

# Cannabis Use Among Missouri College Students

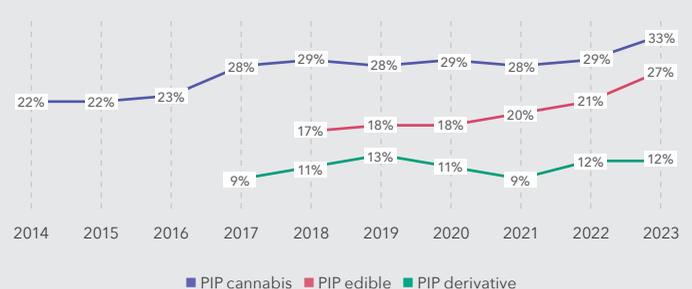
Partners in Prevention (PIP) is Missouri's higher education substance misuse consortium dedicated to creating healthy and safe college campuses. This year, the coalition is comprised of 26 public and private colleges and universities in the state, 24 of whom have data included in the 2023 survey. PIP member campuses work 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 (illegal and prescription), tobacco/nicotine, interpersonal violence, and mental health have on student health and wellness. This brief will focus on the overall cannabis use among Missouri college students. The MACHB survey asks students 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 using any type of cannabis product unless otherwise specified). In November 2022, the state of Missouri passed Amendment 3, the Marijuana Legalization Initiative, which legalized the purchase, possession, consumption, use, delivery, and sale of cannabis. It is worth noting that the passing of Amendment 3 could be responsible for or could have influenced some of the higher rates of cannabis use observed this year. While the state's constitution changed, students, faculty, staff, and even visitors are still not allowed to possess or use cannabis on any of the state's college campuses.

## Prevalence

According to the 2023 MACHB, 41% of students report that they have used any type of cannabis at least once in their lifetime. In the past year, 33% of Missouri college students report using any type of cannabis. This percentage has increased from a consistent trend hovering around 28-29% from 2017 to 2022. Approximately 13% of Missouri college students reported using cannabis one or more times per week and will be referred to in this brief as students who frequently use cannabis. Around 20% of Missouri college students use cannabis 1-2 times per month or less and will be referred to as students who infrequently use cannabis. Additionally, only 5.1% of

students who report using cannabis in the past year have a prescription or medical card in the state of Missouri. Chart 1 presents the cannabis use in the past year broken down by different types of use (cannabis, edible, derivative).

**Chart 1: Cannabis Use in the Past Year**



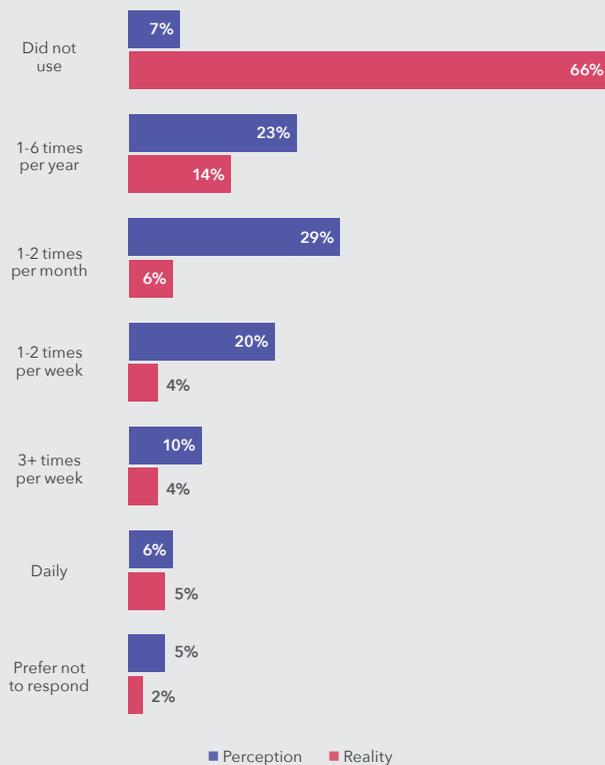
The MACHB asks students about their individual use of cannabis, as well as their perception of other typical student’s use of cannabis. This allows the comparison between perceived versus reality of cannabis use. For example, while 66% of students in reality have not used cannabis in the past year, only 7.3% of students think the typical student does not use cannabis. According to the Michigan Collegiate Cannabis Prevention Toolkit, “higher perceived use is associated with increased actual use”, therefore it is important to understand how much cannabis students perceive is being used around them because that can encourage them to use more or less frequently<sup>1</sup>. Chart 2 illustrates this discrepancy in social norms among students broken down by frequency of cannabis use in the past year.

