



2021 CONNECTICUT SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

Tobacco Use Findings and Selected Health-Risk Behaviors Among Connecticut High School Youth



CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH

TOBACCO
CONTROL
PROGRAM

MAY 2023

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2021
CONNECTICUT SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY
TOBACCO USE FINDINGS AND SELECTED HEALTH-RISK BEHAVIORS

Manisha Juthani, MD
Commissioner
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Suggested citation: Sorosiak, D., Peng, J. (2023). Connecticut Youth Risk Behavior Survey; Tobacco Use Findings and Selected Health-Risk Behaviors; 2021 Surveillance Report. Hartford, CT: Connecticut Department of Public Health.

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Community, Family Health and Prevention Section, Tobacco Control Program, New 6-3-2023

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DEFINITIONS

TOBACCO PRODUCTS AND CANNABIS

Cigarettes: Sold in packs and cartons. Popular brands include Marlboro, Newport, Pall Mall, Camel, and Winston.

Cigars: Rolled bundles of dried and fermented tobacco leaves made to be smoked, produced in a variety of sizes and shapes. Also called “big cigars”.

Electronic Vapor Products (EVPs): Electronic devices like e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods used to inhale an aerosol or vapor. This includes both refillable and disposable products. EVPs can be used to vape nicotine, cannabis, or just a flavoring. Popular brands are JUUL, SMOK, Suorin, Vuse, and blu.

Hookahs: Waterpipes used to smoke specially made tobacco (shisha) that comes in different flavors, such as apple, mint, cherry, chocolate, coconut, licorice, cappuccino, and watermelon. Popular brands are Fumari, Starbuzz, Tanigers, Al-Fakher, Trifecta, Roman, and Social Smoke.

Little Cigars or Cigarillos (LCCs): Tobacco wrapped in a tobacco leaf or brown paper. May be flavored. Popular brands are Swisher Sweets, Backwoods, Dutch Masters, Captain Black, Prime Time, White Owl, and Black & Mild. In this report, LCCs are included with cigars.

Cannabis (including joints, blunts, vapes, and edibles): Commonly known as marijuana and by other widely used slang terms such as chronic, dope, ganja, grass, hash, herb, pot, and weed. Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is the principal psychoactive constituent of cannabis, and cannabidiol (CBD) is the second most prevalent of the active ingredients. Cannabis is sometimes referred to as THC or CBD, as well. Cannabis can be smoked (joint, blunt, bong), vaped, eaten (baked goods, candies), drunk (tea, cola, alcohol), or dabbed.

Other Tobacco: Due to low prevalence use rates of smokeless tobacco and traditional pipes, they were combined and classified as “other tobacco”. This allowed for additional subgroup analysis.

Pipes: Traditional type of pipe used to smoke tobacco.

Secondhand Smoke or Aerosol/Vapor Exposure: Reported exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke, aerosol, or vapor from e-cigarettes or other electronic vapor devices during the past seven days (i.e., recent exposure).

Smokeless Tobacco (chew, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable): Loose leaf or ground tobacco leaves that come in a large pouch (bag) or in tins. Popular brands are Copenhagen, Grizzly, and Skoal. Snus comes in a small pouch that resembles a tea bag. Popular brands are General, Marlboro, and Camel. Dissolvable tobacco comes in orbs, pellets, sticks, strips, and lozenges. Popular brands are Camel, Ariva, and Stonewall.

Tobacco: Includes cigarettes, cigars/LCCs, EVPs, hookahs, pipes, and smokeless tobacco.

PRODUCT USE

Ever use: Used within a lifetime.

Current use: Used within the 30 days prior to the survey.

INTRODUCTION

The Connecticut School Health Survey (CSHS), known nationally as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), is a school-based survey of students in grades 9 - 12, with randomly chosen classrooms within selected schools. It is anonymous and confidential. The health survey previously had two components—the Youth Behavior Component (YBC) and Youth Tobacco Component (YTC)—and has been successfully administered in Connecticut since 2005. Starting in 2019, the YTC was discontinued, and key tobacco-related questions were added to the YBC, the remaining component of the CSHS.

SURVEY SUMMARY

The 2021 CSHS was completed by 1,811 students in 25 public, charter, and vocational high schools in Connecticut during the fall of 2021. The school response rate was 50%, the student response rate was 80%, and the overall response rate was 40%. The results are representative of all students in grades 9 - 12.

The weighted demographic characteristics of the sample are as follows:

Female	48.8%
Male	50.9%
Missing	0.3%

Black*	12.6%
Hispanic	27.0%
White*	50.9%
Other*	8.6%
Missing	0.9%

*non-Hispanic

Grade 9	27.5%
Grade 10	24.9%
Grade 11	23.6%
Grade 12	23.8%
Missing	0.1%

Students completed a self-administered, anonymous, 99-item questionnaire. Survey procedures were designed to protect the privacy of students by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. Local parental permission procedures were followed before survey administration. When sample size and prevalence rates allow, results are presented by various demographics.

The YRBS is one component of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with representatives from state and local departments of education and health, other federal agencies, and national education and health organizations. The YRBSS was designed to focus the nation on behaviors among youth related to the leading causes of mortality and morbidity among both youth and adults and to assess how these risk behaviors change over time. The YRBSS measures behaviors that fall into the following six categories:

1. Behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence;
2. Sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection;
3. Alcohol and other drug use;
4. Tobacco use;
5. Unhealthy dietary behaviors; and
6. Inadequate physical activity.

The YRBS also measures self-reported height and weight to allow calculation of body mass index for assessment of overweight and obesity. More information about the YRBS can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/yrbss>.

Statistical analyses were conducted on weighted data using SAS® software to account for the complex sampling designs. Prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals were computed for all variables and datasets. Differences between prevalence estimates were considered statistically significant based on t-test analysis, p-value < 0.05. Subgroup comparisons that are statistically significant are highlighted in this report. Please note that throughout this document, any difference noted as “significant” is referring to a statistical difference. For this report, data are suppressed if there were fewer than 30 students in a subgroup or the coefficient of variation (CV) was greater than 30%. Connecticut’s sampling design does not allow for analysis at the school or district level.

This document focuses on summarizing the survey results for tobacco use and selected health-risk behaviors. For purposes of this report, tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars (i.e., big cigars, little cigars, cigarillos), e-cigarettes and other electronic vapor products, hookahs (waterpipes), smokeless tobacco (i.e., chewing tobacco, snuff, snus, dip, dissolvable tobacco), and traditional tobacco pipes. Due to low prevalence use rates for pipes (other than waterpipes) and smokeless tobacco, these products were combined and classified as “other tobacco” to allow for larger sample sizes, so more statistics could be reported.

Section 1 presents data covering tobacco use behavior. Some national estimates for tobacco use among high school students are shown. These data are from the 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), and although the questions asked in the NYTS are similar to those asked on the CSHS, caution should be used when making any comparisons between survey estimates. Section 2 presents data covering selected health-risk behaviors and shows how these behaviors are associated with tobacco use. Section 3 covers secondhand tobacco smoke, aerosol, and vapor exposure, and tobacco use cessation. These sections examine behaviors by making comparisons across demographics – sex, race/ethnicity, and grade. The charts in this report graphically describe the results for the selected variables:

- The weighted percentage of students who reported each behavior overall and by sex, race/ethnicity, and grade.
- Results for subgroups with fewer than our minimal threshold of students are not shown (<30 students) or a coefficient of variation (CV) greater than 30% - due to this rule, many results from 2021 could not be shown.
- Statistically significant differences by sex, grade, and race/ethnicity, if they exist.
- All Hispanic students are included in the Hispanic category. All other races are non-Hispanic.
- SAS® was used to calculate statistical differences.

Section 4 shows data on the primary reasons given for using EVPs, the usual ways they are obtained, and the flavors most often used. The Conclusion summarizes the overall tobacco findings and highlights progress that has been made and work being done in Connecticut to address tobacco use and secondhand smoke/aerosol exposure, and the Appendix provides the definition for race/ethnicity.

Please note that due to changes in methodology in 2021, including differences in survey administration, such as the time of year the survey was administered (i.e., fall vs. spring), and data collection procedures in recent years because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ability to compare estimates from 2021 with those from prior CSHS waves is limited. Data from the 2023 YRBS will be necessary to better understand the behavioral trends; therefore, this report does not include any trend analyses.

KEY FINDINGS

TOBACCO USE BEHAVIOR

- High school students' current use (i.e., use in the last 30 days) of any tobacco products was 11.2%, representing approximately 17,600 students.
- The current use prevalence among high school students was highest for electronic vapor products (EVPs) at 10.6%, followed by smokeless tobacco and pipes (1.8%) and hookahs (1.4%).
- The current EVP use rate of 10.6% was more than eight times the prevalence of cigarette smoking (1.3%).
- Nearly 30% of students who currently used EVPs used them daily.

TOBACCO USE BY PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Female high school students (14.6%) had a significantly higher rate of current tobacco use than their male counterparts (7.8%).
- As grade increased, tobacco product use increased as well; the use rate went from 7.4% in 9th to 14.6% in 12th.
- Engaging in certain risky behaviors was correlated with higher tobacco use, such as texting or e-mailing while driving, current cannabis and alcohol use, self-harm, and suicide attempts.
- Other personal characteristics associated with a significantly greater rate of tobacco use among high school students include sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, or bisexual), poor mental health, low academic achievement, and school absenteeism.

ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES

- Students who were bullied on school property, experienced parental verbal abuse, or lived in a home where someone was having a problem with alcohol, drugs, or suffered from mental illness had significantly higher rates of tobacco use.
- Students' primary reasons for using vaping products were curiosity (34.4%) and feeling anxious or stressed (24.8%), while 15.5% mainly used them to get high or buzzed, and 15.1% selected they used them for "some other reason". The influence of family and friends who use vaping products does not appear to be a prominent factor because only 10.2% selected this as their main reason for use.

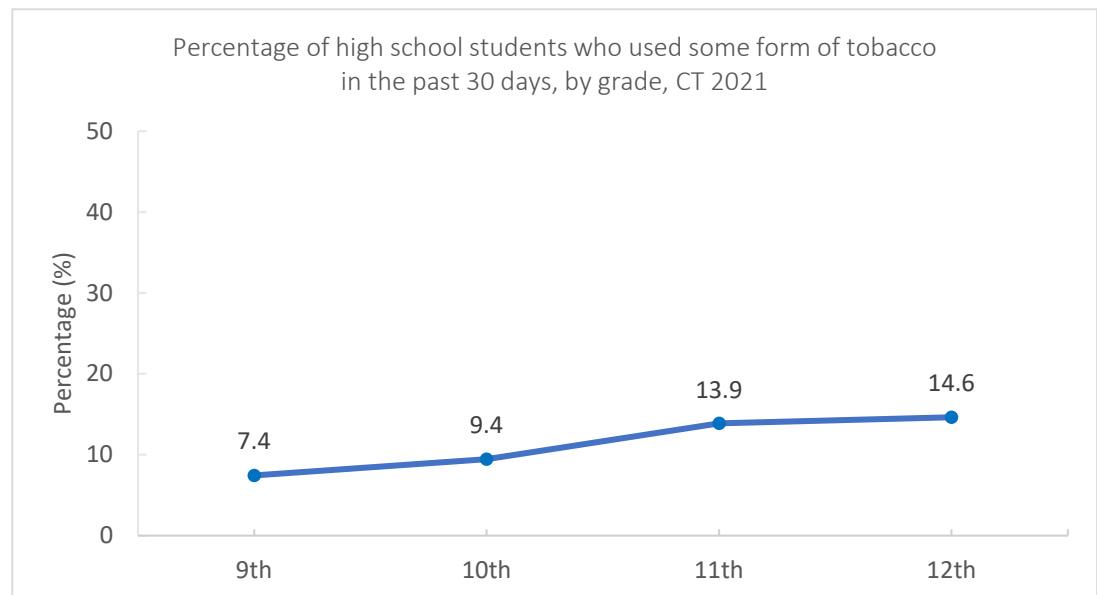
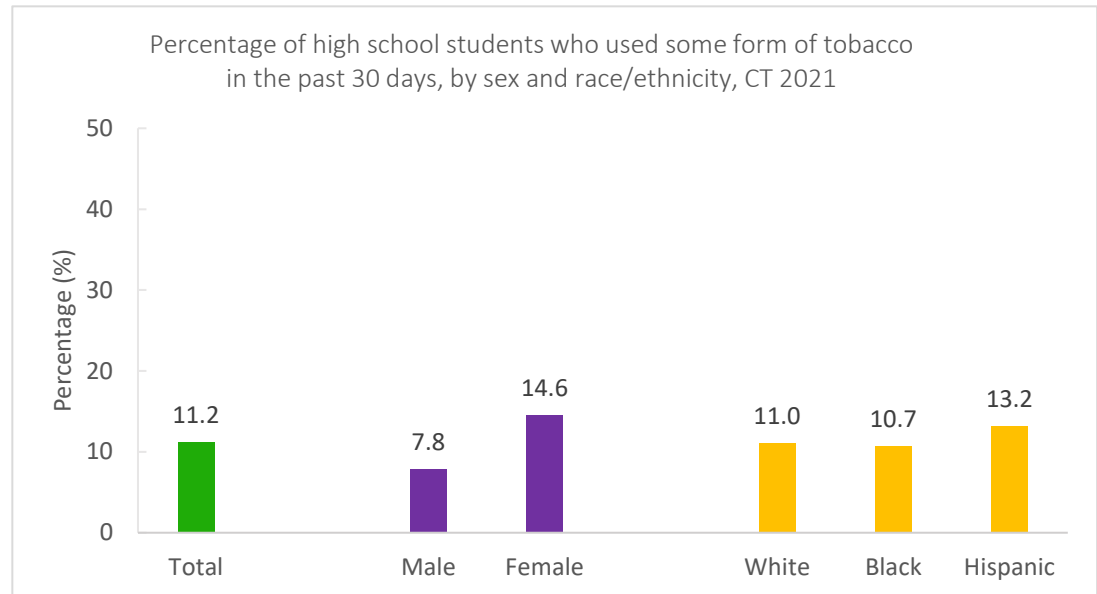
SECTION 1 | TOBACCO USE

- Current Tobacco Use
- Current Cigarette Smoking
- Current Cigar Smoking
- Current Electronic Vapor Product Use
- Used Electronic Vapor Products Daily
- Used Electronic Vapor Products on School Property
- Used Electronic Vapor Products to Vape Cannabis
- Current Hookah Use
- Current Other Tobacco Use

CURRENT TOBACCO USE

In 2021, 11.2% of high school youth reported they had used some form of tobacco, including cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes or other electronic vapor products, hookahs, smokeless tobacco, and pipes, on at least 1 day during the past 30 days (i.e., current tobacco use). This represents approximately 17,600 students.

