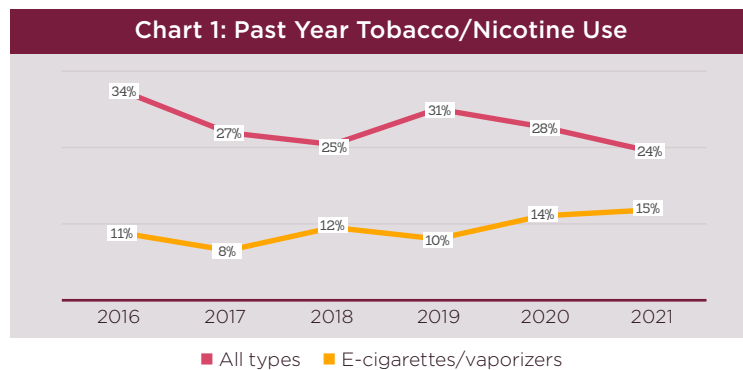


Tobacco and Nicotine Use

Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance misuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. The coalition is comprised of 24 public and private colleges and universities in the state working to prevent high-risk behaviors by implementing evidence-based strategies. To measure progress and obtain data needed for the implementation of programs, PIP created the Missouri Assessment of College Health Behaviors (MACHB) Survey. The MACHB is an annual, online survey that has been implemented each spring since 2007. The survey assesses the roles that alcohol, drugs (illicit and prescription), tobacco/nicotine, interpersonal violence, and mental health have on student health and wellness. This brief will focus on tobacco and nicotine product use among Missouri college students.

Prevalence

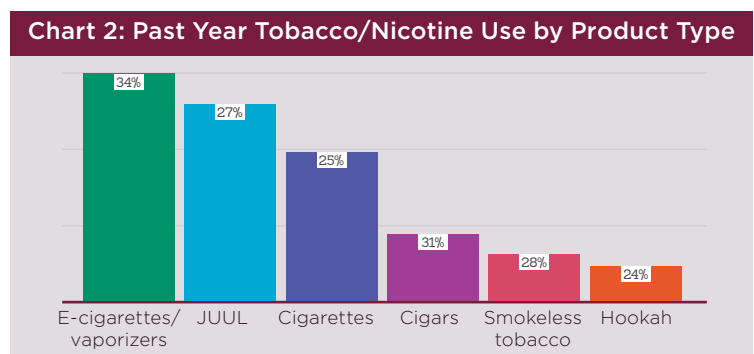
According to the MACHB survey, use of any type of tobacco/nicotine products among Missouri college students has continued to decline since 2016. While use of almost all tobacco/nicotine product types has decreased, use of e-cigarettes/vaporizers has increased, reaching an all-time high in 2021.



In 2021 a new question was added to the MACHB about the age of first use for tobacco/nicotine products and the highest percentage of Missouri college students reported first using at age 18 (shown in table 1). Typically, the younger an individual begins to use nicotine, the more likely they are to develop long-term dependence which has contributed to a push to raise the legal age of sale to 21. However, 68% of students report that they have never used tobacco or nicotine products.

How old were you the first time you used tobacco/nicotine products?	
12 or younger	1.4%
13-15	5.6%
16	5.8%
17	4.9%
18	8.2%
19-20	4.3%
21+	2.3%
Never used	68%

Missouri college students report using various types of tobacco/nicotine products at least once in the past year (question is select all that apply), as shown in chart 2. While JUUL is a type of e-cigarette, some students do not recognize that JUUL products contain nicotine or that they are considered e-cigarettes; therefore, it exists as its own option on the survey currently. Nineteen percent (19%) of students report using either JUUL or an e-cigarette at least once in the past year and 8.4% of students report that they had used both JUUL and an e-cigarette product in the past year.



