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Access to nicotine & tobacco products among Vermont teens and young adults

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Disclosures

- Dr. Villanti receives funding from NIH and State of Vermont to study patterns of tobacco and substance use in teens and young adults
  - Public health researcher, Vermonter, and parent of teens in Vermont schools

- No other funding to disclose



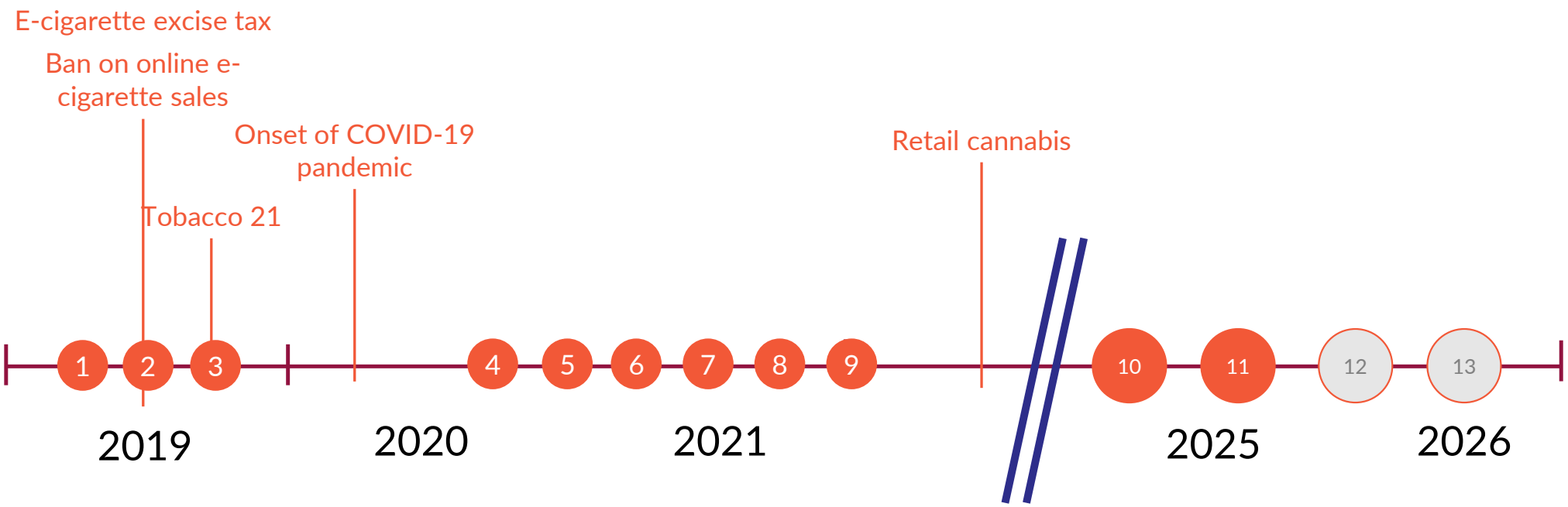
Our goal is to understand the impact of state-level policies and communication campaigns on substance use beliefs and behaviors in young Vermonters.





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PACE Vermont tracks in real-time



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Methods

- Participants are Vermont teens and young adults aged 12-25
  - Convenience sample of online participants; not representative of all Vermonters
- Wave 11 survey was open from **09/05/2025 – 10/05/2025**
  - **N = 301 following data cleaning**
- Items assessed
  - Ever and past 30-day use of tobacco
  - Exposure to marketing
  - Access and purchasing
  - Quitting behavior

Tobacco/nicotine use behavior in young Vermonters (ages 12-25)

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	Cigarettes	Electronic Nicotine Products (ENP)	Nicotine Pouches	Cigars
Ever use	155 (52%)	129 (43%)	57 (19%)	106 (35%)
Past 30-day use	113 (38%)	78 (26%)	37 (12%)	30 (9%)

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Policy and Communication Evaluation

Wave 11, Fall 2025

Preliminary data. Please do not distribute or cite.