etc. Examples of edibles include brownies, cookies, candies, drinks, and other forms of ingestible cannabis. Vaporized cannabis involves utilizing an e-cigarette or other vaporizing device. Derivatives are a highly concentrated form of cannabis that are smoked by being heated to a high temperature in a special type of glass pipe. Some examples of derivatives include wax, dabs, oils, shatter, etc. All other forms of cannabis not listed will fall under the “Other” category.

**Table 1: Types of Cannabis Used from 2020-2023**

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Smoked</b>	26%	24%	24%	27%
<b>Edibles</b>	18%	20%	21%	27%
<b>Vaporized</b>	15%	16%	18%	21%
<b>Derivatives</b>	11%	9.3%	12%	12%
<b>Others</b>	2.3%	2.0%	5.0%	5.0%

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



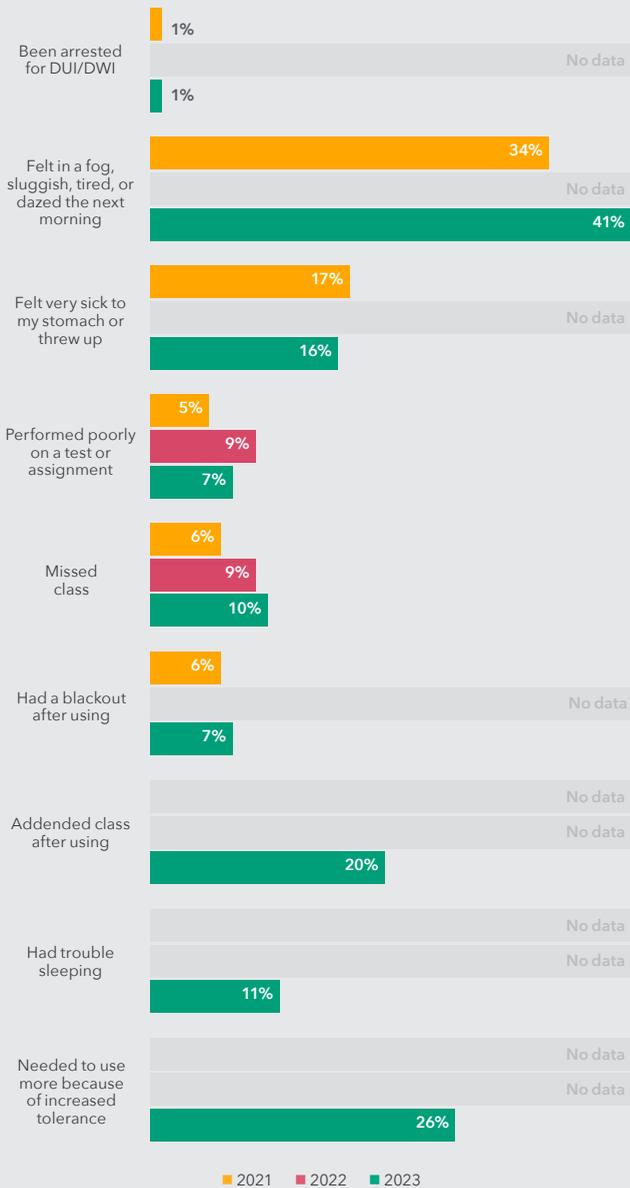
## Motivations for and Consequences of Use

The most common reasons that students report using cannabis are to relax (78%), to have fun with friends (59%), to get high (51%), and because they like how it feels (51%)\*. While reported consequences among users are relatively low, 40% felt in a fog, sluggish, or tired the morning after using, 31% drove after consuming cannabis, 25% needed to use more cannabis due to an increased tolerance, 16% felt very sick/vomited after use, and 10% missed class because of use in the past year. Chart 3 presents a more robust list of consequences of cannabis use. Note that 2023 asked more questions than previous survey years.

