While cigarette smoking among Vermonters has decreased in recent years, it continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S., accounting for nearly one in five deaths.[1] Reducing the prevalence of smoking is a health priority in Vermont.[2] At the same time, the use of electronic vaping products (EVP), particularly among youth and young adults, continues to rise. EVPs are battery powered devices, such as e-cigarettes, e-hookahs, vape pens, and e-cigars, usually containing nicotine and flavors such as fruit, mint or candy.[3]

This data brief summarizes tobacco measures from the 2020 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) for adults ages 18 and older. Prevalence of current cigarette use, e-cigarette use and smoking quit attempts are presented by key demographic subgroups.

2020 KEY POINTS

- **14% of adults smoke cigarettes.**

- **Among LGBT Vermonters, attempts to quit smoking cigarettes increased from 31% (2019) to 61% (2020).**

- **E-cigarette use is 3x higher among young adults (18-24; 12%) than the statewide rate (4%).**

- **Adults who use cannabis are 3x more likely to smoke cigarettes and 7x more likely to use e-cigarettes than those who do not use cannabis.**

Adult Tobacco Use

Fourteen percent of adult Vermonters report current use of cigarettes, 4% use e-cigarettes, and 2% use smokeless tobacco products. Among adults who currently smoke cigarettes, 53% attempted to quit smoking in the past 12 months.

Tobacco Current Use Prevalence & Quit Attempts in Vermont, BRFSS 2020

	%	Estimated Vermonters‡
Cigarette Use	14.5†	64,100
E-Cigarette Use	4.0	19,000
Smokeless Tobacco Use	2.5	12,100
Quit Attempts among Adults who Smoke	52.5†	33,700

† *Age adjusted to standard U.S. 2000 adult population according to Healthy People guidelines.*
‡ *Estimated counts are rounded to the nearest hundred Vermonters and not age adjusted.*

The rates of current cigarette use and smoking quit attempts in 2020 are statistically similar to 2019 rates. Cigarette use did significantly decrease from 18% in 2016. Use of e-cigarettes remains stable since 2016.

Trend in Smoking Prevalence†, Quit Attempts† and E-Cigarette Use among Vermont Adults, 2011-2020 VT BRFSS

Quit Attempts: 55% (2011), 62% (2012), 56% (2013), 59% (2014), 57% (2015), 49% (2016), 59% (2017), 57% (2018), 51% (2019), 53% (2020)

Current Smoking: 20% (2011), 17% (2012), 18% (2013), 18% (2014), 17% (2015), 18% (2016), 17% (2017), 15% (2018), 16% (2019), 14% (2020)

E-Cigarettes: 3% (2016), 3% (2017), 4% (2020)
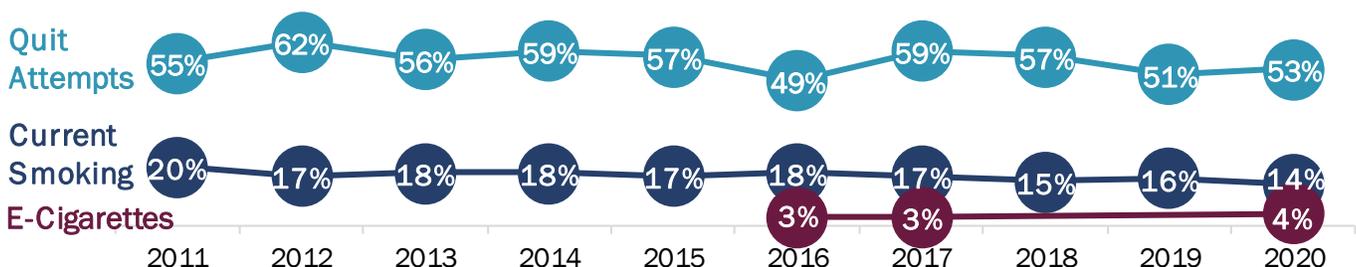
†*Rates are age adjusted to standard U.S. 2000 population according to Healthy People guidelines.*
E-cigarette use is not age adjusted and data was not collected in 2018 and 2019.

