
Action on Smoking and Health
Advocates Smoke Free P.E.I.
Clean Air Coalition of British Columbia
Coalition québécoise pour le contrôle du tabac
Lung Association of Nova Scotia (The)
Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance
Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco
Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada
PEI Lung Association
Smoke-Free Alberta

News Release: Friday, May 7, 2021

CANADA-WIDE STUDY OF 3,000 YOUNG VAPERS SUPPORTS A COMPREHENSIVE FLAVOUR BAN ON NICOTINE VAPING PRODUCTS

Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa — The results of a [national study](#) of 3,000 Canadian youth and young adult vapers that includes new data supports the call from health groups to the federal government as well as eight provincial governments for a full ban on flavours in nicotine vaping products with the exception of “tobacco” flavours. The study, conducted by the **Lung Association of Nova Scotia** with financial support from **Heart & Stroke** and other partners, shows the top flavour preferences among youth, in descending order, are berry, mint/menthol and mango.

“We urge the federal and provincial governments to follow the lead of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island by providing youth with full protection against flavoured vaping products” says **Les Hagen, executive director of Action on Smoking and Health**. “A partial flavour ban implemented in the U.S. last year by the Trump administration resulted in many vapers switching to remaining flavoured products, including menthol. As we saw with the Canadian experience with flavoured tobacco, you cannot protect young people unless menthol is also banned.”

[Neurological research](#) supports making menthol a priority flavour to ban. The chemicals used in menthol flavouring are known to intensify and accelerate the brain's absorption of nicotine, making the process of becoming addicted even faster.

The [study](#) found that young vapers are not drawn to the tobacco flavour, a finding corroborated by recent Health Canada [survey numbers](#) showing that the only flavored e-liquids used predominately by adults over 25 but not by youth are those with tobacco flavours.

The data also confirms the widespread popularity of high nicotine vaping product among youth. Around two-thirds of youth vapers surveyed are using products that contain over 50 mg/ml of nicotine. The federal government is currently proposing a nicotine limit of 20 mg/ml which is the European standard. This limit would affect the vast majority of disposable nicotine vaping products that are preferred by youth.

“We applaud the Federal government and the provinces of Nova Scotia and British Columbia for their efforts to cap the nicotine content in vaping products. Youth have been targeted with flavoured high-nicotine e-cigarettes and such products have fuelled the youth vaping epidemic in Canada,” adds **Hagen**. “A limit on nicotine content and a comprehensive flavour ban are required to give kids a fighting chance of remaining nicotine-free and avoiding future tobacco use.”

The study also found that close to a third (27%) of young vapers with a history of tobacco use began vaping *before* tobacco use. “Besides being a huge concern for tobacco use initiation, vaping products must go through the same regulatory process as all pharmaceutical grade nicotine cessation aids before they can be considered a cessation aid” says **Robert MacDonald, CEO and President of the Lung Association of Nova Scotia**.

“Governments must give priority to protecting youth and other non-users from vaping market advertising,” said **Cynthia Callard, executive director of Physicians for a Smoke-Free Canada**. “The [research is converging](#) that these products are not helping smokers quit when they are supplied as consumer products outside of a treatment setting, but that they are expanding nicotine addiction by young people.”

“To protect youth, no flavours can be exempted besides tobacco, and nicotine must be capped at 20 mg/ml. The only question that remains is whether the federal Health Minister and other provincial Health ministers will show the same leadership in protecting youth from addiction as their counterparts in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island? Or will they capitulate to the tobacco and vaping industries who assert that consumers will turn to the illegal market, the same claim that was used to oppose a ban on menthol cigarettes which never materialized,” concludes **Flory Doucas, codirector of the Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control**.

Other findings:

The sample analyzed consisted of 3009 respondents between the ages of 16 and 24. On average, respondents began vaping at the age of 16 years. More than half (53%) of respondents reported having tried to quit vaping, with many making several attempts. The average user engaged in vaping behaviour six days per week and had 30 vaping episodes per day, with approximately six puffs per episode. On average, respondents spent between \$13 and \$22 per week on e-cigarettes.

The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that they have both used someone else’s e-cigarette (98%) and shared their e-cigarette with others (92%). For those that have shared their e-cigarette, the average number of people the e-cigarette was shared with was 20.

Around half (51%) of all respondents had experienced a negative health effect related to vaping. The majority of respondents reported exposure to vaping-related advertisements on social media platforms (71%). Users of pod-based disposable devices constituted the largest proportion of respondents (65%).

Almost all users reported using a flavoured vaping product at initiation (92%) and at present (90%). In most provinces, berry, mint/menthol and mango were the most popular flavours used at initiation and at present. Two-thirds (65%) of users preferred vaping products that contained the highest possible concentrations of nicotine (50-60 mg/mL). With respect to tobacco use, 64% of respondents were former users and 12% were current users.

According to the latest [Canadian Student Tobacco Alcohol and Drug Survey](#), there are 420,000 school-aged youth that have used vaping products within the past 30 days.

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