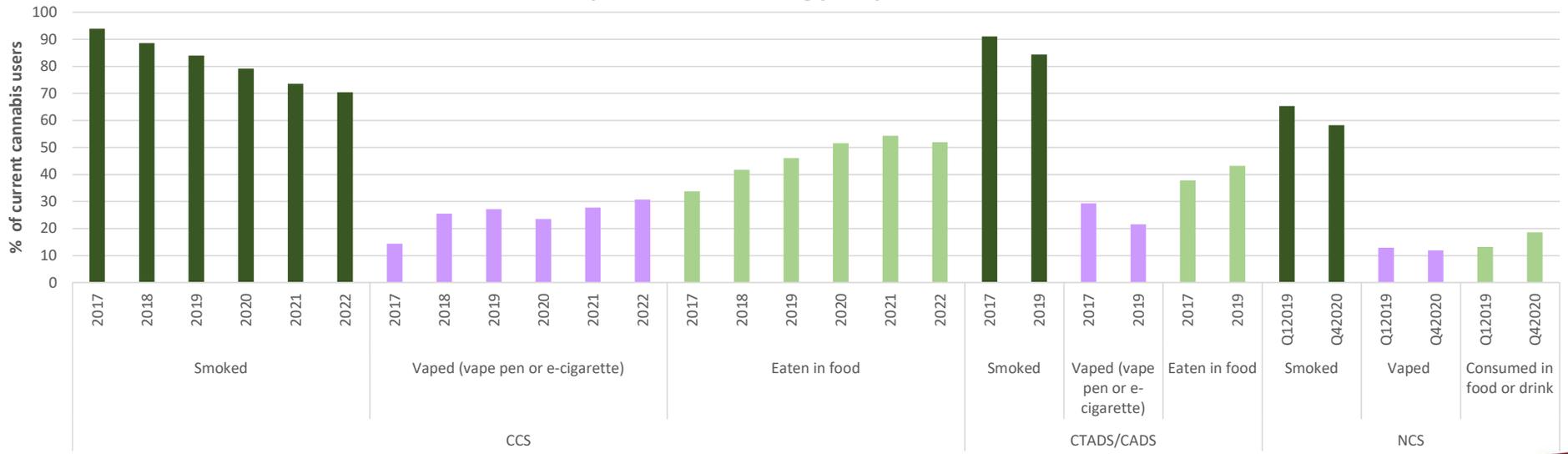


General population

CONSUMPTION METHOD

- Decrease in cannabis smoking, increase in ingesting cannabis/edible use (multiple sources)
- Cannabis smoking remains the leading method; 70% reported smoking cannabis (Canadian Cannabis Survey, 2022)
- No clear trend concerning vaping cannabis

Usual cannabis consumption method among past-year cannabis consumers



General population

SOURCE OF CANNABIS

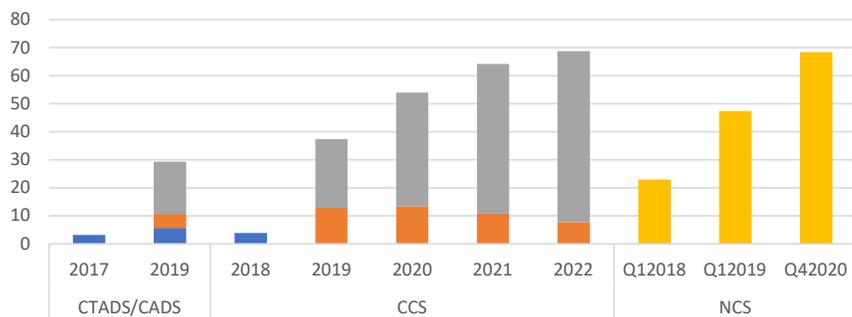
- Increase in those sourcing cannabis legally

- Consumers accessing from legal sources increased from **40%** in 2019 to **69%** in 2022 (Canadian Cannabis Survey)

- SGBA+ findings:

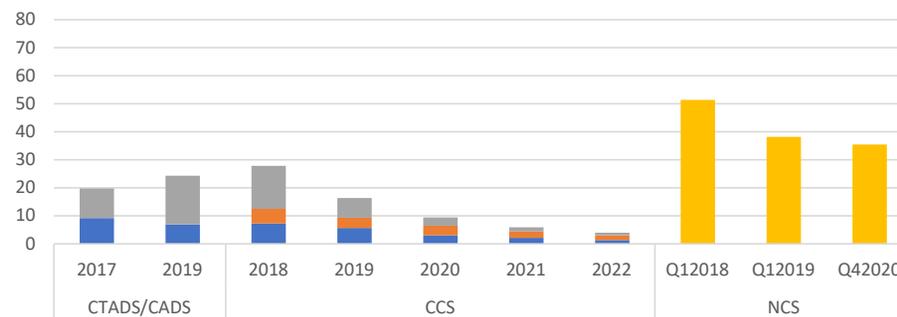
- **Males**, individuals who consume cannabis **frequently/heavily**, and individuals with **lower educational attainment and/or lower income** more likely to source cannabis from illegal sources (International Cannabis Policy Study, 2021)

Legal sources of cannabis



- From an authorized retailer or online from a licensed producer
- Legal retail
- Legal online/mail order
- Health Canada licenced producer

Illegal sources of cannabis



- Multiple illegal sources (storefront; online acquaintance; dealer)
- Illegal retail
- Illegal online
- Dealer

General population

CANNABIS-RELATED ED VISITS/HOSPITALIZATIONS

- Increase in cannabis-related ED visits in 3 jurisdictions (Ontario, Alberta, Yukon) where data are available (National Ambulatory Care Reporting System, Canadian Institute for Health Information)
 - Majority of ED-visits relate to **mental & behavioural disorders** (e.g., harmful use, psychotic disorders, dependence/withdrawal)
- No change in cannabis-related hospitalizations (Discharge Abstract Database, Canadian Institute for Health Information)
 - SGBA+ findings: Rates highest among **young adults**, increases greatest among **children 0-11**

Summary

Notable Takeaways

- Cannabis use among youth has remained stable since legalization
- Past-year cannabis use among the general population has increased, with some indication of increases in daily/almost daily use
- Cannabis poisonings from accidental ingestion of edible cannabis have increased, notably among children 5 years or younger
- Risk perception of cannabis use increased among youth
- Growing displacement of the illicit market
- Smoking cannabis has decreased while ingesting cannabis has increased, though smoking cannabis is still the leading consumption method
- Cannabis vaping (e-pen/e-cigarette) among youth has increased