CIGARETTE USE & QUIT ATTEMPTS - DEMOGRAPHICS

Current cigarette smoking rates among Vermont adults differ significantly by age, education, income, veteran status, insurance, geography, home ownership, disability status, cannabis use, binge drinking and e-cigarette use.

- Current smoking is significantly higher in adults ages 25-34 (20%), 35-44 (17%), 45-54 (15%) and 55-64 (15%) years compared to adults 65 and older (7%).

- Smoking rates differ significantly with increasing level of education. Adults with less than a high school education smoke at the highest rate (43%) while adults with a college education smoke at the lowest rate (4%).

- Adults living in households with income below 250% of the FPL have statistically higher smoking rates (25%) than those in households with income at or above 250% FPL (9%).

- Veterans smoke at nearly two times the rate of non-veterans (26% vs. 14%).

- Adults without health insurance smoke at a significantly higher rate than those with insurance (28% vs. 13%).

- Vermonters living in rural areas smoke at a statistically higher rate than urban Vermonters (17% vs. 11%).

- Adults who rent their home smoke at a significantly higher rate than adults who own their home (27% vs. 11%).

- Cigarette use among adults with any disability is three times higher than the rate for those without a disability (32% vs. 11%).

- Adults who use cannabis smoke at three times the rate of adults who do not use cannabis (30% vs. 10%).

- Adults who binge drink smoke at a significantly higher rate than those who do not binge drink (21% vs. 12%).

- Adults who use e-cigarettes smoke cigarettes at nearly three times the rate of adults who do not use e-cigarettes (36% vs. 13%).

- There are no statistical differences in smoking rates by sex, race/ethnicity or sexual orientation/gender identity.

Quit attempts do not differ significantly by any of these demographics, though there is a trend of decreasing rates with increasing age.

Adult Cigarette Smoking Prevalence† and Quit Attempts†, 2020 VT BRFSS

■ Current Smoking ■ Quit Attempts

Group	Current Smoking	Quit Attempts
Overall	14%	53%
18-24	11%	72%
25-34	20%	62%
35-44	17%	50%
45-54	15%	48%
55-64	15%	48%
65+	7%	39%
Male	16%	53%
Female	13%	52%
BIPOC	21%	62%
WnH	14%	51%
<High School	43%	44%
High School	23%	50%
Some College	14%	59%
College+	4%	57%
<250% of FPL	25%	50%
≥250% of FPL	9%	64%
Veteran	26%	53%
Non-Veteran	14%	53%
Insured	13%	54%
Uninsured	28%	50%
Urban	11%	60%
Rural	17%	50%
Own Home	11%	57%
Rent Home	27%	50%
Any Disability	32%	52%
No Disability	11%	51%
LGBT	19%	61%
Non-LGBT	14%	52%
Cannabis Use	30%	52%
No Cannabis Use	10%	53%
Binge Drink	21%	53%
No Binge Drink	12%	53%
E-Cigarette Use	36%	64%
No E-Cigarette Use	13%	50%

Sex = sex assigned at birth; WnH=White, non-Hispanic; BIPOC=Black, Indigenous, or people of color; FPL=Federal Poverty Level; LGBT=Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender; Renting Home includes those with other accommodations; Cannabis Use is in past 30 days; Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more drinks in one sitting for a male or a 4 or more drinks in one sitting for a female in the past 30 days.
*†Prevalence data on this page is age-adjusted to U.S. 2000 population according to Healthy People 2020 guidelines.*

CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND HEALTH STATUS

In 2020, current smoking prevalence remains higher in adults with certain chronic diseases.