- The prevalence of current tobacco use:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (14.6% and 7.8%)
 - Did not vary significantly by race/ethnicity
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 11 than among those in grade 9 (13.9% and 7.4%)
- Students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were significantly more likely than heterosexual students to currently use tobacco (17.8% and 9.2%) - *data not shown in charts*
- The rate of current tobacco use among students who reported their mental health was most of the time or always not good, including stress, anxiety, and depression, during the 30 days before the survey was nearly 2.5 times higher than it was among those who did not suffer from mental health problems (18.4% and 7.5%) - *data not shown in charts*
- Nationwide in 2021, 13.0% of high school students currently used tobacco* - *data not shown in charts*

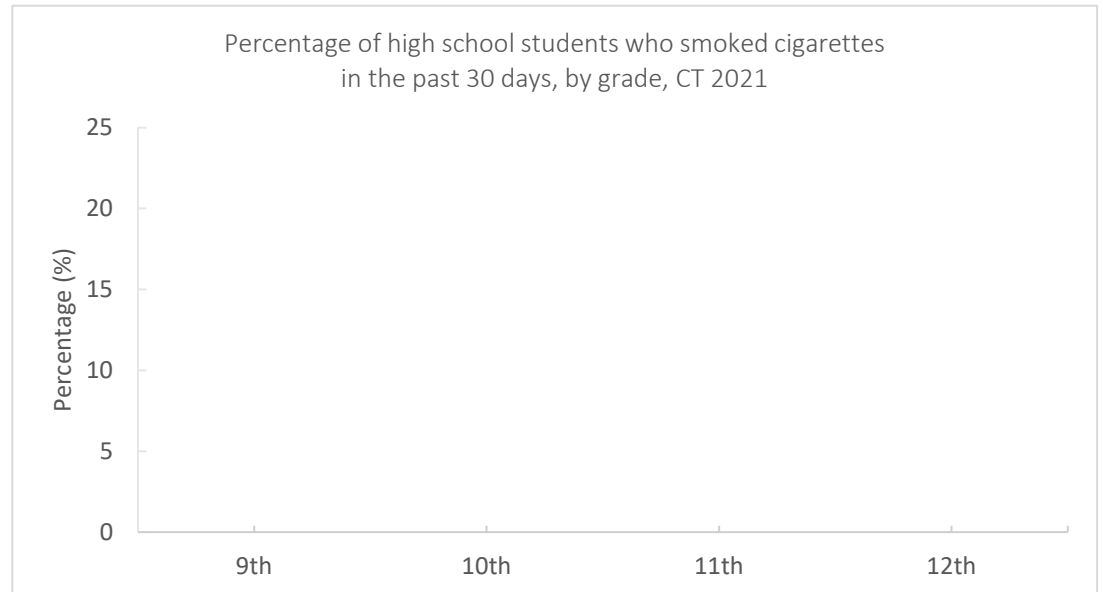
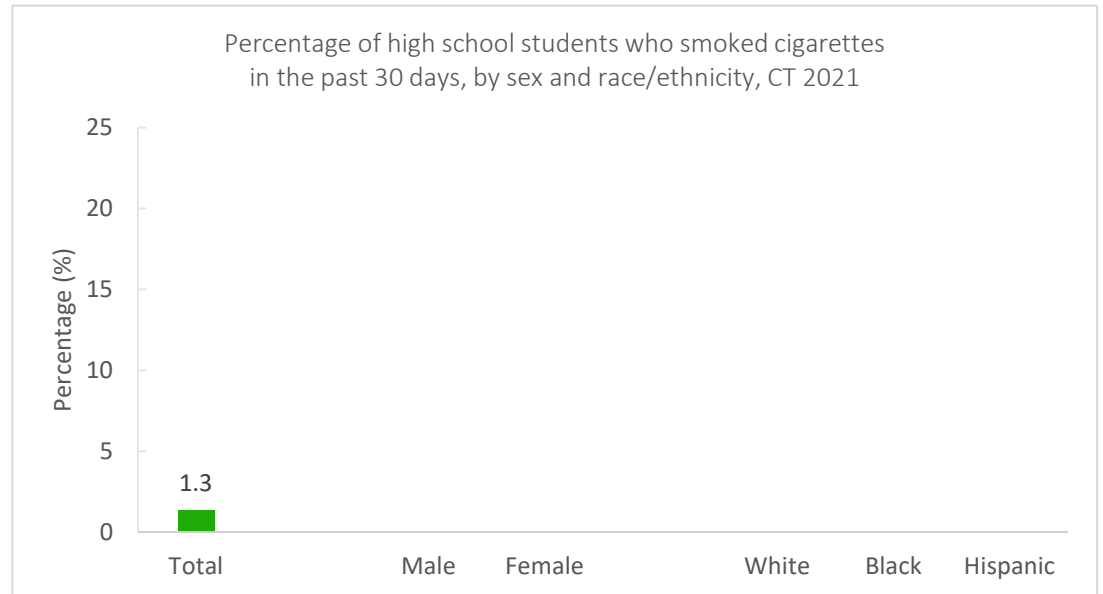


*Data source: 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey

CURRENT CIGARETTE SMOKING

In 2021, 1.3% of high school youth reported they had smoked cigarettes on at least 1 day during the past 30 days (i.e., current cigarette smoking). This represents approximately 2,100 students.

- Nationwide in 2021, the prevalence of current cigarette smoking among high school students was 1.9%* - *data not shown in charts*



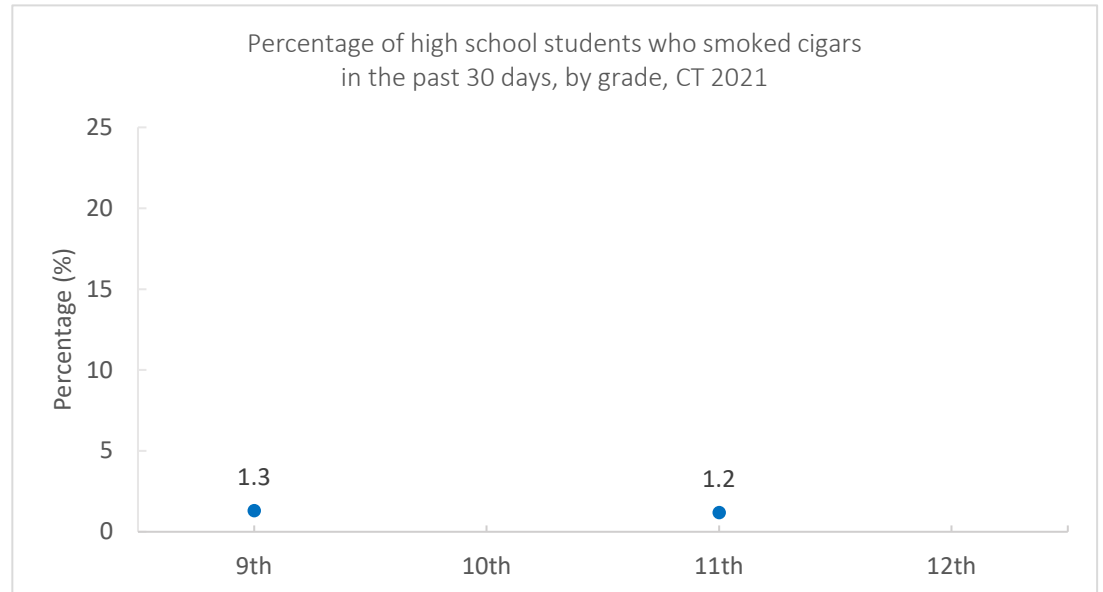
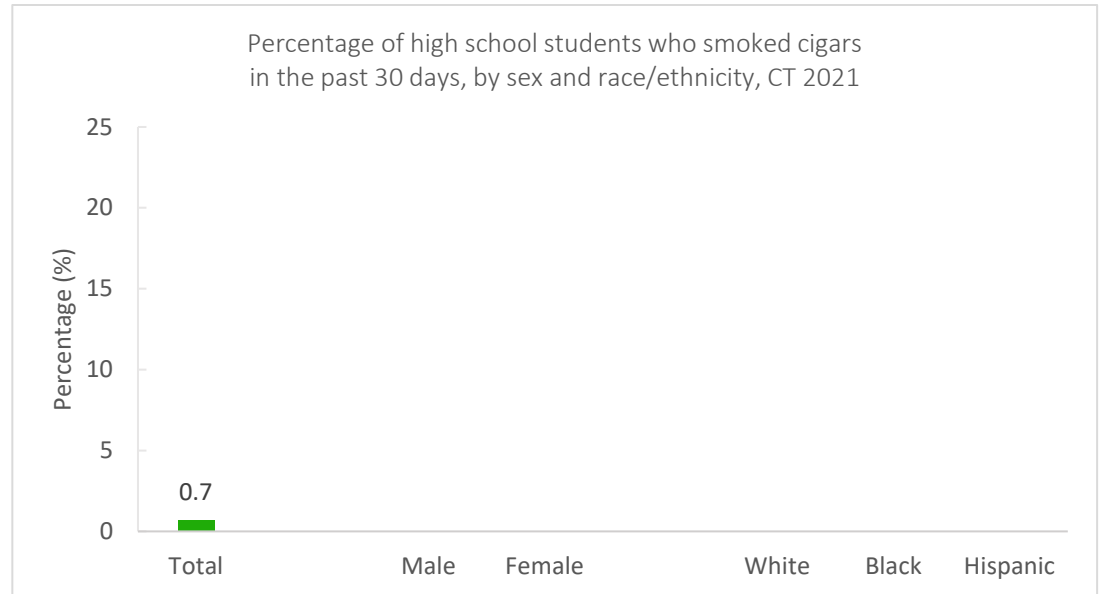
Missing bar or data point indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

*Data source: 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey

CURRENT CIGAR SMOKING

In 2021, 0.7% of high school youth reported they had smoked big cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on at least 1 day during the past 30 days (i.e., current cigar smoking). This represents approximately 1,100 students.

- The prevalence of current cigar smoking did not vary significantly by grade
- Nationwide in 2021, the prevalence of current cigar smoking among high school students was 2.1%* - *data not shown in charts*

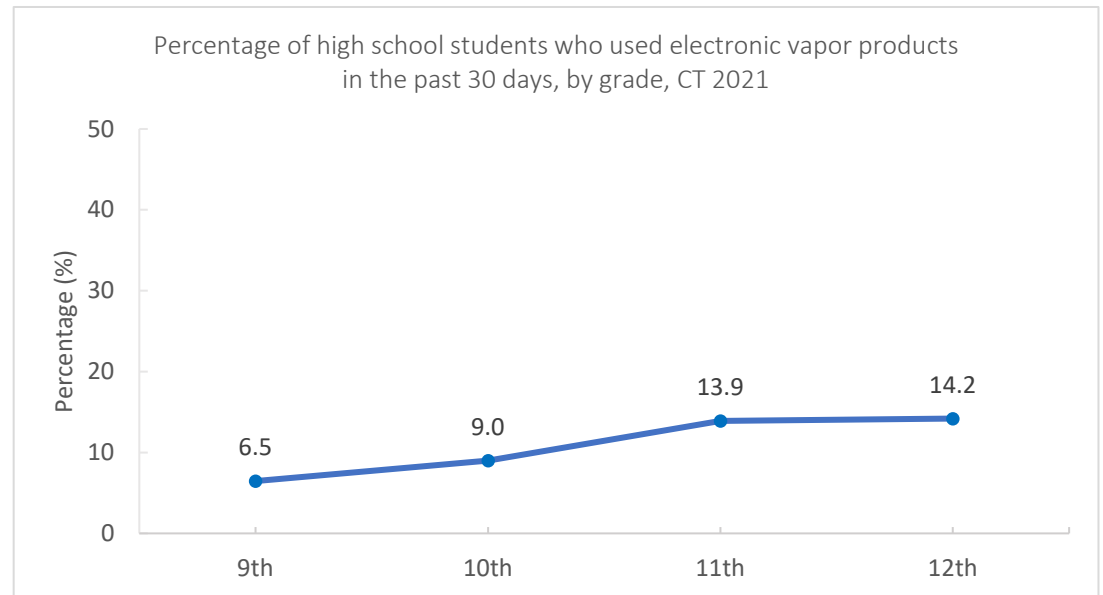
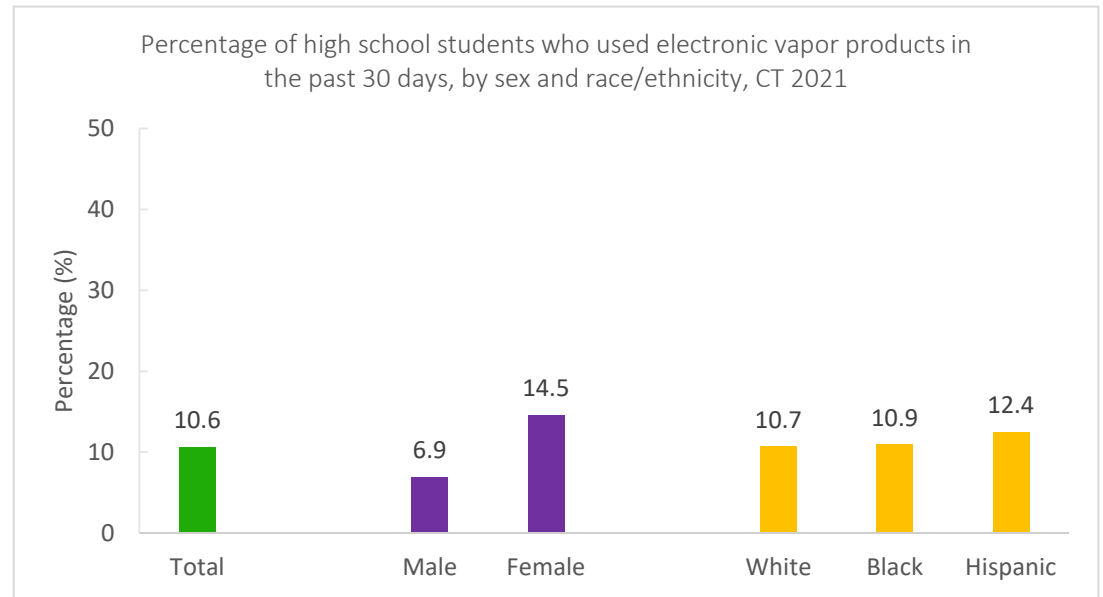


Missing bar or data point indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

CURRENT ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCT USE

In 2021, 10.6% of high school youth reported they had used electronic vapor products (EVPs), including e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods, such as JUUL, SMOK, Suorin, Vuse, and blu, on at least 1 day during the past 30 days (i.e., current EVP use). This represents approximately 15,600 students.

- The prevalence of current EVP use:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (14.5% and 6.9%)
 - Did not vary significantly by race/ethnicity
 - Was significantly higher among students in grades 11 and 12 than among those in grade 9 (13.9%, 14.2%, and 6.5%, respectively)
- The prevalence of current EVP use among students who reported their mental health was most of the time or always not good during the past 30 days was 2.5 times higher than it was among those who did not have mental health problems (17.9% and 7.3%) - *data not shown in charts*
- Use of EVPs was significantly higher among students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual than it was among heterosexual students (16.7% and 8.9%) - *data not shown in charts*
- Nationwide in 2021, 11.3% of high school students were current EVP users* - *data not shown in charts*



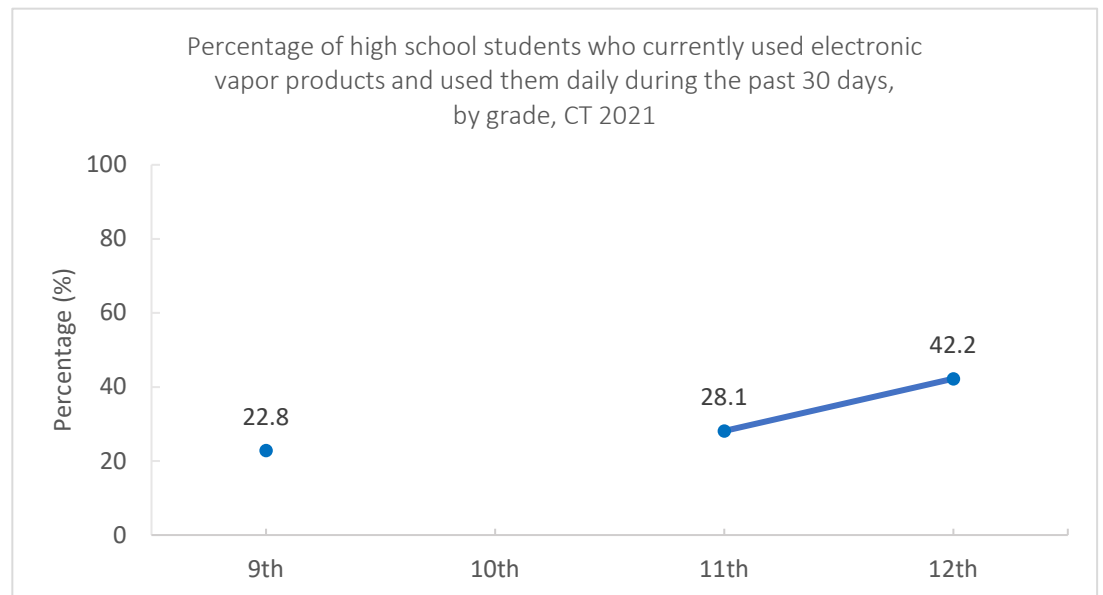
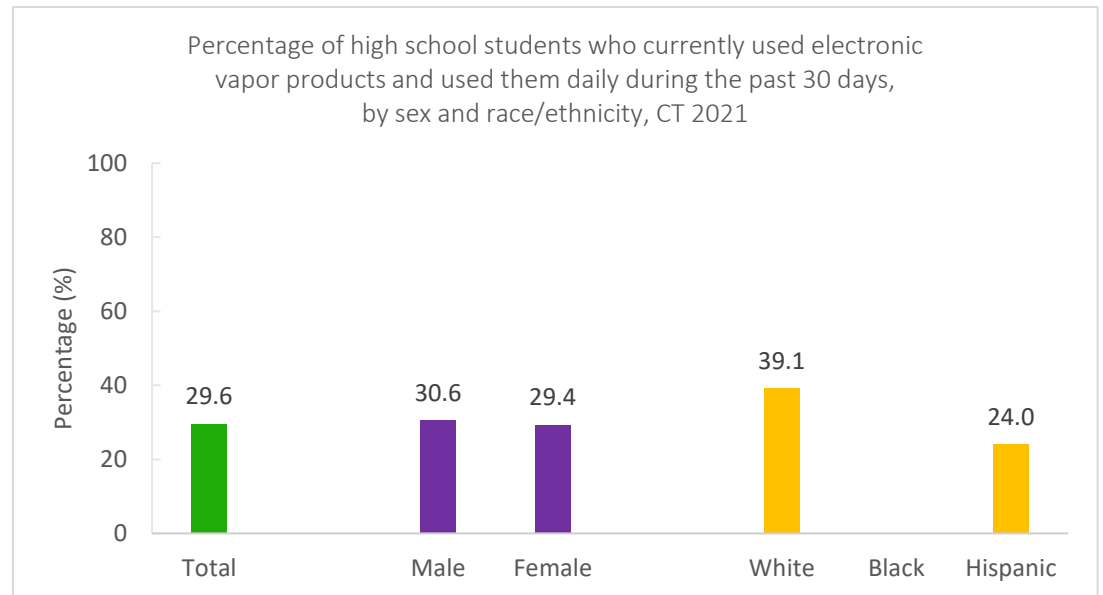
*Data source: 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey

USED ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS DAILY

In 2021, 29.6% of high school youth who currently used electronic vapor products (EVPs)* reported using them on all 30 days during the past 30 days (i.e., daily). This represents approximately 4,600 students.