Exposure to the Retail Environment

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- Advertising, price promotions appealing to price-sensitive young people[1]
- Normalizes use, which can increase susceptibility to use[2]
- Easier perceived access to purchase[3]



1. US Department of Health and Human Services (2012). Preventing Tobacco Use Among Youth and Young Adults: A Report of the Surgeon General. US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health.
2. Robertson, L., Cameron, C., McGee, R., Marsh, L., & Hoek, J. (2016). Point-of-sale tobacco promotion and youth smoking: A meta-analysis. Tob Control, 25(e2), e83–e89.
3. Wakefield M, Germain D, Durkin S, Henriksen L. An experimental study of effects on schoolchildren of exposure to point-of-sale cigarette advertising and pack displays. Health Educ Res. 2006;21(3):338-47.

Perceived access (full sample)

If you wanted to get […] products, how hard or easy would it be for you to get some?

- Very hard
- Sort of hard
- Sort of easy
- Very easy

	Tobacco/nicotine
Age <21	99/162 (61%)
Age 21+	124/139 (89%)

Preliminary data. Please do not distribute or cite.

Exposure to ENP ads or promotions

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How often do you see ads or promotions for ENP products...

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Less than monthly
- Never
- Don't know

	Teens (%)	Young Adults (%)	Total (%)
Online, on websites	29.6	38.2	34.9
On social media	30.4	27.4	28.6
In state or local newspapers or magazines	18.3	13.4	15.3
On local radio stations	13.0	11.3	12.0
When I'm out and about (e.g. in stores, on public transportation, or by the side of the road)	42.6*	31.2	35.6

* p<0.05 from chi-square test comparing teens and young adults

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Purchasing behavior among past 30-day users

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	Tobacco/Nicotine N= 143
Where did you buy your own…products?	
I did not buy [product] during the past 30 days	17 (12%)
A vape shop or tobacco shop	**62 (43%)**
A gas station or convenience store	**48 (34%)**
On the internet (such as a product website for tobacco: online vape or tobacco store) or other online marketplace)	**33 (23%)**
I bought them from another person (a friend, family member, or someone else)	31 (22%)
A grocery store	15 (10%)
A mall or shopping center kiosk/stand	15 (10%)
A drugstore	10 (7%)
Through the mail	9 (6%)
Through a delivery service (such as DoorDash or Postmates)	9 (6%)
A vending machine	7 (5%)
Through store pick-up (such as a grocery store, Walmart or Target)	-
Some other place not listed here	ǂǂ

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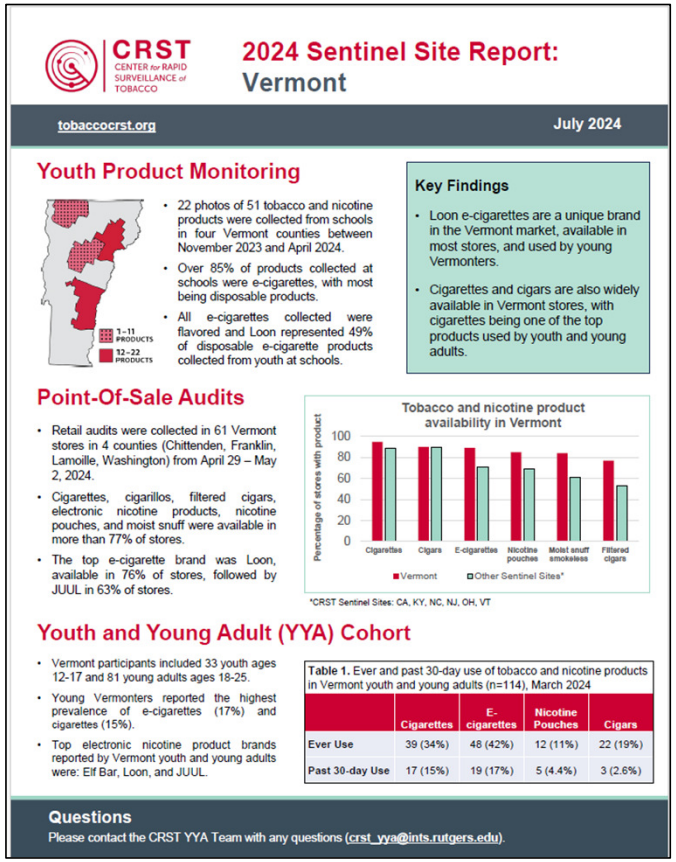
Asked of past 30-day users. Select all that apply question.

ǂǂ suppressed due to <5 responses- Response option not included

Preliminary data. Please do not distribute or cite.