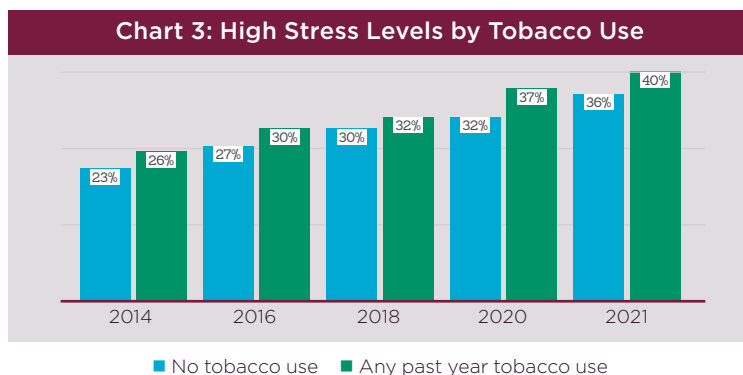
Related to frequency of use, 41% of students who use e-cigarettes report that they use daily (compared to 24% of students who use smokeless tobacco, 20% of students who use JUUL, and 17% of students who use cigarettes).

Quitting Tobacco/Nicotine

Related to quitting tobacco/nicotine use, 54% of students who had used in the past year report that they have tried to quit since entering college. However, 70% of those who had tried to quit had not sought assistance for quitting, though if they had, the most common places they sought assistance were through the support of friends and family (21%) or an off-campus medical doctor (4.9%), though the question is select all that apply. The outcomes of the quit attempt are varied, with 30% of students saying they have greatly reduced their use but have occasional slip-ups, 25% have not used at all since quitting, 23% have slightly reduced their use, and 20% continue to use at the same level as before.

Tobacco/Nicotine Use and Stress

The MACHB asks students to report their stress level in the past 2 weeks ranging from no stress to unbearable stress. Students who had used tobacco/nicotine in the past year were more likely to report high stress (overwhelming or unbearable stress) compared to students who do not report using tobacco/nicotine. This data is correlational, not causal, and students may use tobacco/nicotine to cope with stress but may also face additional stress as a result of tobacco/nicotine use. Questions about stress are typically only asked on even numbered years but were included in 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Tobacco/Nicotine and Cannabis Use

MACHB data also shows that students who have used tobacco/nicotine products in the past year were more likely to report past year cannabis use than students who do not use tobacco/nicotine products. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of students who had used tobacco/nicotine products in the past year reported that they had also used cannabis in the past year. Comparatively, only 18% of students who had not used tobacco/nicotine products reported that they had used cannabis in the past year.

Summary

While it is positive that rates of tobacco/nicotine use continue to decline, it is important to continue efforts related to prevention and cessation, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, as legislation around tobacco/nicotine use continues to change, more students may be wanting to quit and willing to seek services to assist them. Resources related to stress reduction and healthy coping are also important to promote on campus, especially for students who use tobacco or nicotine. Finally, as rates of cannabis use are higher among students who have used tobacco/nicotine in the past year, it may be important to discuss quitting or cutting back on other substances in cessation appointments and provide resources for students who use both substances.

Training and Resources

Partners in Prevention recently created a new website, Time to Change? Assess Your Substance Use at mopip.org/change which allows students to conduct a brief assessment on their tobacco/nicotine or marijuana/cannabis use, learn about the benefits of quitting, and find resources to help them quit or cut back.

PIP has also partnered with colleagues at the University of Missouri's Eliminate Tobacco Use project to provide virtual tobacco cessation meetings with a trained tobacco treatment specialist for any student in the state who is interested in quitting tobacco. Visit mopip.org/change/contact.html to learn more

PIP also provides training on delivering tobacco cessation services on college campuses. Visit mopiptraining.org to see when our next training is available. PIP also supports cessation efforts at campuses by providing free nicotine replacement therapy and other quit kit items free of charge. Contact our staff at pip@missouri.edu for more information.

Contact Partners in Prevention at (573) 884-7551.

Report prepared by Margo Leitschuh, Communications Coordinator. Data prepared by Dong Ding and Kayleigh Greenwood, Research Coordinators. Published February 2022.

For more information, visit mopip.org

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