- The prevalence of having used EVPs daily:
 - Did not vary significantly by sex or race/ethnicity
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 12 than among those in grade 9 (42.2% and 22.8%)

*Current use is defined as having used an EVP on 1 or more of the last 30 days.



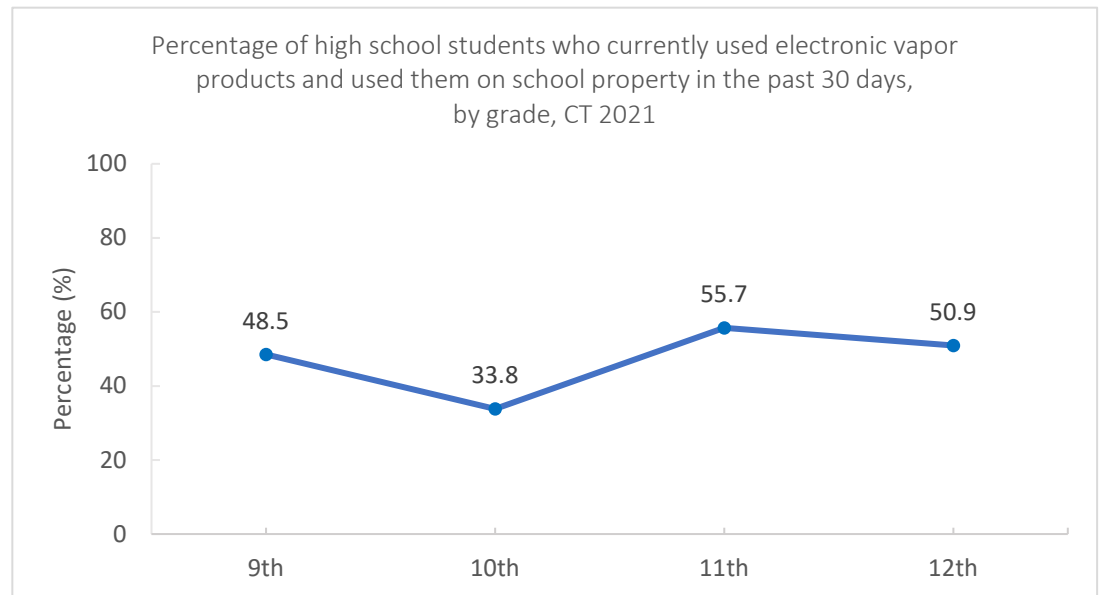
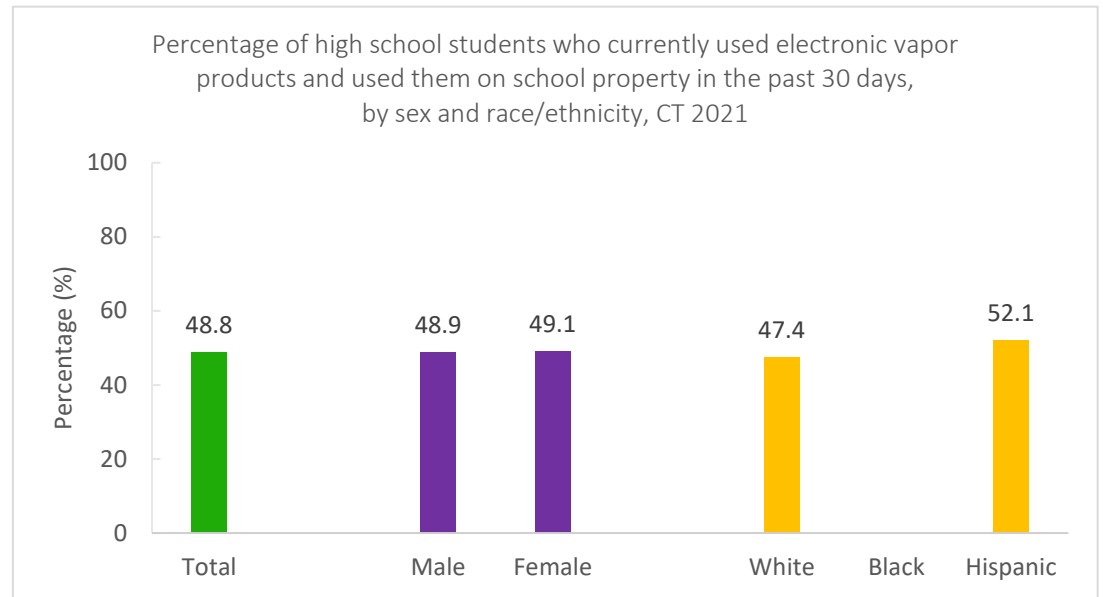
Missing bar or data point indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCT USE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

In 2021, 48.8% of high school youth who currently used electronic vapor products (EVPs)* used them on school property during the past 30 days. This represents approximately 7,300 students.

- The prevalence of having used EVPs on school property:
 - Did not vary significantly by sex or race/ethnicity
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 11 than among those in grade 10 (55.7% and 33.8%)

*Current use is defined as having used an EVP on 1 or more of the last 30 days.



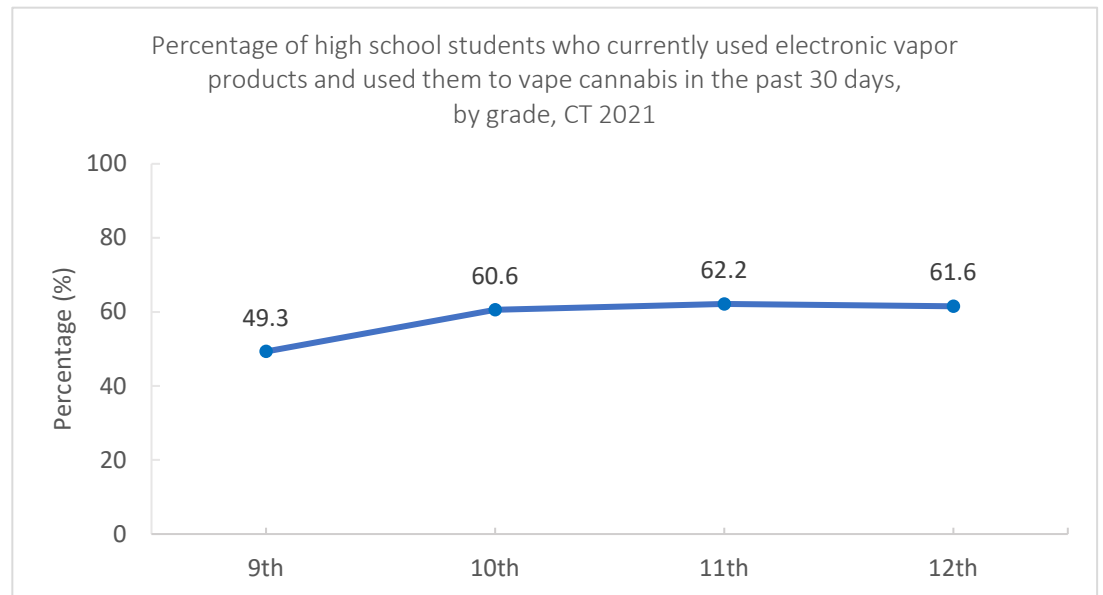
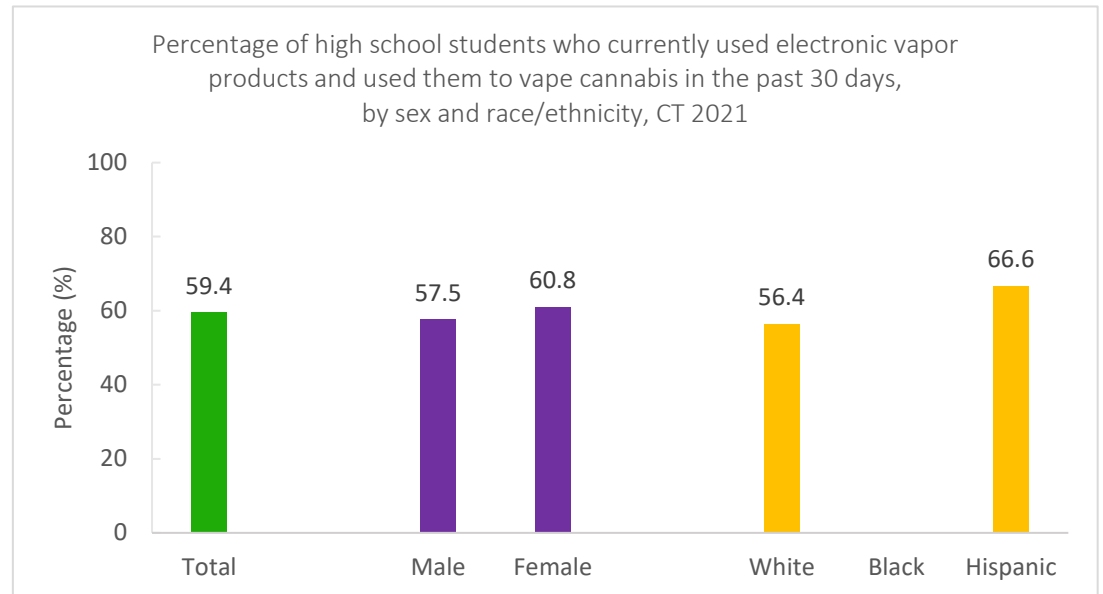
Missing bar indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

CURRENT USE OF AN ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCT TO VAPE CANNABIS

In 2021, among high school youth who currently used electronic vapor products (EVPs),* 59.4% reported they had used them to vape cannabis, (also called marijuana, pot, or weed), including THC, THC concentrates, hash oil, and waxes, on at least 1 day during the past 30 days. This represents approximately 9,100 students.

- The prevalence of having currently used an EVP to vape cannabis did not vary significantly by sex, race/ethnicity, or grade

*Current use is defined as having used an EVP on 1 or more of the last 30 days.

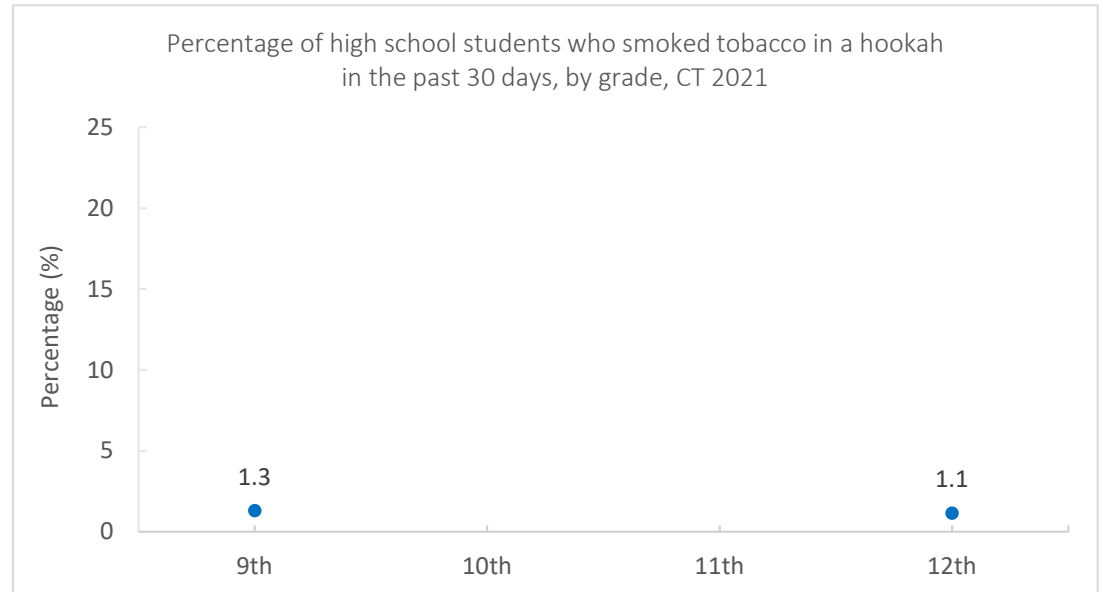
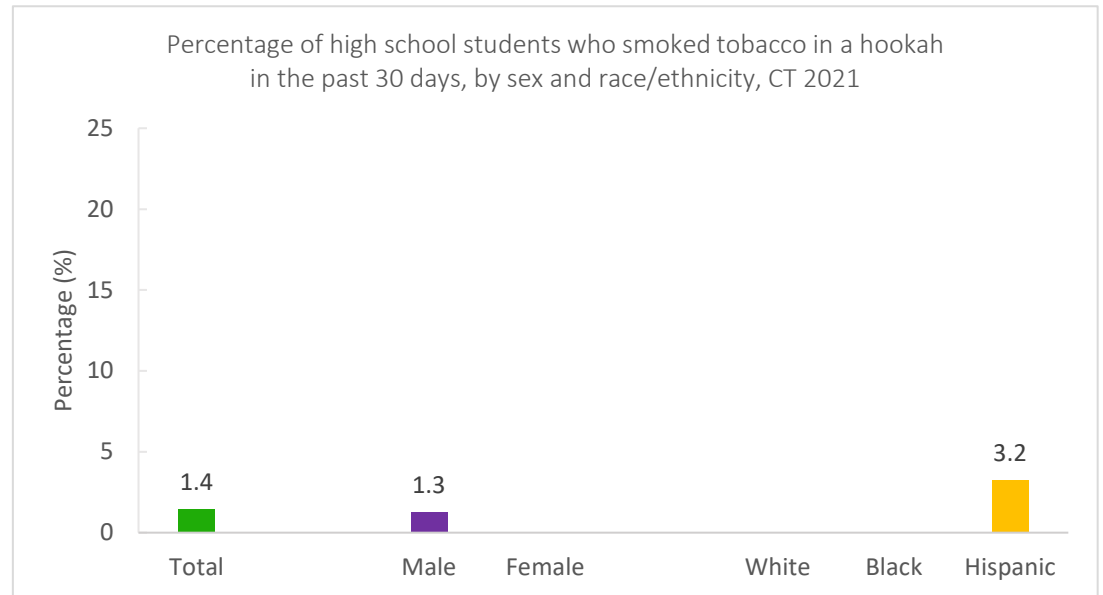


Missing bar indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

CURRENT HOOKAH USE

In 2021, 1.4% of high school youth reported they had smoked tobacco, also called shisha, in a hookah, narghile, or other type of waterpipe on at least 1 day during the past 30 days (i.e., current hookah use). This represents approximately 2,200 students.

