

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON YOUTH CANNABIS USE IN CANADA



YMCA  
Youth Cannabis  
Awareness  
Program

Programme de  
sensibilisation des  
jeunes au cannabis  
du YMCA

YOUTH CANNABIS USE HAS INCREASED DURING THE PANDEMIC AND SOME YOUTH MAY BE USING CANNABIS TO COPE WITH THE CHANGES<sup>3</sup>

## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

### CHANGES TO ROUTINE

2 in 3 students felt it is more difficult to learn during the pandemic<sup>1</sup>

### POORER MENTAL HEALTH

In April 2020, 46.5% of youth aged 15-34 noted their mental health as fair or poor<sup>1</sup>

### UNEMPLOYMENT

23% of youth were unemployed as of August 2020<sup>1</sup>

### ISOLATION

49% of youth reported loneliness and isolation<sup>1</sup>

### FINANCIAL INSECURITY

73% of post-secondary students were highly concerned about using up their savings and adding to their debt<sup>1</sup>

### STRESS AND ANXIETY

The pandemic has increased youth's levels of stress and anxiety. These are two of the top reasons youth decide to use cannabis<sup>2</sup>

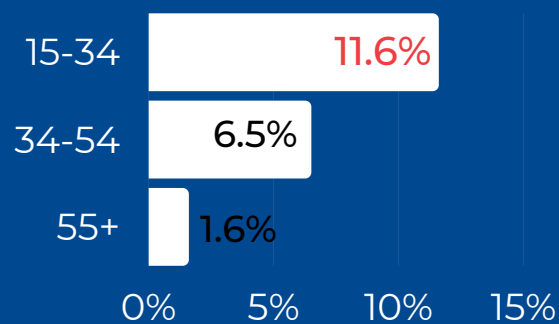
THE HEALTH & SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC MAY BE HEIGHTENED AMONG 2SLGBTQ+, INDIGENOUS, RACIALIZED, NEWCOMER YOUTH, YOUTH FROM LOW INCOME FAMILIES AND YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES<sup>1</sup>

## CHANGES IN YOUTH CANNABIS USE

- 1 in 8 youth aged 15-34 increased use<sup>1</sup>
- 5% more youth aged 16-19 reported daily use (21% in 2020 vs. 16% in 2019)<sup>1</sup>
- 2LGBTQ+ youth were more likely to report poor mental health and increased use<sup>1</sup>
- Youth experiencing poorer mental health were more likely to report increased use<sup>1</sup>

Across all age groups, youth reported the highest increase in cannabis use<sup>1</sup>

Increases in weekly cannabis use by age<sup>1</sup>



Frequent cannabis use can result in greater exposure to THC (the mind altering compound in cannabis) increasing the risk of dependence on cannabis<sup>3</sup>.

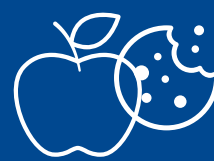
CANNABIS COMPOUNDS MAY SUPPRESS THE IMMUNE SYSTEM MAKING IT HARDER FOR YOUR BODY TO FIGHT OFF VIRUSES LIKE COVID-19<sup>3</sup>

## STRATEGIES TO STAY HEALTHY DURING THE PANDEMIC

### WHAT OTHER YOUTH ARE DOING<sup>1</sup>



93.6% Reported Communication with loved ones



39.7% Reported Changing food choices



62 - 66.8% Reported Exercise indoors/outdoors



22.7% Reported Meditation

### WHAT CAN YOU DO?



Participate in activities you enjoy



If you want support or to talk, refer to mental health services available in your area.

## Reference List

1. Statistics Canada. (2020, September). The Social and Economic Impacts of COVID-19: A Six-month Update.
2. DFK Canada. (2020, April 29). Family Stress and COVID-19. Retrieved January 14, 2021, from <https://www.drugfreekidscanada.org/support-yourself-and-your-family-through-the-challenges-of-covid-19/substance-use-and-covid-19/>
3. Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction. (2020, December 2). COVID-19, Alcohol and Cannabis Use

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