- Adults with COPD are four times more likely to currently smoke than those without COPD.
- Those with diabetes, non-skin cancer, cardiovascular disease (CVD), depression and arthritis are at least two times as likely to smoke than those without these conditions.
- Smoking rates for adults with and without asthma are statistically similar, but in 2019 adults with asthma smoked at a significantly higher rate than those without asthma. This change is due to a 4% decrease in the smoking rate for those with asthma since 2019.
- Smoking rates for adults with diabetes and non-skin cancer are significantly higher compared to adults without these conditions. This is driven by a 6% increase in both rates since 2019. The smoking rates for both conditions were similar in 2019.
- There is no significant difference in the smoking rate between those with and without chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Smoking Prevalence[†] in Adults with Chronic Health Conditions, 2020 VT BRFSS

● With Chronic Disease ● Without

	COPD*	Diabetes*	Non-Skin Cancer*	CVD*	Depression*	CKD	Arthritis*	Asthma
With	54%	31%	30%	26%	25%	24%	23%	19%
Without	13%	14%	14%	14%	11%	14%	13%	14%
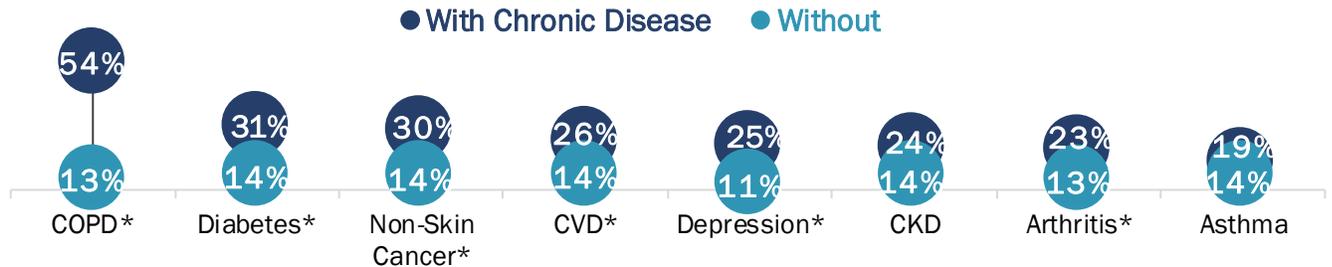
COPD=Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease; CVD=Cardiovascular disease; CKD=Chronic Kidney Disease

Adults who currently smoke are more than two times as likely to report fair to poor general health (25% vs. 9%), poor physical health (18% vs. 8%), or poor mental health (30% vs. 12%) compared to adults who do not smoke. All differences are statistically significant.

SMOKING PREVALENCE BY COUNTY

Adult cigarette smoking prevalence ranges from 10% in Chittenden County to 26% in Essex County. The smoking rate in Chittenden County (10%) is significantly lower than the state average of 15%. No other regions differ significantly from the state average.

Smoking Prevalence[†] by County, VT BRFSS, 2019-2020
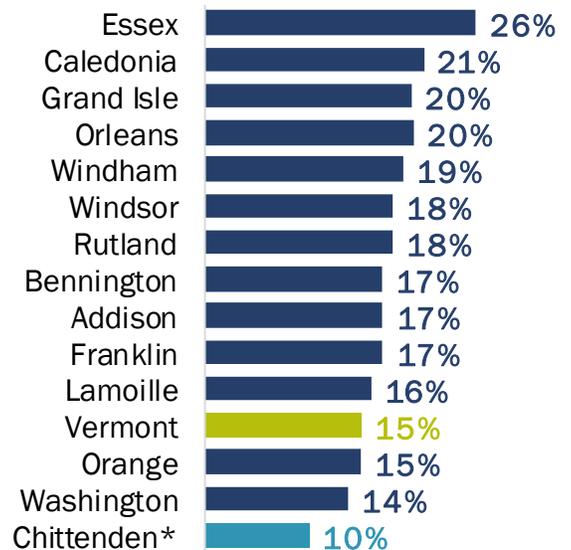
County	Prevalence
Essex	26%
Caledonia	21%
Grand Isle	20%
Orleans	20%
Windham	19%
Windsor	18%
Rutland	18%
Bennington	17%
Addison	17%
Franklin	17%
Lamoille	16%
Vermont	15%
Orange	15%
Washington	14%
Chittenden*	10%

†Prevalence data on this page is age-adjusted to U.S. 2000 population according to healthy people 2020 guidelines. Vermont and county rates are the average for 2019 and 2020.
* Indicates statistically significant difference.