- The prevalence of current hookah use did not vary significantly by grade
- Nationwide in 2021, 1.2% of high school students currently used hookahs* - *data not shown in charts*



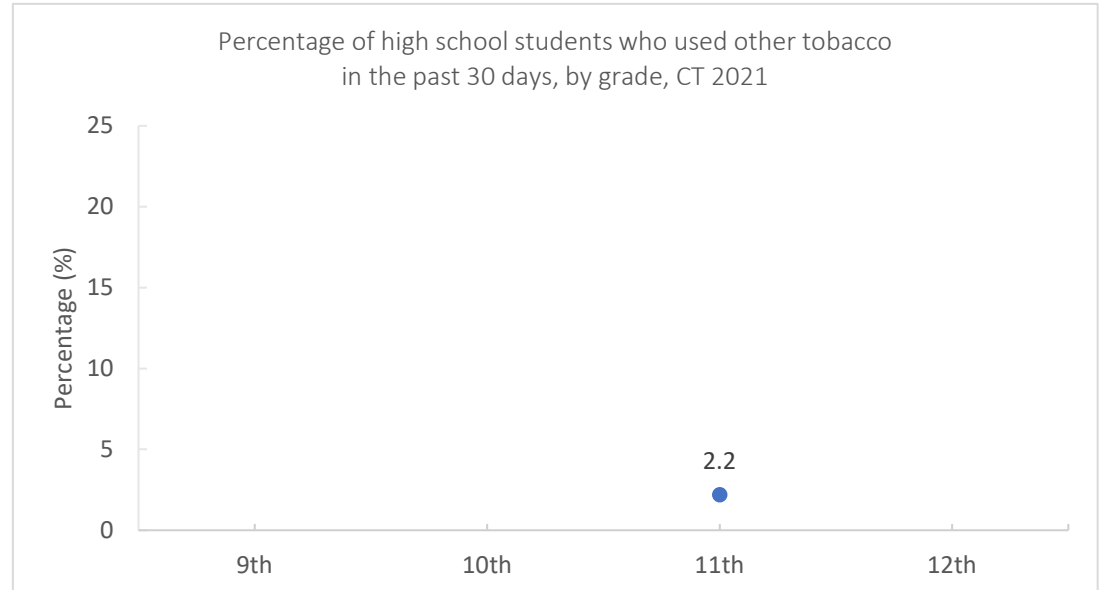
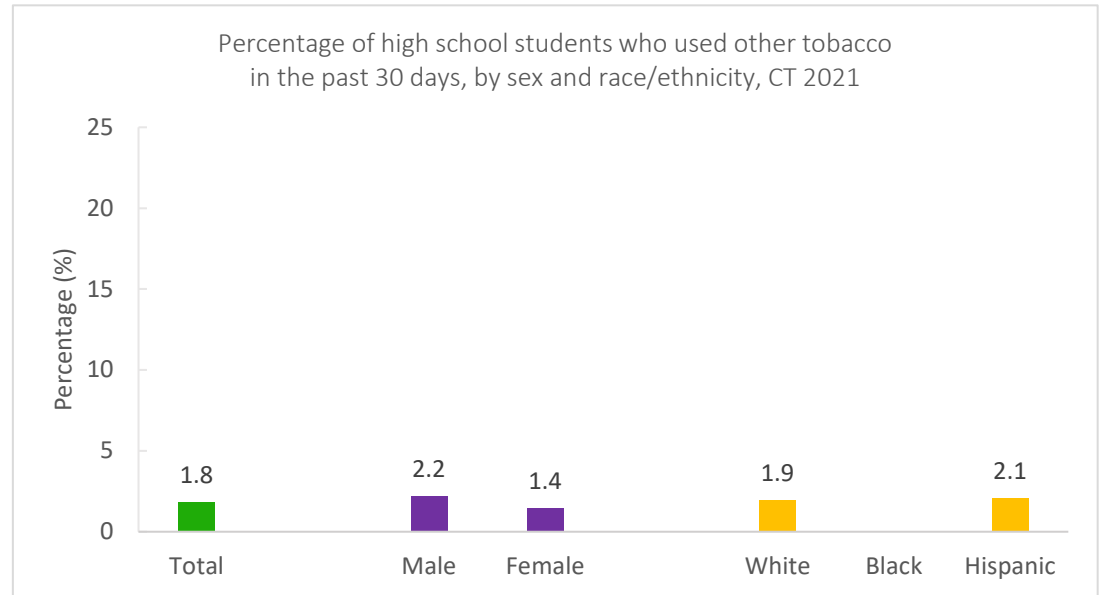
Missing bar or data point indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

*Data source: 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey

CURRENT OTHER TOBACCO USE

In 2021, 1.8% of high school youth reported they had used smokeless tobacco, including chewing tobacco, snuff, dip, snus, or dissolvable tobacco products (such as Copenhagen, Grizzly, Skoal, or Camel Snus) or smoked tobacco from a pipe that was not a hookah, narghile, or other type of waterpipe, on at least 1 day during the past 30 days (i.e., current other tobacco use). This represents approximately 2,800 students.

- The prevalence of current other tobacco use did not vary significantly by sex or race/ethnicity
- Nationwide in 2021, the rate of current other tobacco use among high school students was 1.4%* - *data not shown in charts*



Missing bar or data point indicates fewer than 30 students in subgroup or CV>30%.

*Data source: 2021 National Youth Tobacco Survey

SECTION 2 | SELECTED HEALTH-RISK BEHAVIORS and THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH TOBACCO USE

- Bullied on School Property
- Poor Mental Health
- Low Academic Achievement
- School Absenteeism
- Texting or E-Mailing While Driving
- Self-Harm
- Attempted Suicide
- Parental Verbal Abuse
- Lived with Someone Having a Problem with Alcohol or Drugs
- Lived with Someone Who Has Mental Illness
- Current Alcohol Use
- Current Cannabis Use

BULLIED ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

In 2021, 12.2% of high school youth reported they had been bullied, such as being teased, threatened, hit, shoved, or gossiped about, over and over again, on school property during the past 12 months. This represents approximately 19,200 students.

- The prevalence of having been bullied on school property:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (13.8% and 10.6%)
 - Was significantly higher among White than among Hispanic students (14.5% and 8.2%)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 9 than among those in grades 10, 11, and 12 (8.9%, 6.6%, 4.4%, and 4.2%, respectively)

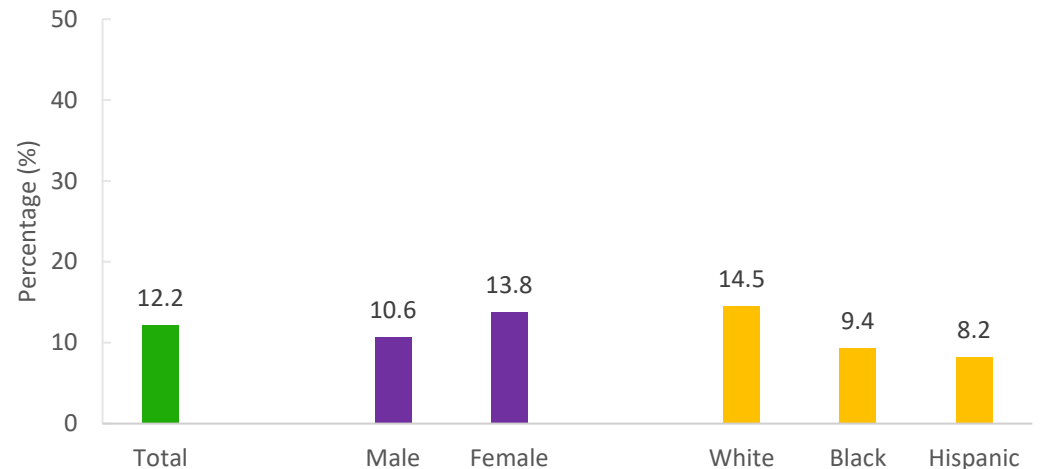
Bullied on School Property and Association with the Use of Tobacco



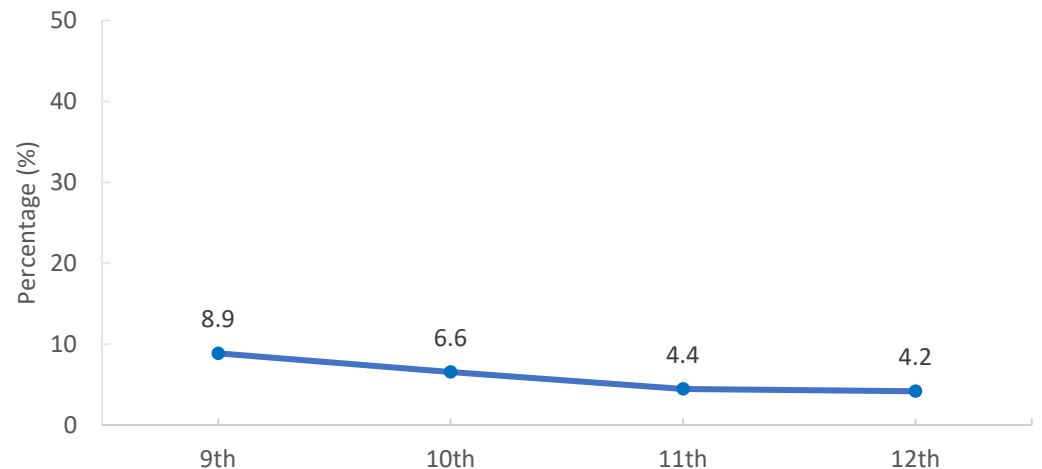
Students who had been bullied on school property were more than twice as likely as those who had not been bullied to have used tobacco in the last 30 days (20.3% and 9.8%) - *data not shown in charts*



Percentage of high school students who had been bullied on school property in the past 12 months, by sex and race/ethnicity, CT 2021



Percentage of high school students who had been bullied on school property in the past 12 months, by grade, CT 2021



POOR MENTAL HEALTH

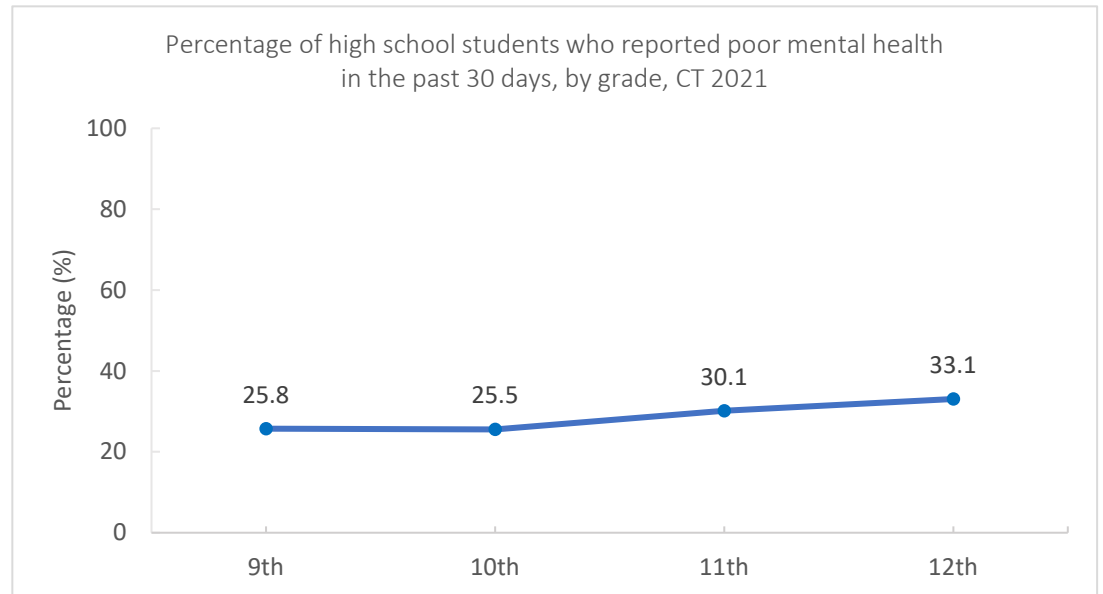
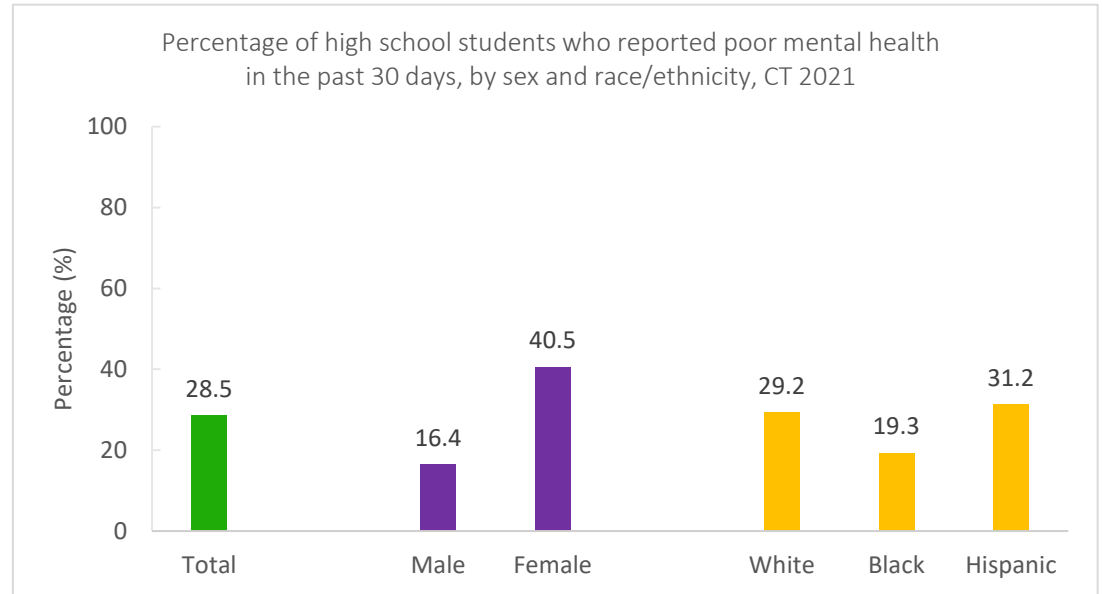
In 2021, 28.5% of high school youth reported that their mental health was most of the time or always not good, including stress, anxiety, and depression, during the past 30 days (i.e., poor mental health). This represents approximately 42,000 students.

- The prevalence of having had poor mental health:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (40.5% and 16.4%)
 - Was significantly higher among White and Hispanic students than among Black students (29.2%, 31.2%, and 19.3%, respectively)
 - Did not vary significantly by grade

Poor Mental Health and Association with the Use of Tobacco



Students who reported poor mental health were nearly 2.5 times more likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were their counterparts who did not experience mental health difficulties (18.4% and 7.5%) - *data not shown in charts*

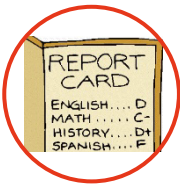
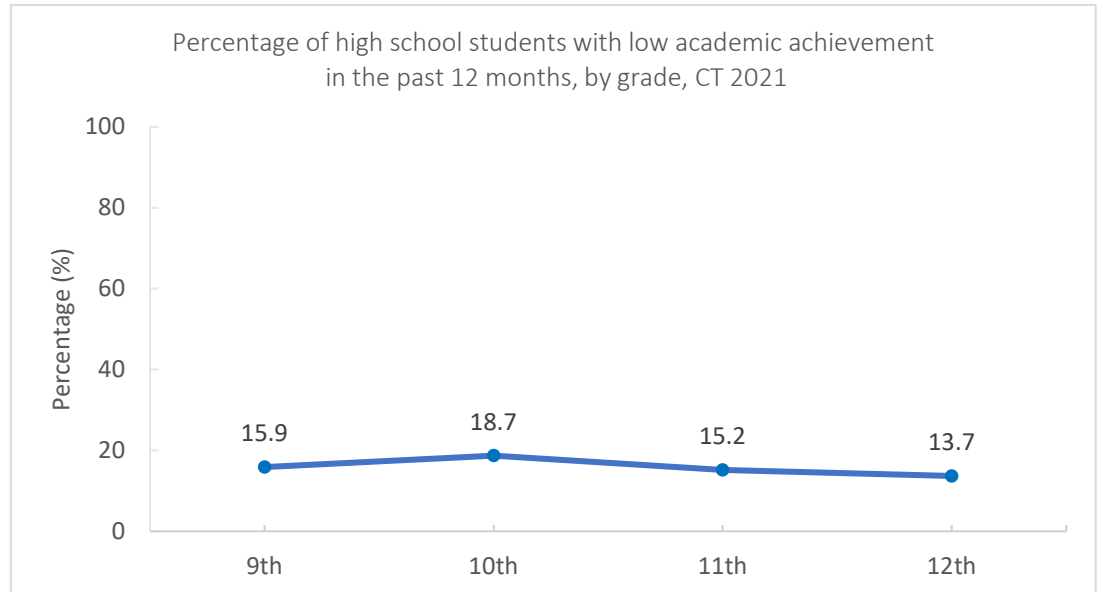
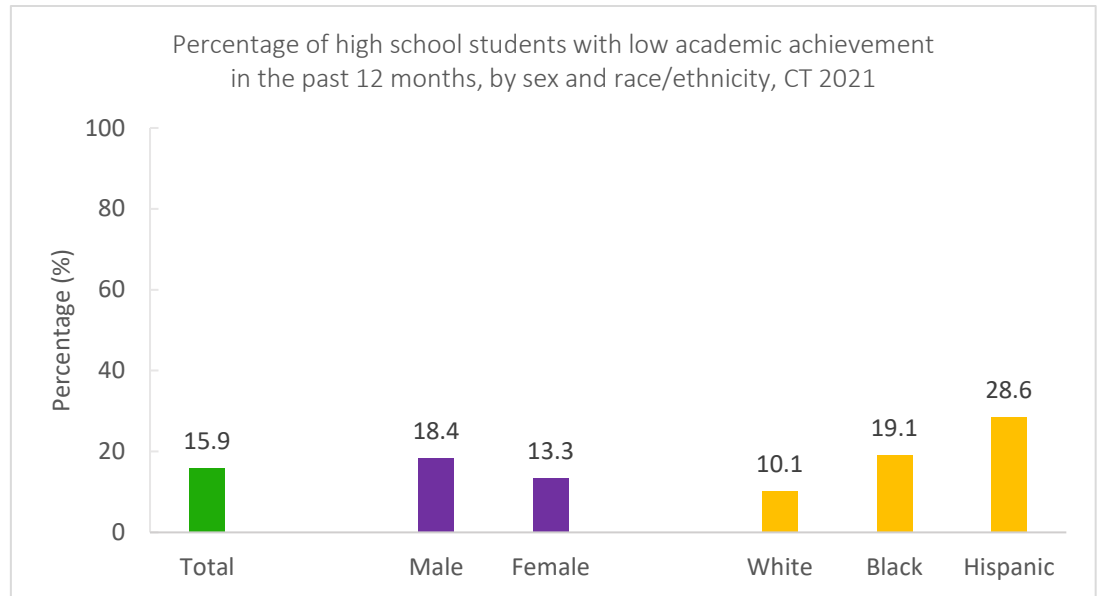


LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

In 2021, 15.9% of high school youth described their grades in school in the past 12 months as mostly Cs, Ds, or Fs (i.e., low academic achievement). This represents approximately 22,400 students.