Companion project –
Rutgers Center for Rapid Surveillance of Tobacco

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CRST CENTER for RAPID SURVEILLANCE of TOBACCO

2024 Sentinel Site Report: Vermont

tobaccocrst.org — July 2024

Youth Product Monitoring

- 22 photos of 51 tobacco and nicotine products were collected from schools in four Vermont counties between November 2023 and April 2024.
- Over 85% of products collected at schools were e-cigarettes, with most being disposable products.
- All e-cigarettes collected were flavored and Loon represented 49% of disposable e-cigarette products collected from youth at schools.

Key Findings

- Loon e-cigarettes are a unique brand in the Vermont market, available in most stores, and used by young Vermonters.
- Cigarettes and cigars are also widely available in Vermont stores, with cigarettes being one of the top products used by youth and young adults.

Point-Of-Sale Audits

- Retail audits were collected in 61 Vermont stores in 4 counties (Chittenden, Franklin, Lamoille, Washington) from April 29 – May 2, 2024.
- Cigarettes, cigarillos, filtered cigars, electronic nicotine products, nicotine pouches, and moist snuff were available in more than 77% of stores.
- The top e-cigarette brand was Loon, available in 76% of stores, followed by JUUL in 63% of stores.

*CRST Sentinel Sites: CA, KY, NC, NJ, OH, VT

Youth and Young Adult (YYA) Cohort

- Vermont participants included 33 youth ages 12-17 and 81 young adults ages 18-25.
- Young Vermonters reported the highest prevalence of e-cigarettes (17%) and cigarettes (15%).
- Top electronic nicotine product brands reported by Vermont youth and young adults were: Elf Bar, Loon, and JUUL.

Table 1. Ever and past 30-day use of tobacco and nicotine products in Vermont youth and young adults (n=114), March 2024

	Cigarettes	E-cigarettes	Nicotine Pouches	Cigars
Ever Use	39 (34%)	48 (42%)	12 (11%)	22 (19%)
Past 30-day Use	17 (15%)	19 (17%)	5 (4.4%)	3 (2.6%)

Questions
Please contact the CRST YYA Team with any questions (crst_yya@ints.rutgers.edu).



CRST CENTER for RAPID SURVEILLANCE of TOBACCO

NOVEMBER 2023 – APRIL 2024

Youth Tobacco Product Monitoring Project Summary - Vermont

Overview

Description: 22 photos of 75 products were submitted between November 1, 2023, and April 30, 2024, of products collected during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. Fifty-one of those products were nicotine and tobacco products, with the remaining either accessories (chargers, lighters) or cannabis products. Submissions originated from 4 counties: Caledonia, Franklin, Washington, and Windsor.

Examples of Photos Submitted

Products and Brands

Disposable Brands 14 distinct brands: Loon (48.6% of disposables), Puffbar (8.6%), RAZ (5.7%), Fruty (5.7%), Lost Mary (5.7%), Elfbar, Hyde, Kado, Posh, Rare, Trulybar, Tyson, VGOD

Pod Brands 2 distinct brands: JUUL (83.3% of pods), Elfworld.

Cigarette Brands 2 distinct brands: Marlboro (83.3% of cigarettes) and Pall Mall.

Flavors

ALL products were flavored, the majority featuring characterizing or explicit flavors.

33.3% fruit | 13.7% "ice" | 11.8% sweet | 9.8% beverage | 5.9% menthol | 21.6% concept

Photos of example flavors from across the US, not just Vermont; 21.6% of product flavors could not be confirmed.

THANK YOU to all who submitted photos. Please send us your end-of-year photos!
Want to get involved or get tailored information for your state or locality?
Email Jessie.Jensen@rutgers.edu.
For more on the latest on tobacco use and marketing in the US, visit tobaccocrst.org.