E-CIGARETTE USE - DEMOGRAPHICS

In the BRFSS survey, adults are asked if they have ever used e-cigarettes in their life and if so, whether they currently use them some days or every day. The question focuses on use of e-vapor products with nicotine, not cannabis.

Use of e-cigarettes among VT adults differs significantly by age, sex, education, home ownership, disability status, cannabis use, binge drinking and smoking status.

- E-cigarette use declines with increasing age. Use is significantly higher in adults ages 18-24 (12%), 25-34 (7%) and 35-44 (4%) years compared to adults 55-64 years (1%).
- Males use e-cigarettes at twice the rate of females (6% vs. 3%).
- Adults with a high school education or less use e-cigarettes at three times the rate of adults with a college education (6% vs. 2%).
- Vermonters who rent a home use e-cigarettes at four times the rate of Vermonters who own their home (9% vs. 2%).
- Adults with any disability use e-cigarettes at a significantly higher rate than adults without a disability (7% vs. 3%).
- Vermonters who use cannabis use e-cigarettes at seven times the rate of Vermonters who do not use cannabis (14% vs. 2%).
- Vermonters who binge drink use e-cigarettes at three times the rate of Vermonters who do not binge drink (9% vs. 3%).
- Adults who *currently smoke* cigarettes use e-cigarettes at 12 times the rate of adults who never smoked (12% vs. 1%), while adults who *formerly smoked* use e-cigarettes at six times the rate of adults who *never smoked* (6% vs. 1%).
- There are no statistical differences in e-cigarette use by income, geography or sexual orientation/gender identity.

Adult E-Cigarette Prevalence, 2020 VT BRFSS
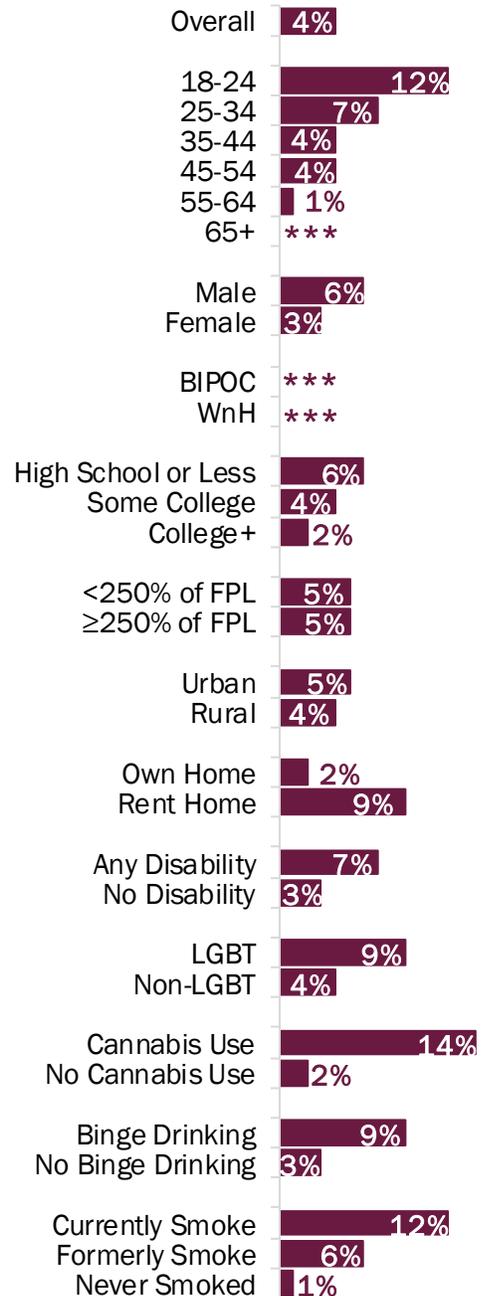
Category	Value
Overall	4%
18-24	12%
25-34	7%
35-44	4%
45-54	4%
55-64	1%
65+	***
Male	6%
Female	3%
BIPOC	***
WnH	***
High School or Less	6%
Some College	4%
College+	2%
<250% of FPL	5%
≥250% of FPL	5%
Urban	5%
Rural	4%
Own Home	2%
Rent Home	9%
Any Disability	7%
No Disability	3%
LGBT	9%
Non-LGBT	4%
Cannabis Use	14%
No Cannabis Use	2%
Binge Drinking	9%
No Binge Drinking	3%
Currently Smoke	12%
Formerly Smoke	6%
Never Smoked	1%

