

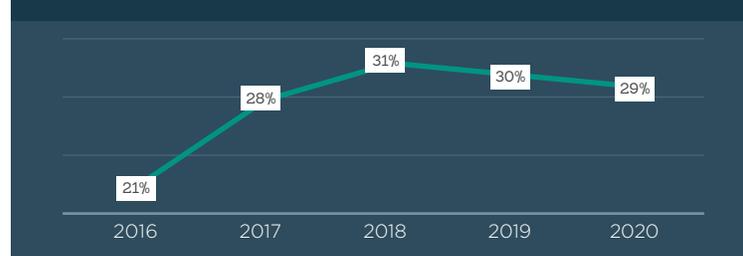
# Cannabis Use among Missouri College Students

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 and reduce high-risk behaviors by implementing evidence-informed 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 that assesses students' experiences of substance use, mental health and well-being, and interpersonal violence. This brief will focus on cannabis use behaviors of students. Note: The 2020 MACHB data was collected at all campuses prior to campus closures and disruptions due to COVID-19.

## Prevalence

Students are asked to report their marijuana/cannabis use behaviors, including smoking marijuana, using derivatives, and all edible products (the survey uses this terminology to capture commonly used terminology among students, but for the purposes of this brief, cannabis will be used to refer to use any type of cannabis product use unless otherwise specified). According to the 2020 MACHB, 38% of students report that they have used any type of marijuana/cannabis at least once in their lifetime. In the past year, 29% of Missouri college students report using any type of cannabis. This percentage has remained consistent over the past few years, even as legislation and public opinion around cannabis has changed. Additionally, 89% of the students who report using cannabis in the past year do not have a prescription or medical card (in November 2018 Missourians voted to legalize cannabis for medical use).

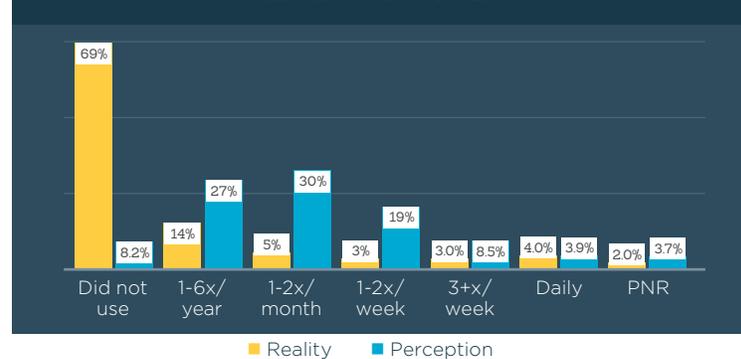
**Chart 1: Cannabis Use Past Year**



Students are also asked to report how frequently they use cannabis, shown in chart 2. However, students greatly overestimate how frequently their peers use

cannabis. While 69% of students have not used in the past year, only 8.2% of students perceive that their peers do not use.

**Chart 2: Frequency of Cannabis Use in the Past Year**



The MACHB also asks about types of cannabis used at least once in the past year, the most common being smoked cannabis and cannabis edibles.

**Table 1: Types of Cannabis Used in the Past Year**

Smoked (joint, pipe, blunt, bong)	26%
Edibles (brownies, cookies, candies, drinks)	18%
Vaporized (e-cigarette or vaporizing device)	15%
Derivatives (wax, dabs, oils)	11%
Others	2.3%

## Motivations for and Consequences of Use

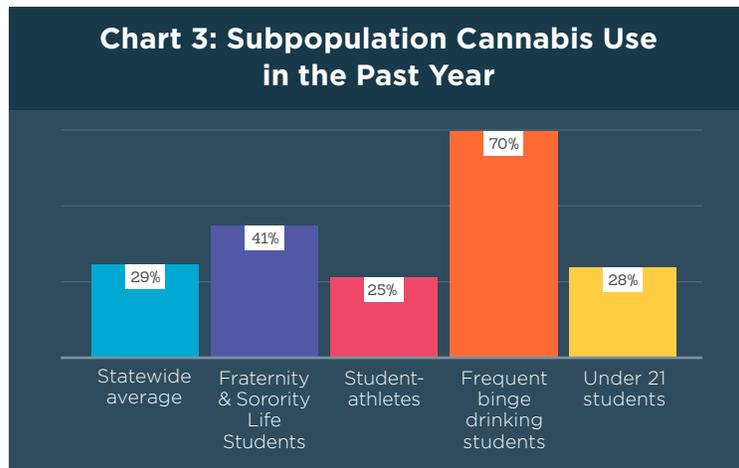
The most common reasons that students report using cannabis are to relax (79%), to have fun with

friends (66%) and to get high (61%). While reported consequences among users are relatively low, 37% felt in a fog, sluggish, or tired the morning after using, 29% drove after consuming cannabis, 15% felt very sick/vomited after use, and 10% missed class because of use in the past year.

Additionally, over one-third (36%) of students who use report wanting to change their cannabis use behaviors (currently trying to use less or quit, ready to use less or quit or thinking about using less or quitting).

## Cannabis Use Among Subpopulations

Certain subpopulations including Fraternity and Sorority Life students and students who frequently binge drink (consuming 5 or more drinks in a two-hour period 3 or more times in the past 2 weeks – approximately 5.4% of Missouri college students) have higher rates of cannabis use in the past year. While student-athletes report slightly lower rates of cannabis use than the statewide average, still about 1 in 4 report use in the past year, a violation of NCAA policy. Similarly, students under 21 have slightly lower cannabis use rates, but also make up almost two-thirds of the statewide sample (60%).



Additionally, the MACHB asks students to identify in which state they graduated from high school, and students from states where cannabis was legalized either recreationally or medically reported slightly higher use rates than Missouri (now medically legal) or states without any legalization.

**Table 2: Cannabis Use in the Past Year by High School Location and Legalization Status**

Missouri high school	29%
States where cannabis is not legalized	28%
States where cannabis is recreationally and medically legal	33%
States where cannabis is medically legal	33%

## Conclusion

Cannabis use is a critical health behavior that we must continue to monitor. We must also implement prevention strategies (social norms campaigns, education, environmental strategies, etc.) as well as harm-reduction strategies that address high-risk use. Screening, brief intervention and referral to treatment (SBIRT) models coupled with motivational interviewing and/or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are also promising treatment methods for students with cannabis use disorder (CUD) or who are wanting to decrease or stop using. Best practices recommendations suggest including screening for cannabis use in student health centers and counseling centers during intake. Partners in Prevention has curated resources in our toolkit on cannabis on our website, via the 2021 Meeting of the Minds Training Series recorded sessions, and via a webinar series on strategies to address cannabis and other novel substances. Contact our staff at [pip@missouri.edu](mailto:pip@missouri.edu) for access to the Meeting of the Minds recordings and see the other resources listed next.

## Resources

- [CADE Higher Education Cannabis Prevention Toolkit](#)
- [Michigan Collegiate Cannabis Prevention Toolkit](#)
- [Partners in Prevention Cannabis Toolkit](#)
- [Drug Free Schools and Campuses Compliance and Evidence-Based Strategies to Address Cannabis and Other Novel Substances Webinar Series](#)

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

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