- The prevalence of low academic achievement:
 - Was significantly higher among males than among females (18.4% and 13.3%)
 - Was significantly higher among Hispanic than among White students (28.6% and 10.1%)
 - Did not vary significantly by grade

Low Academic Achievement and Association with the Use of Tobacco



Students with low academic achievement were more than twice as likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were their counterparts who had higher grades (20.3% and 9.0%) - *data not shown in charts*



SCHOOL ABSENTEEISM

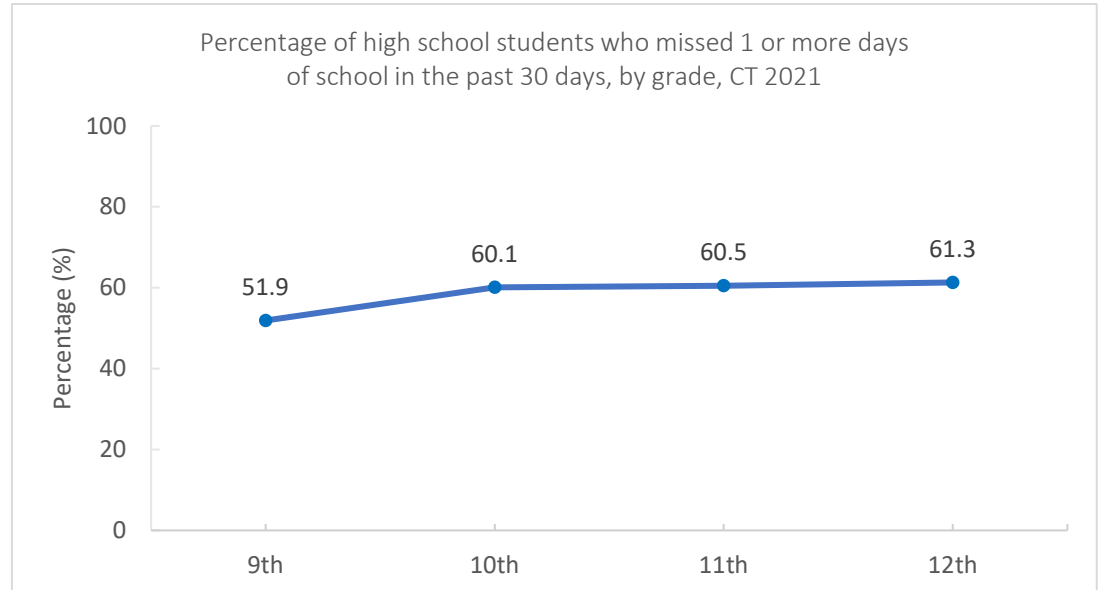
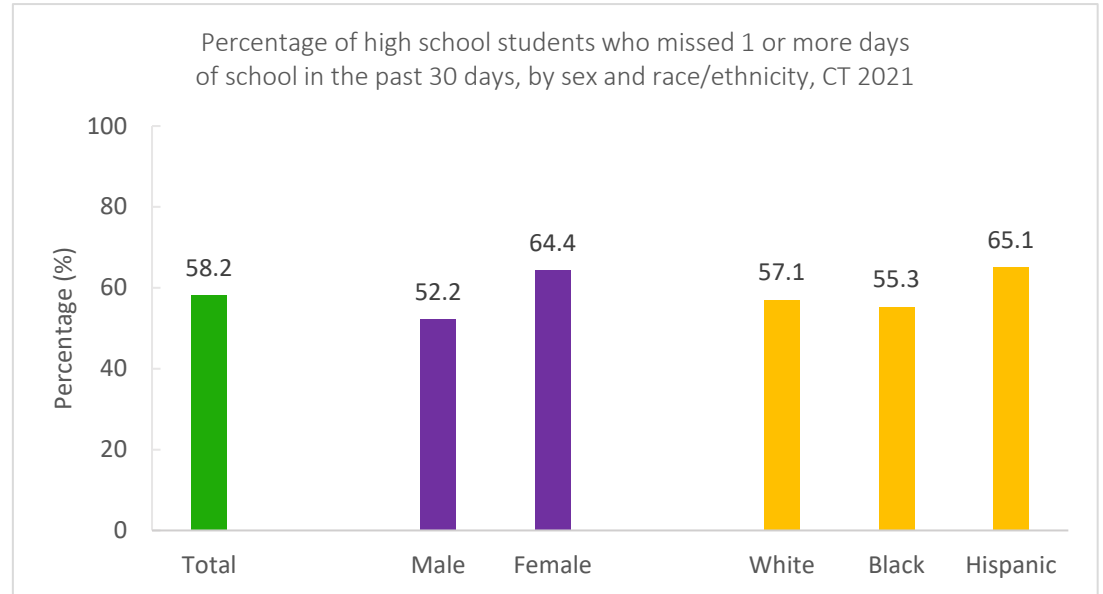
In 2021, 58.2% of high school youth missed school on 1 or more of the past 30 days, counting days with or without permission, days they were sick, or days missed due to a school suspension (i.e., school absenteeism). This represents approximately 85,800 students.

- The prevalence of school absenteeism:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (64.4% and 52.2%)
 - Was significantly higher among Hispanic students than among White and Black students (65.1%, 57.1%, and 55.3%, respectively)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grades 10 and 12 than among those in grade 9 (60.1%, 61.3%, and 51.9%, respectively)

School Absenteeism and Association with the Use of Tobacco



Students who missed 1 or more days of school in the past 30 days were significantly more likely than those who missed no school to have used tobacco in the last 30 days (14.3% and 5.9%) - *data not shown in charts*



TEXTING OR E-MAILING WHILE DRIVING

In 2021, 24.9% of high school students texted or e-mailed while driving a car or other vehicle on at least 1 day during the past 30 days.* This represents approximately 16,300 students.

- The prevalence of texting or e-mailing while driving:
 - Did not vary significantly by sex
 - Was significantly higher among White students than among Black and Hispanic students (29.9%, 19.7%, and 15.9%, respectively)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 11 than among those in grade 10 (18.7% and 7.0%); and significantly higher among students in grade 12 than among those in grades 9, 10, and 11 (41.6%, 11.2%, 7.0%, and 18.7%, respectively)

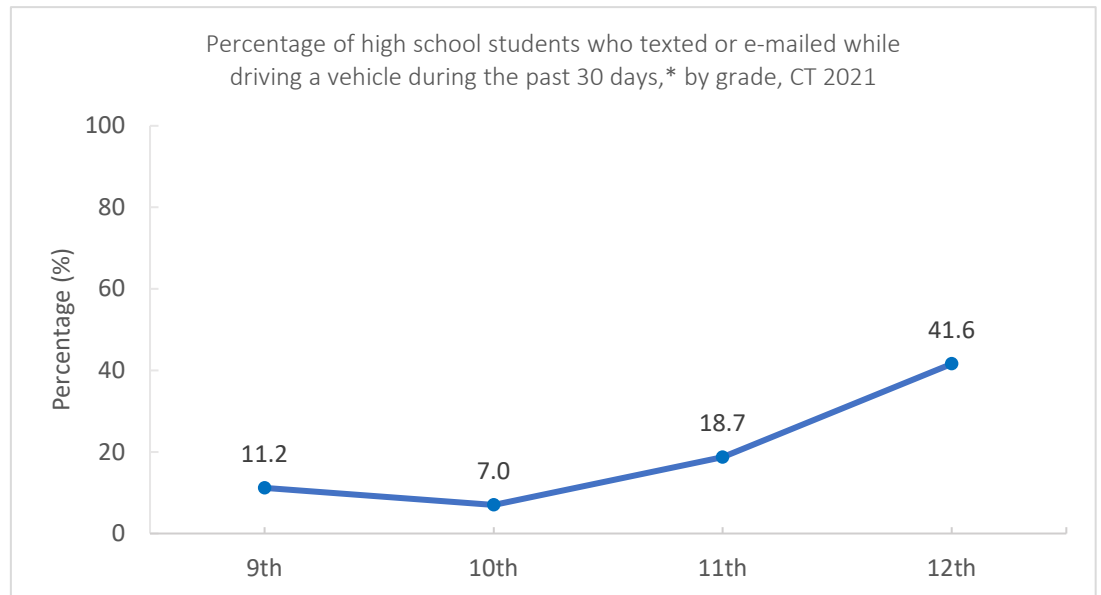
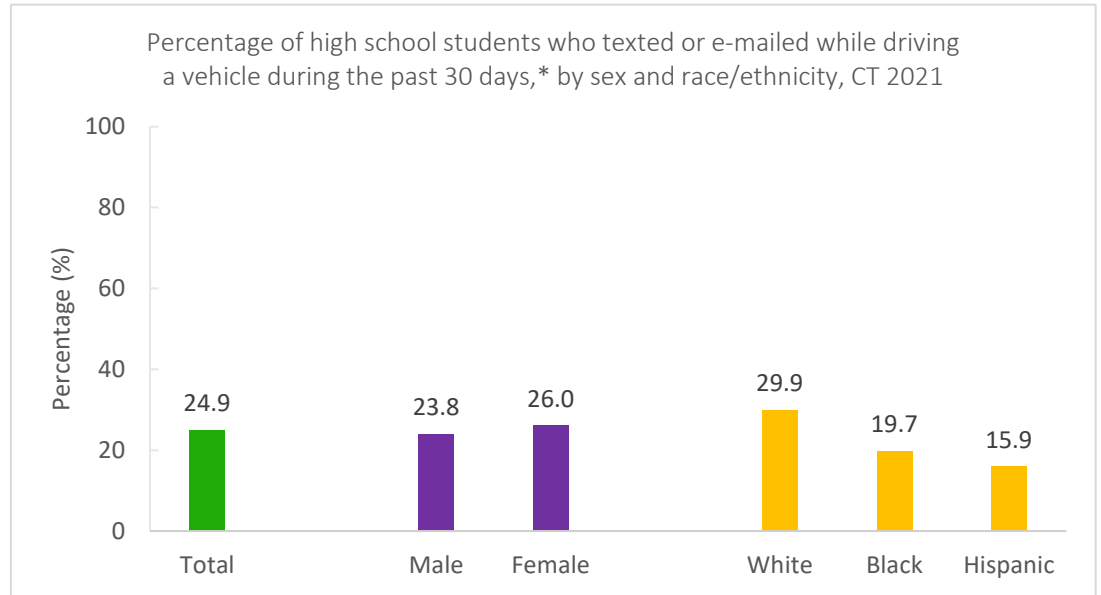
Texting or E-Mailing While Driving and Association with the Use of Tobacco



Students who texted or e-mailed while driving a vehicle were 2.5 times more likely than those who had not texted or e-mailed while driving to have used tobacco in the last 30 days (28.4% and 11.2%) - *data not shown in charts*



*Among students who had driven a car or other vehicle during the 30 days before the survey.



SELF-HARM

In 2021, 18.0% of high school youth reported they had done something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die, such as cutting or burning themselves on purpose, one or more times during the past 12 months (i.e., self-harm). This represents approximately 27,900 students.

- The prevalence of having engaged in self-harming behavior:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (25.1% and 11.2%)
 - Did not vary significantly by race/ethnicity
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 11 than among those in grades 10 and 12 (22.0%, 15.3%, and 15.9%)

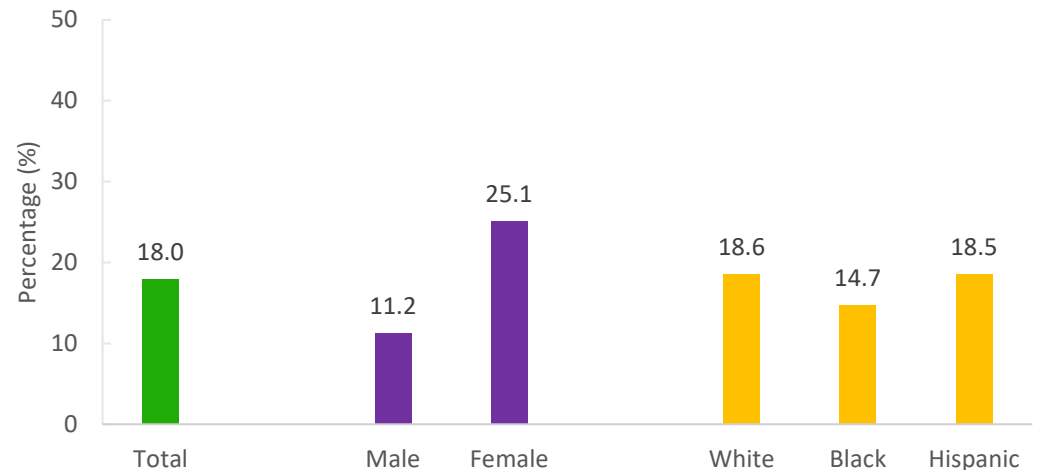
Self-Harm and Association with the Use of Tobacco



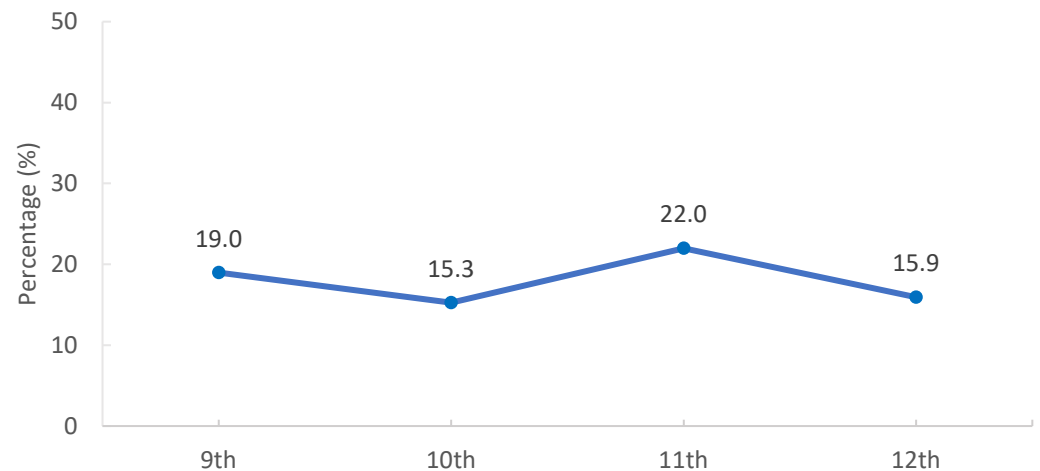
Students who had engaged in self-harm were about 3 times more likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were students who did not report self-harming behavior (25.7% and 7.9%) - *data not shown in charts*



Percentage of high school students who engaged in self-harming behavior in the past 12 months, by sex and race/ethnicity, CT 2021



Percentage of high school students who engaged in self-harming behavior in the past 12 months, by grade, CT 2021



ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

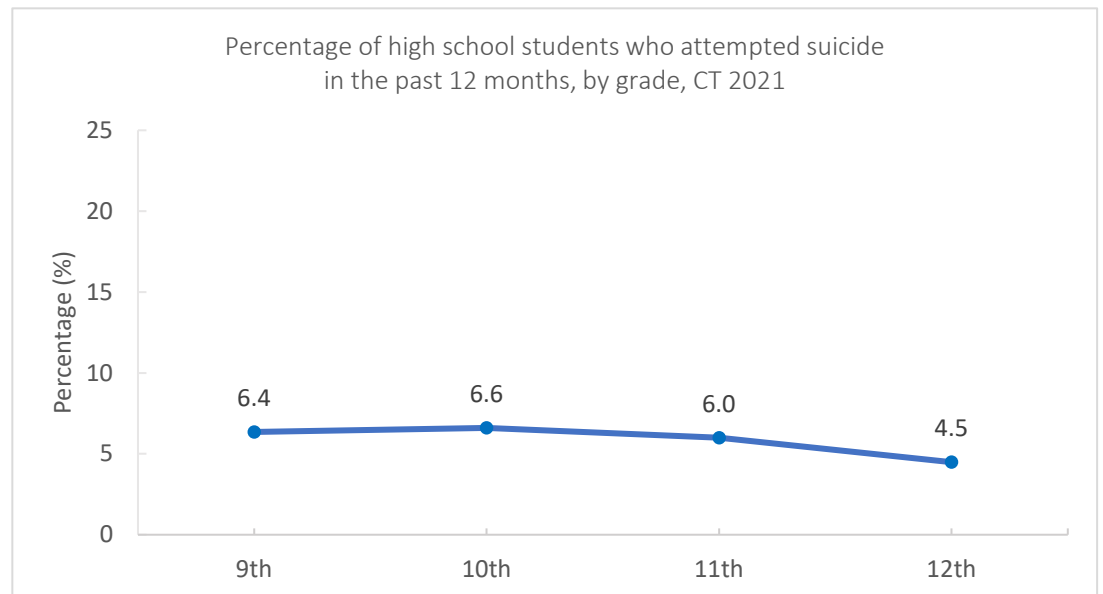
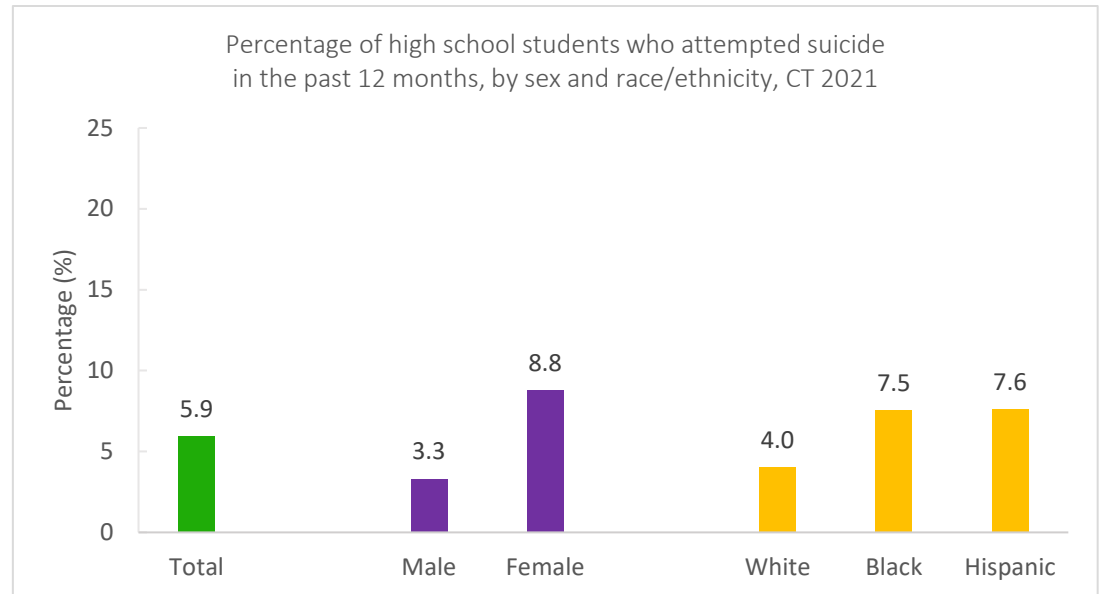
In 2021, 5.9% of high school youth reported that they had attempted suicide one or more times in the past 12 months. This represents approximately 9,200 students.

- The prevalence of having attempted suicide:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (8.8% and 3.3%)
 - Was significantly higher among Hispanic students than among White students (7.6% and 4.0%)
 - Did not vary significantly by grade

Suicide Attempts and Association with the Use of Tobacco



Students who reported they had attempted suicide were nearly 4 times more likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were students who had not attempted suicide (36.3% and 9.4%) - *data not shown in charts*



PARENTAL VERBAL ABUSE

In 2021, 12.4% of high school youth reported that a parent or other adult in their home most of the time or always swore at them, insulted them, or put them down during their life (i.e., parental verbal abuse). This represents approximately 19,300 students.

- The prevalence of having experienced parental verbal abuse:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (16.3% and 8.7%)
 - Did not vary significantly by race/ethnicity or grade

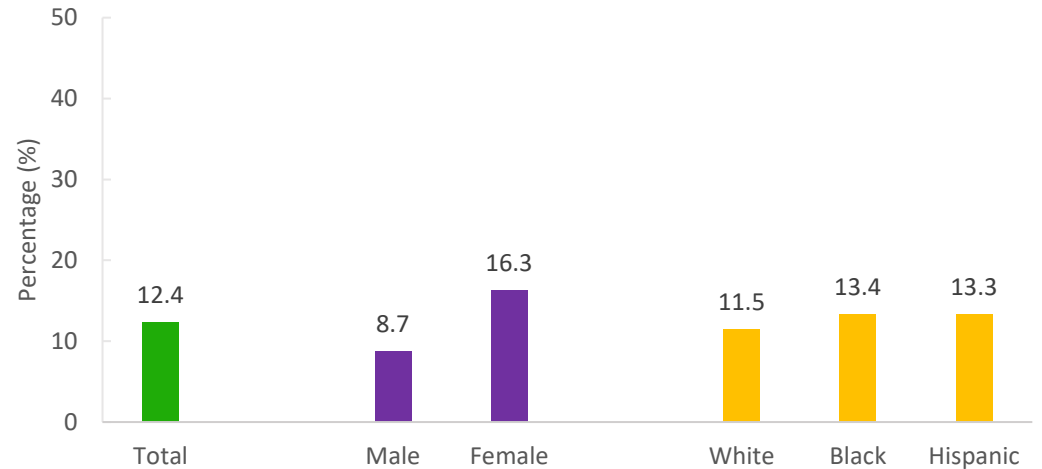
Parental Verbal Abuse and Association with the Use of Tobacco



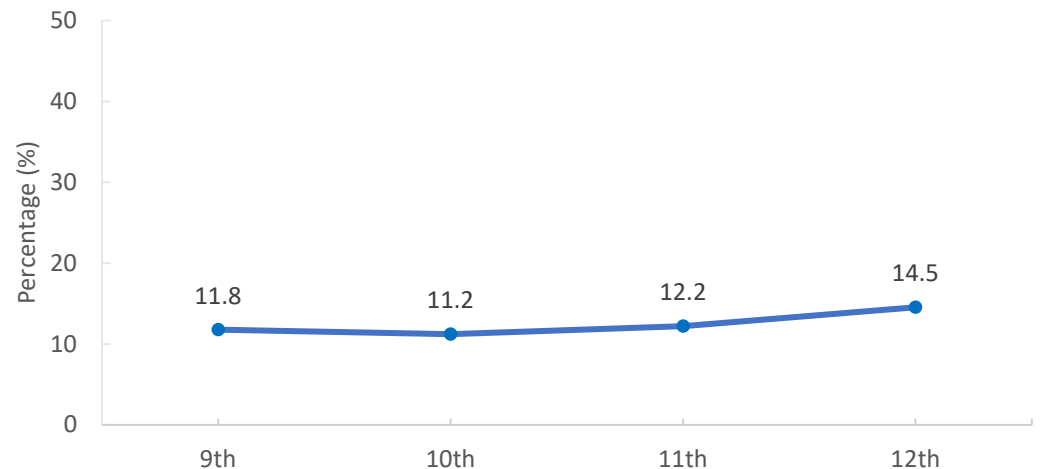
Students who reported having experienced parental verbal abuse were more than twice as likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were their counterparts who had not been verbally abused (22.7% and 9.7%) - *data not shown in charts*



Percentage of high school students who reported parental verbal abuse, by sex and race/ethnicity, CT 2021



Percentage of high school students who reported parental verbal abuse, by grade, CT 2021



EVER LIVED WITH SOMEONE HAVING A PROBLEM WITH ALCOHOL OR DRUGS

In 2021, 26.7% of high school youth reported that they had ever lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drug use. This represents approximately 39,700 students.

- The prevalence of ever having lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drugs:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (31.3% and 22.1%)
 - Was significantly higher among White and Hispanic students than among Black students (27.7%, 33.5%, and 16.8%, respectively); and significantly higher among Hispanic students than among White students (33.5% and 27.7%)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grade 11 than among those in grade 9 (29.5% and 23.9%)

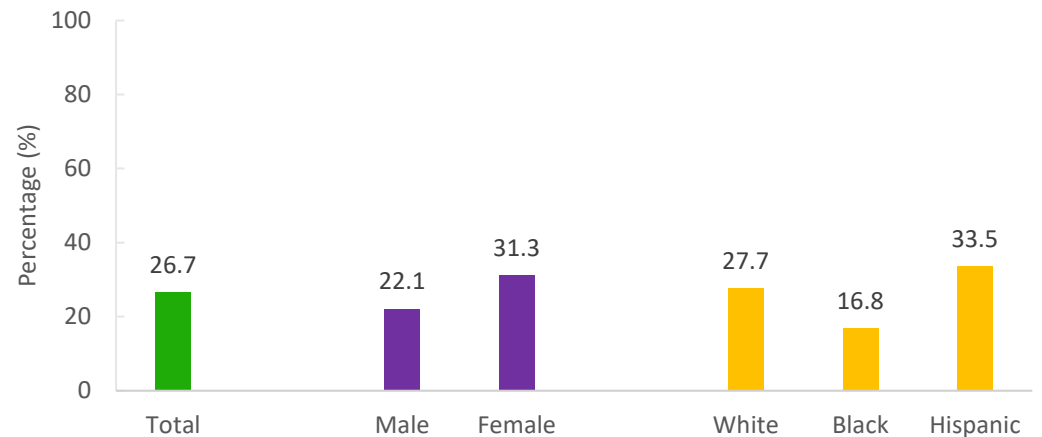
Ever Lived with Someone Having a Problem with Alcohol or Drugs and Association with the Use of Tobacco



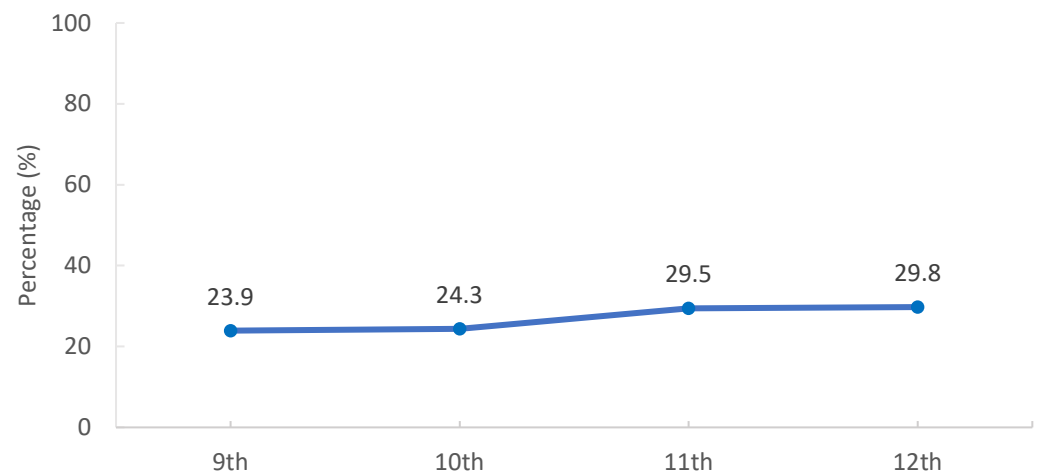
Students who had ever lived with a person who was having a problem with alcohol or drugs were about 2.5 times more likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were those who had never lived with someone who was abusing alcohol or drugs (19.7% and 7.5%) - *data not shown in charts*



Percentage of high school students who ever lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drug use, by sex and race/ethnicity, CT 2021



Percentage of high school students who ever lived with someone who was having a problem with alcohol or drug use, by grade, CT 2021



EVER LIVED WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS MENTAL ILLNESS

In 2021, 33.5% of high school youth reported they had ever lived with someone who was depressed, mentally ill, or suicidal. This represents approximately 49,500 students.

- The prevalence of having ever lived with someone who has mental illness:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (41.9% and 25.3%)
 - Was significantly higher among White and Hispanic students than among Black students (37.0%, 35.4%, and 20.9%, respectively)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grades 11 and 12 than among those in grade 9 (35.8%, 37.3%, and 29.7%, respectively)

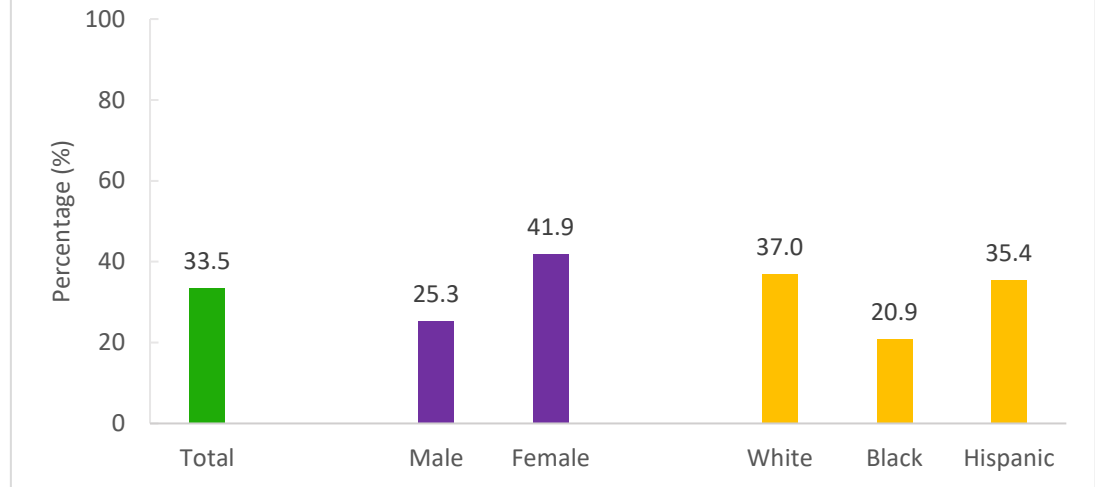
Ever Lived with Someone Who Has Mental Illness and Association with the Use of Tobacco



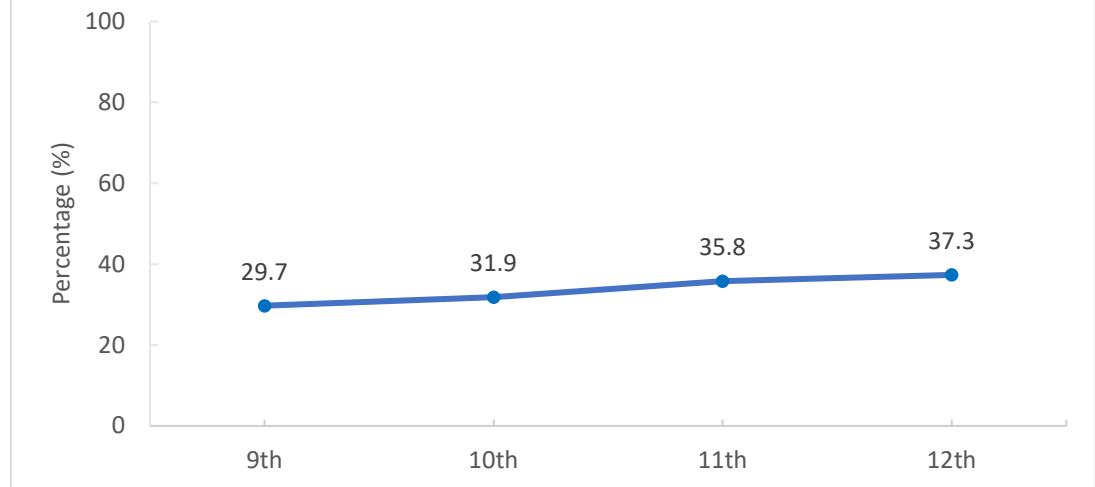
Students who ever lived with someone who has mental illness were more than twice as likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were students who had never lived with someone suffering from mental health issues (17.1% and 7.5%) - *data not shown in charts*



Percentage of high school students who ever lived with someone who has mental illness, by sex and race/ethnicity, CT 2021



Percentage of high school students who ever lived with someone who has mental illness, by grade, CT 2021