Sex = sex assigned at birth. WnH=White, non-Hispanic; BIPOC=Black, Indigenous, or people of color; FPL=Federal Poverty Level; LGBT=Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender; Renting Home includes those with other accommodations; Cannabis Use is in past 30 days; Binge drinking is defined as having 5 or more drinks in one sitting for a male or a 4 or more drinks in one sitting for a female in the past 30 days. ***Value has been suppressed due to small sample size.

Adult Smoking Prevalence and Quit Attempts by Demographic Characteristics (VT BRFSS, 2020)

	Smoking Prevalence †			Quit Attempts †		
	%	Estimated Vermonters‡	Diff from State Rate?	%	Estimated Vermonters‡	Diff from State Rate?
Overall	14.5	64,100		52.5	33,700	
Age Group						
18-24 years	10.7^{AB}	6,800		71.7^A	4,900	
25-34 years	20.3^A	13,600		62.2^A	8,500	
35-44 years	17.3^A	11,900		50.3^A	5,900	
45-54 years	15.2^A	10,200		47.8^A	4,900	
55-64 years	14.5^A	12,900		47.7^A	6,200	
65+ years	7.1^B	8,500	✓	38.8^A	3,300	
Sex						
Male	15.9^A	35,300		53.2^A	19,100	
Female	13.0^A	28,800		52.0^A	14,700	
Race-Ethnicity						
White, non-Hispanic	14.1^A	56,900		50.7^A	28,800	
People of color	20.7^A	7,100		61.8^A	4,800	
Education						
Less than high school	43.2^A	12,300	✓	44.0^A	5,500	
High school	22.9^B	29,600	✓	49.6^A	14,600	
Some college	14.5^C	16,300		59.5^A	10,200	
College or higher	3.5^D	5,700	✓	57.3^A	3,300	
Federal Poverty Level						
<250% of FPL	24.7^A	26,500	✓	50.4^A	13,900	
≥250% of FPL	8.7^B	11,500	✓	64.0^A	7,400	
Veteran Status						
Veteran	26.1^A	8,000	✓	52.6^A	4,000	
Non-veteran	13.9^B	55,900		52.7^A	29,500	
Insurance Status						
Insured	13.3^A	54,700		53.8^A	29,000	
Uninsured	28.2^B	9,300	✓	49.9^A	4,500	
Geographic Status						
Urban	11.1^A	17,100		60.2^A	10,300	
Rural	16.9^B	46,100		49.6^A	23,100	
Housing Status						
Own home	10.9^A	36,000		56.7^A	18,800	
Rent home	27.0^B	28,100	✓	50.2^A	14,900	
Disability Status						
No disability	10.6^A	36,900	✓	51.4^A	19,800	
Any disability	31.8^B	26,700	✓	52.1^A	13,700	
SOGI¥						
Heterosexual/Cisgender	14.2^A	54,500		51.7^A	27,800	
LGBT	18.6^A	8,100		61.3^B	5,100	
Cannabis Use						
Cannabis	29.9^A	23,300	✓	52.2^A	13,300	
No cannabis	10.0^B	33,300	✓	52.6^A	16,500	
Binge Drinking						
Binge drink	20.7^A	17,000	✓	53.4^A	9,400	
No binge drink	12.5^B	43,200		53.1^A	22,700	
E-Cigarette Use						
E-Cigarettes	35.7^A	7,300	✓	63.9^A	5,200	
No e-cigarettes	13.5^B	55,100		50.2^A	27,600	