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 presents the different types of cannabis used over the years from 2019 to 2023. Some examples of smoked cannabis are joints, pipes, blunts, bongos,

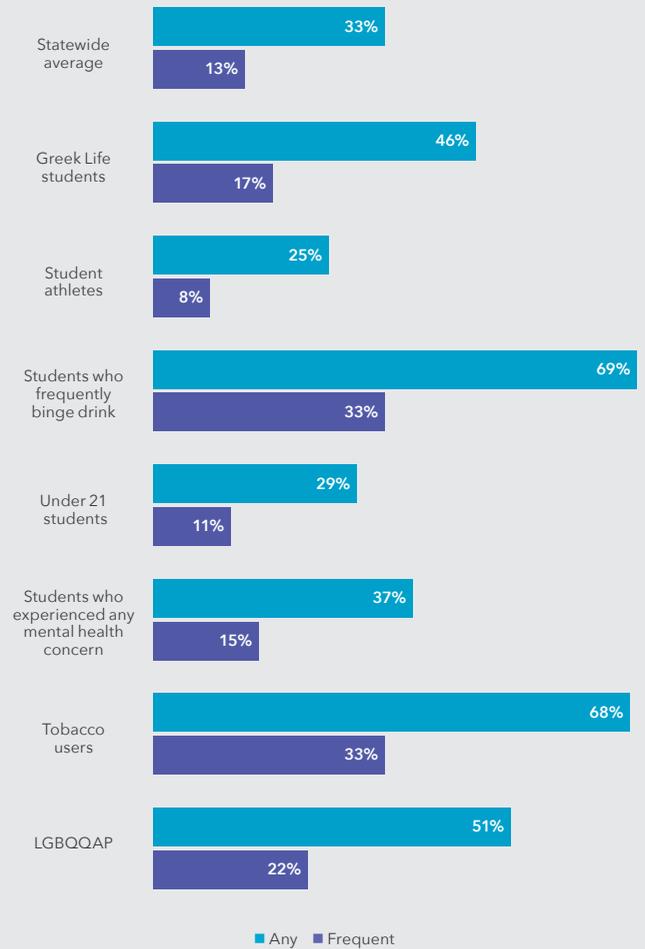
Additionally, 30% of students who use report wanting to change their cannabis behaviors (currently trying to use less or quit, ready to use less or quit, or thinking about using less or quitting). Given the change in Missouri state law legalizing cannabis, 87% of students that currently do not use also do not plan to begin using, while only 10% of non-users report that they are curious to try it.

**Chart 3: Consequences of Cannabis Use**



per week. While student athletes report slightly lower rates of cannabis use than the statewide average, still about 25% (1 in 4) report use in the past year, and 7.8% report frequent rates of cannabis use. Similarly, students under 21 years old have slightly lower cannabis use rates, but also make up over half of the statewide sample (58%).

**Chart 4: Cannabis Use by Population in the Past Year**



## Cannabis Use Among Subpopulations

Certain subpopulations, including tobacco users, 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 6.3% of Missouri college students), LGBQQAP (sexual orientation: lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, asexual, and pansexual), and Fraternity and Sorority Life (Greek Life) students have higher rates of cannabis use in the past year. Chart 4 presents any and frequent use of cannabis in the last year. Frequent use is described as using cannabis one or more times

## Conclusion

Cannabis use is a critical health behavior that PIP continues to monitor. Campuses 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

### - Time to Change? Assess Your Substance Use

One newer resource from PIP is our Time to Change? website, which provides a brief intervention and referral to resources for students looking to quit or cut back on marijuana/cannabis (and tobacco/nicotine) use. The site includes the CUDIT-R screening tool (Cannabis Use Disorder

Identification Test - Revised) to assess current cannabis use, provides information on the benefits of quitting/cutting back, and provides both campus and virtual resources including handouts, apps, quit programs and more. PIP has also created posters, half-sheet handouts, and social media images that can be used to promote the site on your campus. Visit [mopip.org/change](https://mopip.org/change) to learn more

### - Michigan Collegiate Cannabis Prevention Toolkit

### - Partners in Prevention Cannabis Toolkit

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

Report and data prepared by Lexi Gow, Research Intern. Published August 2023.

\*question is select all that apply

#### Citations

1. Harder, L., & Anderson, S. (2019, July). Michigan Collegiate Cannabis Prevention Toolkit (Michigan Higher Education Network, Ed.) AOD Prevention. [Review of Michigan Collegiate Cannabis Prevention Toolkit].