CURRENT ALCOHOL USE

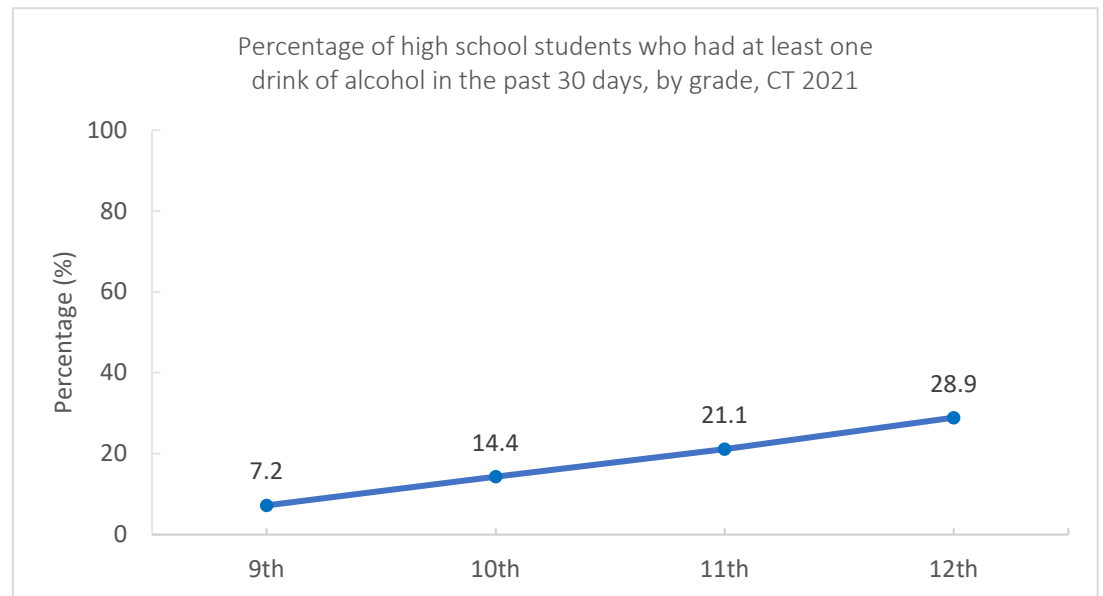
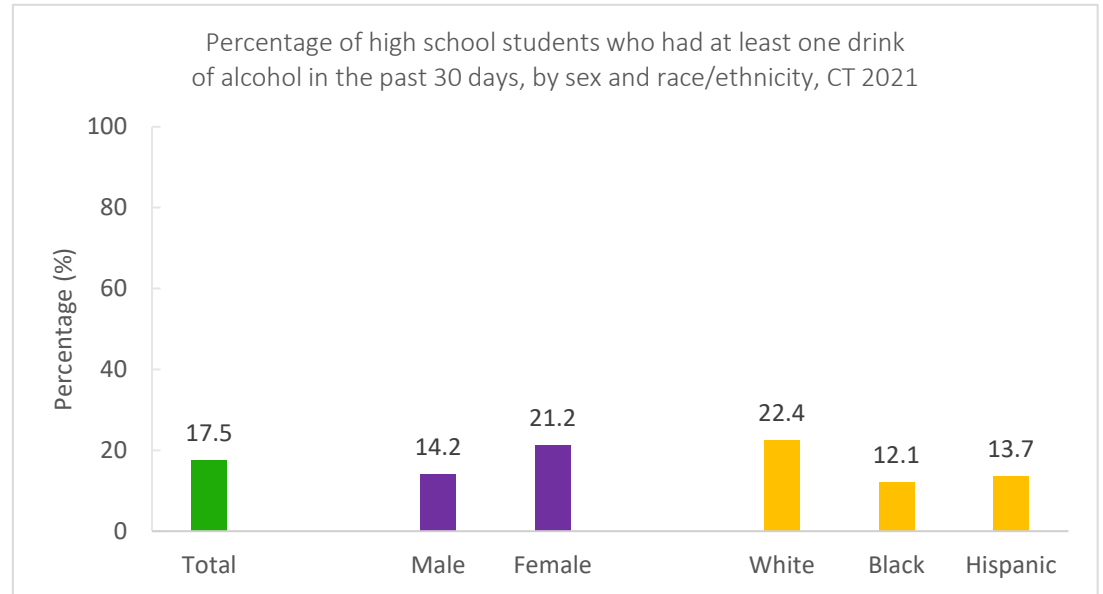
In 2021, 17.5% of high school youth reported they had at least one drink of alcohol on 1 or more of the past 30 days (i.e., current alcohol use). This represents approximately 26,500 students.

- The prevalence of current alcohol use:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (21.2% and 14.2%)
 - Was significantly higher among White students than among Black and Hispanic students (22.4%, 12.1%, and 13.7%, respectively)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grades 10, 11, and 12 than among those in grade 9 (14.4%, 21.1%, 28.9%, and 7.2%, respectively); and significantly higher among students in grade 12 than among those in grade 10 (28.9% and 14.4%)

Current Alcohol Use and Association with Tobacco Use



Students who reported current alcohol use were nearly 8 times more likely to have used tobacco in the last 30 days than were their counterparts who were not current alcohol users (37.1% and 4.7%) - *data not shown in charts*



CURRENT CANNABIS USE

In 2021, 11.1% of high school youth reported they had used cannabis (also called marijuana) one or more times in the past 30 days (i.e., current cannabis use). This represents approximately 17,000 students.

- The prevalence of current cannabis use:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (14.1% and 8.2%)
 - Was significantly higher among Hispanic students than among White students (13.9% and 9.9%)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grades 10, 11, and 12 than among those in grade 9 (10.0%, 14.9%, 16.0%, and 4.7%, respectively); and significantly higher among students in grades 11 and 12 than among those in grade 10 (14.9%, 16.0%, and 10.0%, respectively)

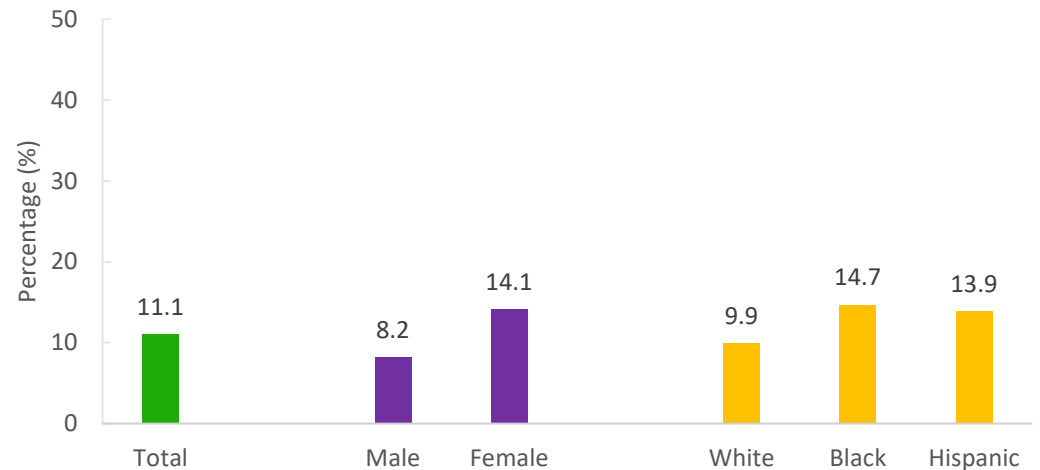
Current Cannabis Use and Association with Tobacco Use



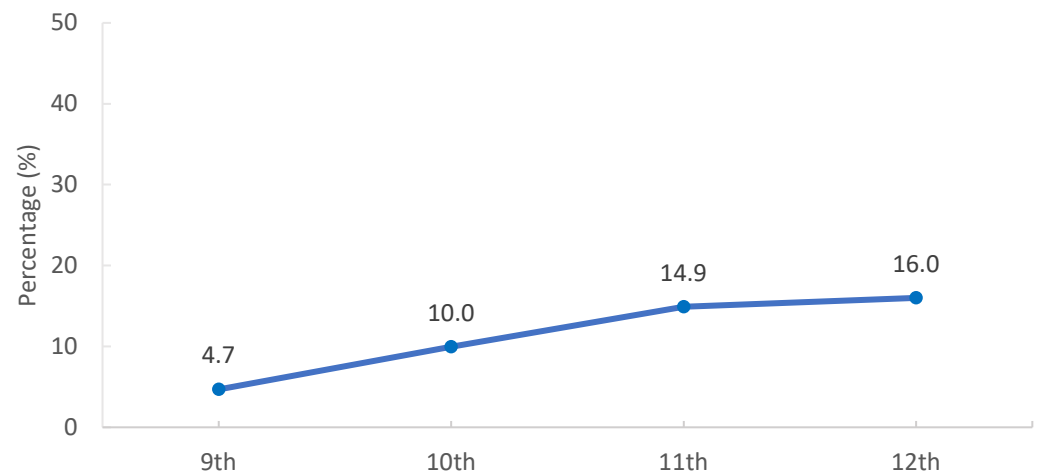
Students who currently used cannabis were about 11 times more likely than non-cannabis users to have used tobacco in the last 30 days (54.9% and 5.0%) - *data not shown in charts*



Percentage of high school students who used cannabis in the past 30 days, by sex and race/ethnicity, CT 2021



Percentage of high school students who used cannabis in the past 30 days, by grade, CT 2021



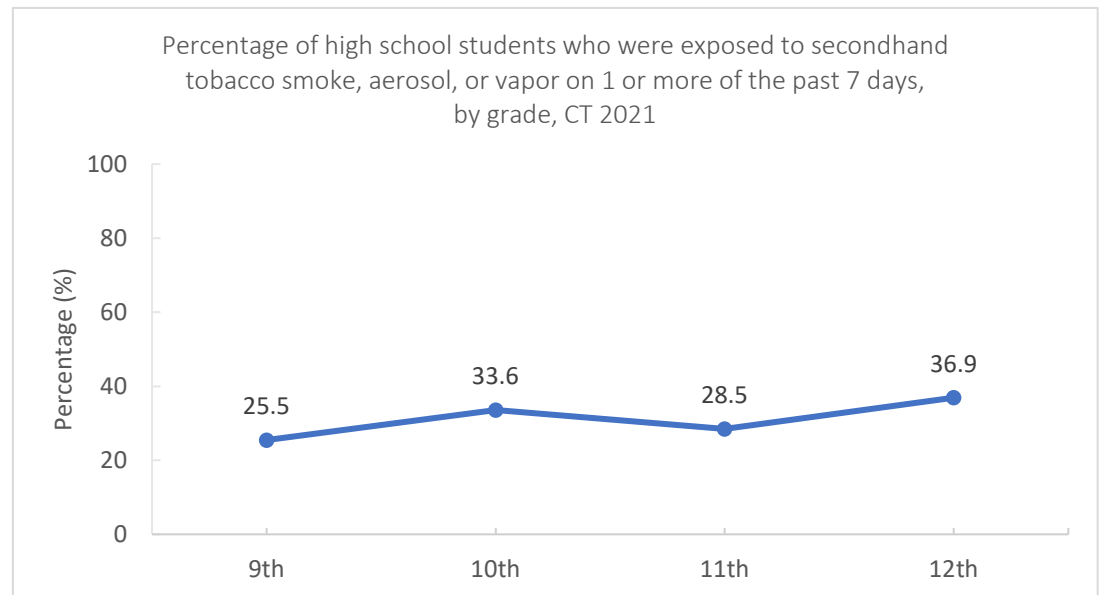
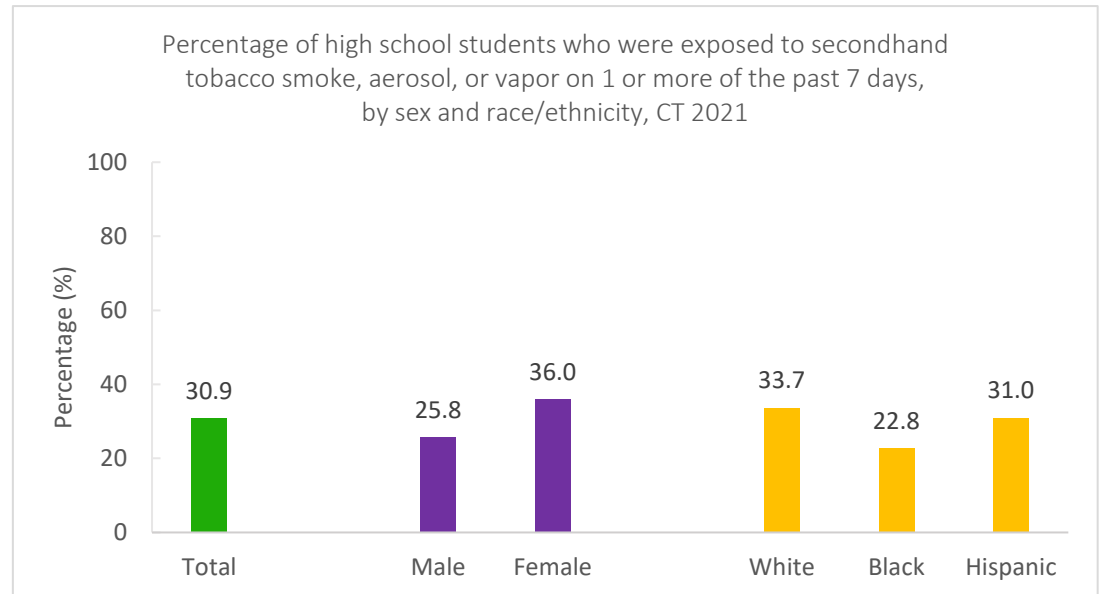
SECTION 3 | SECONDHAND SMOKE EXPOSURE, CESSATION

- Recent Secondhand Smoke, Aerosol, or Vapor Exposure
- Tried to Quit Using All Tobacco Products

RECENT SECONDHAND TOBACCO SMOKE, AEROSOL, OR VAPOR EXPOSURE

In 2021, 30.9% of high school youth reported they had breathed the smoke, aerosol, or vapor from someone who was smoking or vaping a tobacco product on 1 or more of the past 7 days (i.e., recent secondhand smoke exposure). This represents approximately 47,500 students.

- The prevalence of recent secondhand smoke exposure:
 - Was significantly higher among females than among males (36.0% and 25.8%)
 - Was significantly higher among White and Hispanic students than among Black students (33.7%, 31.0%, and 22.8%, respectively)
 - Was significantly higher among students in grades 10 and 12 than among those in grade 9 (33.6%, 36.9%, and 25.5%, respectively)
- Recent secondhand smoke exposure among students who reported their mental health was most of the time or always not good during the past 30 days was significantly higher than it was among those who did not have mental health problems (43.8% and 27.1%) - *data not shown in charts*
- Students who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual were significantly more likely than heterosexual students to have been recently exposed to secondhand smoke (41.6% and 28.2%) - *data not shown in charts*

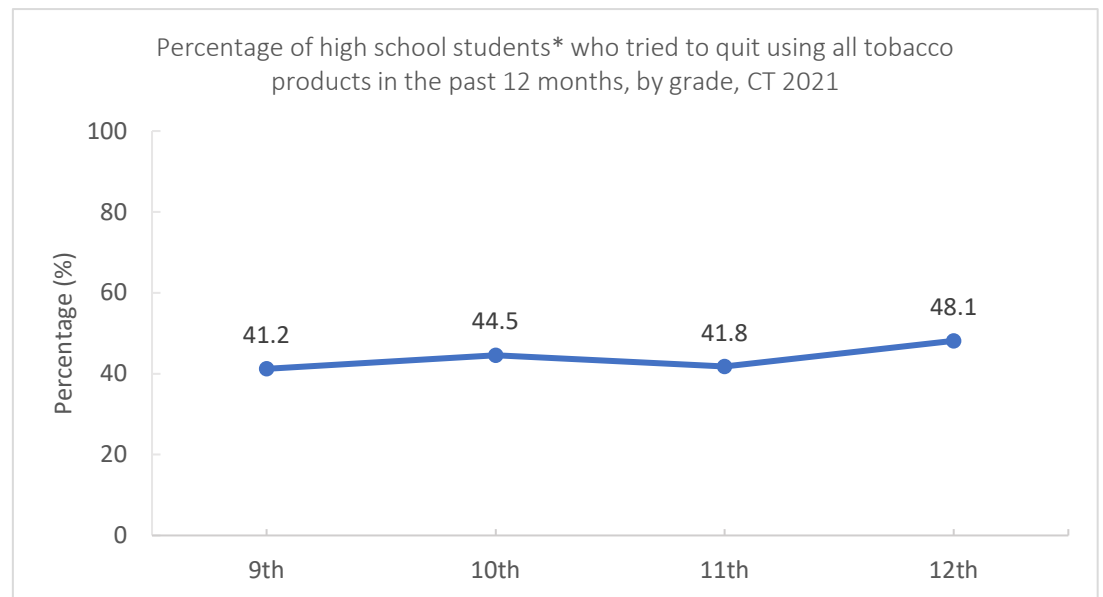
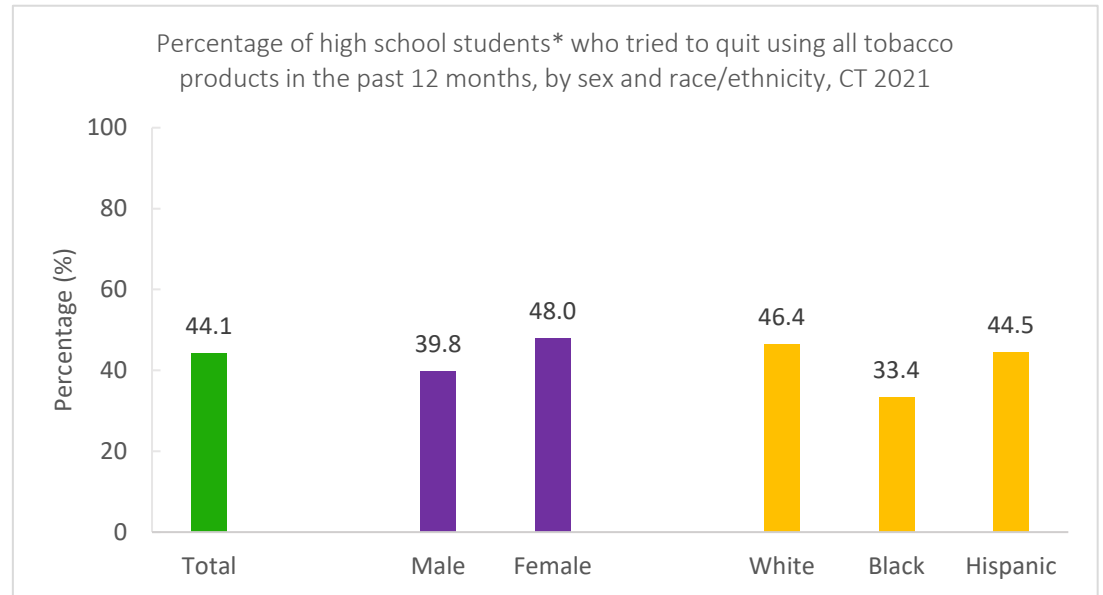


TRIED TO QUIT USING ALL TOBACCO PRODUCTS

In 2021, 44.1% of high school youth* tried to quit using all tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, electronic vapor products, shisha or hookah tobacco, smokeless tobacco, and pipe tobacco, during the past 12 months. This represents approximately 11,300 students.