†Percentages are age-adjusted to standard U.S. 2000 population according to Healthy People 2020 guidelines. ‡Estimated Counts are rounded to the nearest hundred Vermonters and are not age-adjusted. ¥SOGI = Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity.

A, B, C, D Groups within demographic categories that share a common letter are statistically similar to each other. For example, smoking among veterans and non-veterans is significantly different, while quit attempts is similar.

Adult E-Cigarette Prevalence by Demographics (VT BRFSS, 2020)

	%	Estimated Vermonters	Diff from State Rate?
Overall	4.0	19,000	
Age Group			
18-24 years	12.2^A	7,300	✓
25-34 years	7.4^{AB}	4,800	
35-44 years	4.4^{AB}	2,900	
45-54 years	3.5^{BC}	2,400	
55-64 years	1.3^C	1,200	✓
65+ years	--	--	
Sex			
Male	5.5^A	12,800	
Female	2.6^B	6,300	
Education			
<High school	5.8^A	10,200	
Some college	3.7^{AB}	4,900	
College or higher	2.4^B	3,900	
Federal Poverty Level			
<250% of FPL	5.0^A	5,600	
≥250% of FPL	5.2^A	7,100	
Geographic Status			
Urban	4.9^A	7,900	
Rural	3.7^A	10,800	
Housing Status			
Own home	2.4^A	8,300	
Rent home	9.0^B	10,800	✓

	%	Estimated Vermonters	Diff from State Rate?
Disability Status			
No disability	3.3^A	11,800	
Any disability	6.7^B	7,100	
SOGI¥			
Heterosexual/Cisgender	3.6^A	15,300	
LGBT	8.6^A	3,600	
Cannabis Use			
Cannabis	13.6^A	10,500	✓
No cannabis	1.8^B	6,500	✓
Binge Drinking			
Binge drink	9.2^A	11,300	✓
No binge drink	3.0^B	7,200	
Cigarette Smoking			
Currently smoke	11.6^A	7,300	✓
Formerly smoked	5.6^A	7,700	
Never smoked	1.5^B	4,000	✓

‡*Estimated Counts are rounded to the nearest hundred Vermonters.*
-- Indicates data has been suppressed due to small numbers.
$^{A, B, C, D}$ *Groups within demographic categories that share a common letter are statistically similar to each other. For example, e-cigarette use among male and female Vermonters is significantly different while use among urban and rural Vermonters is not.*
¥*SOGI = Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity.*

DATA NOTES

The BRFSS uses the term "e-cigarette" to refer to electronic vaping products (EVP). We have used "e-cigarette" in this data brief to refer to all e-vapor products.

The BRFSS uses the term "marijuana" to refer to cannabis. We have used "cannabis" in this data brief to reflect updated terminology at the Vermont Department of Health.

Currently, the Vermont BRFSS only includes assessment of LGBT. We acknowledge this definition does not fully represent the other identities people may utilize.

REFERENCES

[1] Current Cigarette Smoking Among Adults in the United States:
https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/adult_data/cig_smoking/index.htm

[2] Vermont State Health Improvement Plan 2019-2023:
https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/ADM_State_Health_Improvement_Plan_2019-2023.pdf

[3] Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS): https://www.healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/population-health-surveys-data/brfss. COVID-19 began to emerge in the U.S. in early 2020 and Vermont issued a Stay at Home order 3/2020, no gaps in data collection were encountered and data was collected throughout the year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Vermont Tobacco Data
www.healthvermont.gov/health-statistics-vital-records/surveillance-reporting-topic/tobacco

Vermont Tobacco Control Program
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