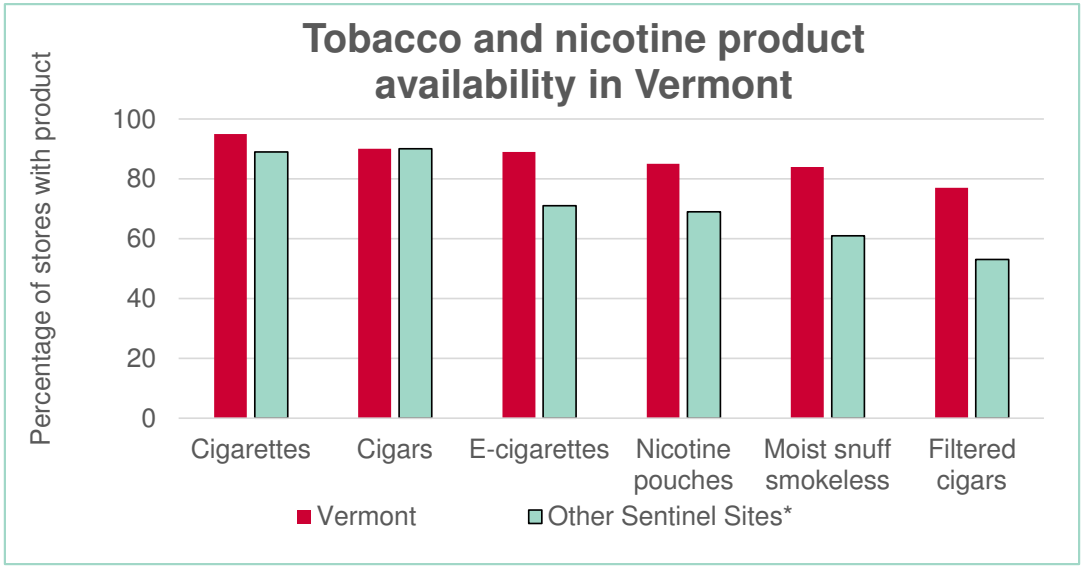
https://tobaccocrst.org/

High availability of tobacco in Vermont stores

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Point-Of-Sale Audits

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https://tobaccocrst.org/

New products in Vermont stores appeal to young people

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A. Craftbox V-Play 20K Disposable Vape with Built in Gaming System 25mL: Vermont, April 2024 (Wave 1)



C. Z Colors disposable vape: Vermont, April 2025 (Wave 3)



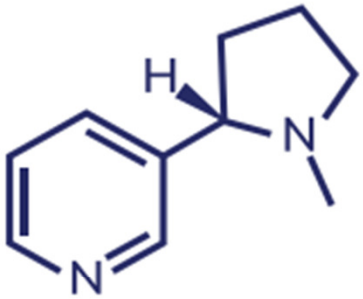
D. Juicehead disposable vape: Vermont, April 2025 (Wave 3)



B. Elf and Loon Nicotine Pouches: Vermont, October 2024 (Wave 2)

Hrywna et al. Development and implementation of a rapid surveillance system for tobacco product retail availability in six U.S. sites. *Prev Med Reports, in press.* https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335525003821

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nicotine

WHAT IS NICOTINE?

Nicotine is a highly addictive chemical compound present in a tobacco plant. All tobacco products contain nicotine, such as cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco, hookah tobacco, and most e-cigarettes. Nicotine is what keeps people using tobacco products.

https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/health-effects-tobacco-use/nicotine-why-tobacco-products-are-addictive

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More than half of youth want to quit

- **Quit intentions**
  - 62.5% of current users of any tobacco product
  - 68.1% of cigarette smokers
  - 63.9% of e-cigarette users

- **Past-year quit attempts**
  - 65.4% of current users of any tobacco product
  - 65.8% of cigarettes smokers
  - 67.4% for e-cigarette users

"I feel the impact on my lungs already and I can't imagine what the impact may be in a few years"

"I don't want to be pinned down to nicotine to get me through the day"

Amato MS, et al.
Addict Behav. 2021;112:106599.

Zhang L, Gentzke A, Trivers KF, VanFrank B. *J Adolesc Health. 2022;70(1):147-154.*

Substance use behavior in young Vermonters (ages 12-25)

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	Cigarettes	ENP
Ever use	155 (52%)	129 (43%)
Past 30-day use	113 (38%)	78 (26%)
Quit or cut down		
Past month*	50 (32%)	57 (44%)

* Asked among ever users

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Policy and Communication Evaluation

Wave 11, Fall 2025

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Conclusions

- Retail environment is an important place where young people gain access to nicotine/tobacco products and establish norms re: tobacco/nicotine use
- More than 40% of Vermont teens report exposure to tobacco/nicotine marketing when they are “out and about (e.g. in stores)”
- Young people purchase nicotine/tobacco products in vape shops/tobacco shops, gas stations or convenience stores, or on the internet
- S.198 proposes a number of important steps to protect young people
  - Potentially, reducing tobacco/nicotine initiation and increasing cessation in young Vermonters