- The prevalence of having tried to quit using all tobacco products did not vary significantly by sex, race/ethnicity, or grade

*Among students who had used any tobacco products during the past 12 months.

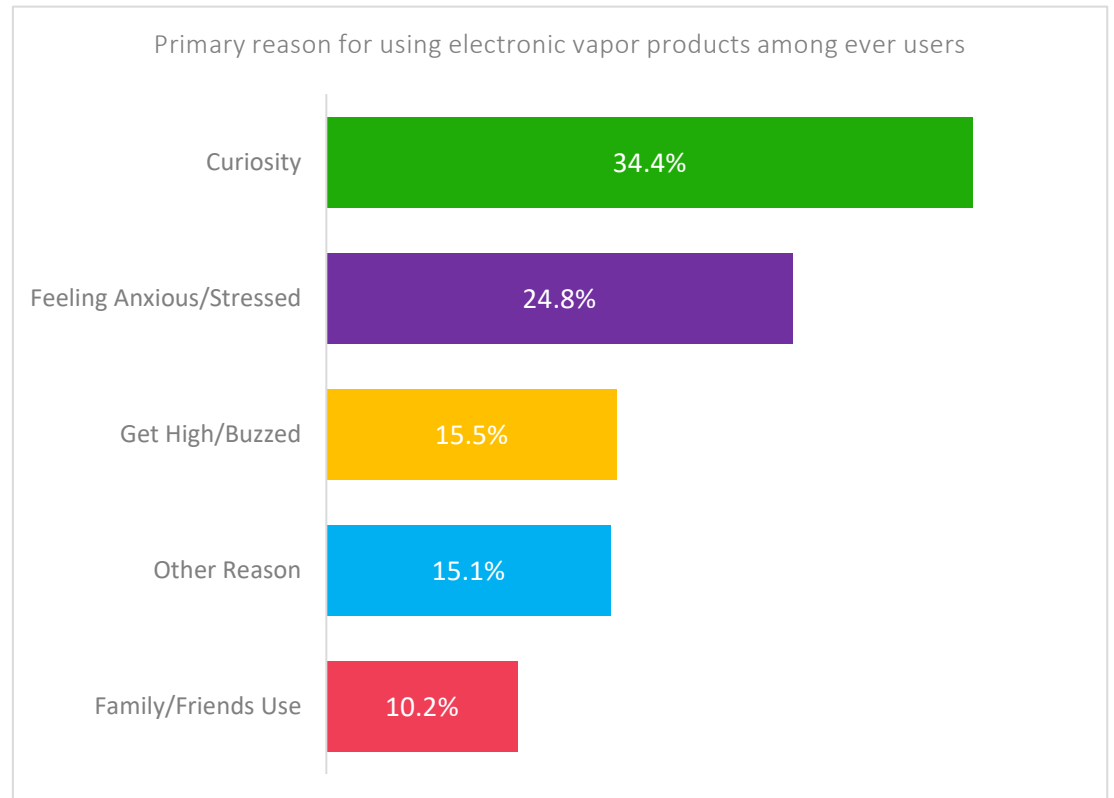


SECTION 4 | ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS

- Primary Reason for Using Electronic Vapor Products
- Usual Way of Getting Electronic Vapor Products
- Flavor of Product Most Often Used

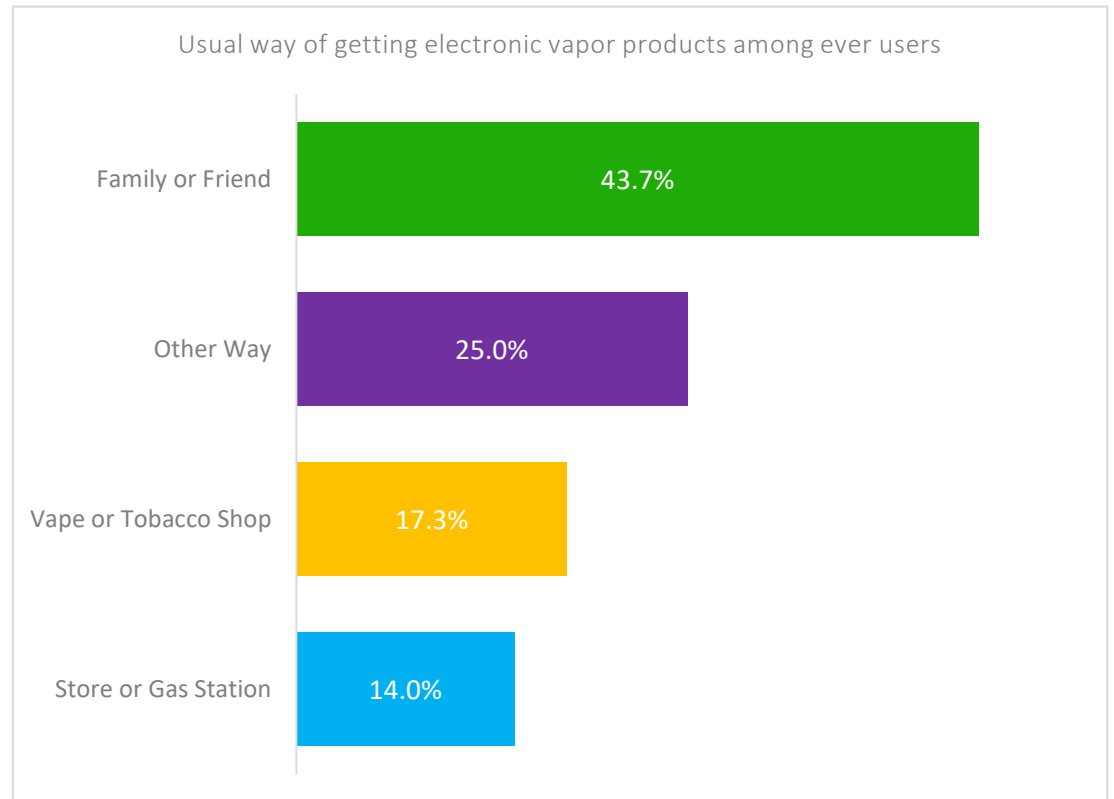
PRIMARY REASON FOR USING ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS

In 2021, among Connecticut high school students who ever tried electronic vapor products, 34.4% reported that their primary reason for using them was curiosity, 24.8% primarily used them because they were feeling anxious or stressed, while 15.5% used them to get high or to feel buzzed. Only about 1 in 10 ever users said the main reason they had used vaping products was family or friends use them.



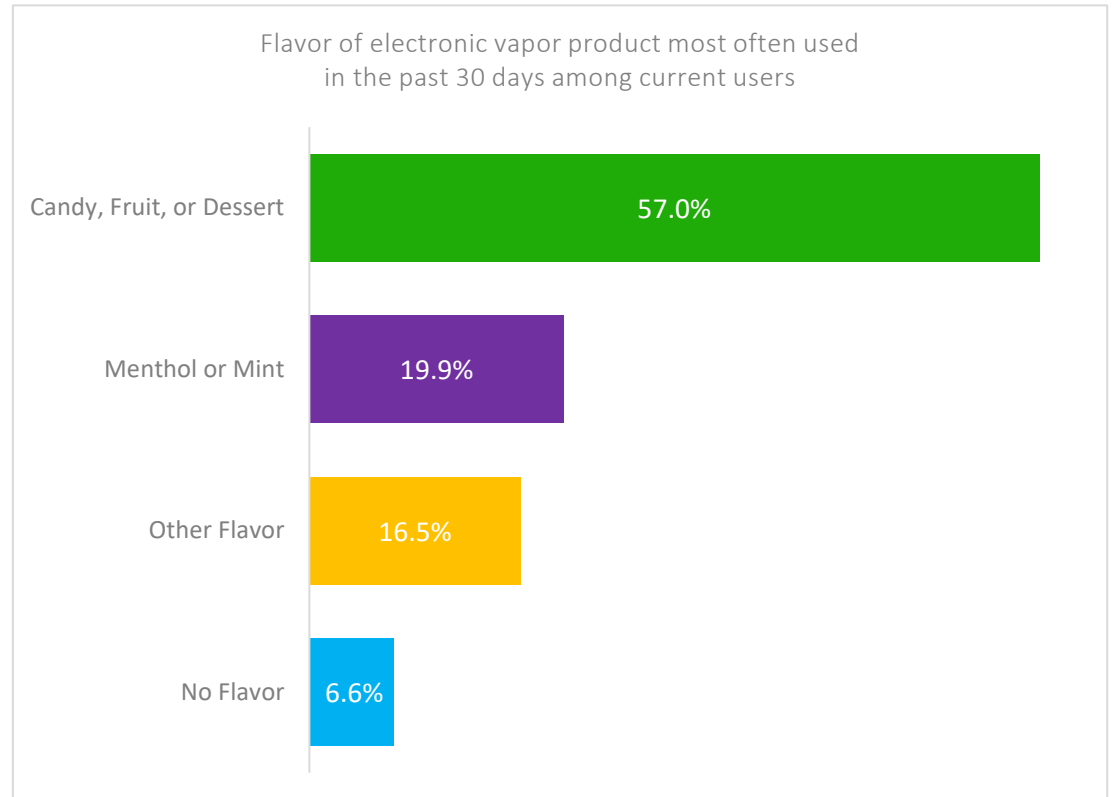
USUAL WAY OF GETTING ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCTS

In 2021, among Connecticut high school students who ever used electronic vapor products, 43.7% reported that their usual way of getting the products was from family or friends; 17.3% most often got them from a vape or tobacco shop; while 14.0% usually got them from a convenience store, supermarket, discount store, or gas station. One-quarter (25.0%) of ever users usually got them some other way, such as from a mall kiosk or over the internet.



FLAVOR OF ELECTRONIC VAPOR PRODUCT USED MOST OFTEN

In 2021, among Connecticut high school students who used electronic vapor products in the past 30 days (i.e., current use), 57.0% reported that the flavors they used most often were candy, fruit, or desserts, and 19.9% most often used menthol or mint. Only 6.6% most often used products with no flavor.



CONCLUSION

Overall Findings for 2021

Due to the many unique challenges of 2021, interpreting the results from the Connecticut School Health Survey (CSHS) has been complicated and many questions remain unanswered. Additionally, the response rate to the 2021 survey was historically low for Connecticut, which contributed to many of the estimates having to be suppressed. To get a clearer understanding of tobacco use behavior among Connecticut high school youth, more data from future survey cycles will be necessary. In Connecticut, effective for the 2022-2023 school year, school participation in the CSHS is required by law per [Connecticut General Statute Sec. 10-217h](#). This new statute will increase data collection, resulting in more reportable estimates that are representative of our state's high school youth.

Findings from the 2021 survey show that while rates of current cigarette, cigar, and hookah smoking are low (1.3%, 0.7%, and 1.4%, respectively), about 1 in 10 students (10.6%) reported using e-cigarettes or other electronic vapor products (EVPs) in the last 30 days. E-cigarettes and other electronic vaping devices have been the most widely used tobacco products among students since 2015.

Eliminating the Tobacco Problem in Connecticut

Risk factors and costs associated with tobacco use have a widespread impact on all Connecticut residents. The problem remains that tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and disability in the United States, despite a significant decrease in the number of people who smoke, especially in Connecticut. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 16 million Americans have at least one disease caused by smoking. If youth were prevented from starting tobacco use and every person who smokes were to quit, approximately \$170 billion in direct medical costs could be saved each year.¹

State of Connecticut Key Facts for 2021

In 2021, 11.2% of Connecticut high school youth reported currently using any tobacco product, which includes e-cigarettes and other EVPs. Current cigarette smoking prevalence was 1.3% for youth and 11.1% for adults (aged 18 years or older).² From the most recent estimates available, about 4,900 adults die from smoking-related illnesses each year in Connecticut and approximately \$2.0 billion is spent on healthcare costs due to smoking.¹

The Connecticut Department of Public Health's Role in Reducing Tobacco Use and Related Costs

For fiscal year 2021, Connecticut received nearly \$1.2 million from the CDC for advancing its tobacco prevention and control activities. The CDC describes tobacco prevention and control activities as a public health "best buy", so the Tobacco Control Program (TCP) at Connecticut Department of Health (DPH) adopted an evidence-based statewide tobacco control program that is comprehensive, sustained and accountable. This type of program has been shown to reduce the number of people who smoke, as well as decrease tobacco-related diseases and deaths. For every dollar Connecticut spends on tobacco prevention, tobacco-related healthcare and

hospitalization expenditures can be reduced by as much as \$55.¹ Our state's continued investment is vital to reduce youth and adult tobacco use. In alignment with the CDC's National Tobacco Control Program Goals, our comprehensive tobacco control program coordinates state and local initiatives to 1) prevent initiation of tobacco products, including EVPs and other emerging products, among youth and young adults; 2) promote cessation and assist tobacco users to quit; 3) protect people from secondhand smoke and aerosol; and 4) advance health equity by identifying and eliminating commercial tobacco product-related inequities and disparities.

Tobacco Cessation Public Education Campaign

As part of DPH's efforts to decrease tobacco use among Connecticut's youth, between July 2020 and April 2022, the TCP funded a Tobacco Cessation Public Education Campaign, which focused on 1) building public awareness about the immediate health risks associated with smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke; and 2) encouraging tobacco users to quit. The campaign had multiple phases. One of the phases was designed to educate young adult audiences on the dangers of vaping and to promote cessation, especially within this demographic. The target audiences for some of the key campaign messages were Connecticut residents between the ages of 17 and 26 years old, English and Spanish speaking, and young adults with lower socioeconomic status.



To address the vaping epidemic among young people, the campaign emphasized solutions versus scare tactics. It used plain language that was supportive and uplifting, highlighting the positive results of quitting, and to resonate with the younger audience, visuals were added, including short videos for social media. The audience was urged to get support and enlist a friend to quit – in other words, don't go it alone. Tobacco users were advised to identify triggers, such as parties, drinking with friends, driving, and boredom, and combat those triggers by using tips

provided by the campaign instead of smoking or vaping. To reach youth and young adults, social posts were made on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Google. Display/text and video ads were used, as well as streaming audio and gas station audio (OOH).

The campaign was a success. The cessation topics were met with exceptionally positive responses, generating an organic community where people shared their tips, quit stories, and positive thinking. The campaign resulted in millions of impressions and thousands of new enrollments to Connecticut's tobacco Quitline.

TOBACCO CESSATION PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN RESULTS

- Radio Impressions: 1,289,445
- Google Impressions: 7,407,292
- Social Media Impressions: 6,976,693
- OOH Impressions: 11,400,000
- Spanish Impressions: 1,601,862
- 2021 Quitline Registrations (Jan-Dec): 1,894
 - Phone Program: 1,561
 - Web Program: 333
- 2022 Quitline Registrations (Jan-Apr): 705
 - Phone Program: 559
 - Web Program: 146

28.7M
TOTAL
CAMPAIGN
IMPRESSIONS

2.6K
TOTAL
QUITLINE
ENROLLMENTS
2021-2022

¹Office on Smoking and Health, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; "Extinguishing the Tobacco Epidemic in Connecticut"; www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/state-fact-sheets/connecticut/index.html.

²Connecticut Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2021.

APPENDIX

Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity was determined using two questions. The first question asked, “Are you Hispanic or Latino?”. The second question asked, “What is your race?”, and the selection options were (A) American Indian or Alaska Native; (B) Asian; (C) Black or African American; (D) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and (E) White. Students could select one or more responses to this second question. For this report, all students who answered “Yes” to the Hispanic/Latino question are “Hispanic”, regardless of their answer to the second question. Students who answered “No” or did not answer are “non-Hispanic”, and their race is based on their answer, if any, to the second (i.e., race) question. Due to low numbers of non-Hispanic American Indians/Alaska Natives; Asians; Native Hawaiians/Other Pacific Islanders; and multi-racial students, they were combined to form an “Other” race category. In this report, there are three race/ethnicity demographic categories used: (1) Black (2) Hispanic (3) White.



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH | TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

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www.CT.gov/DPH/Tobacco



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