

An Overview of Youth Health in Montreal

UNDERSTAND, MOBILIZE, TAKE ACTION

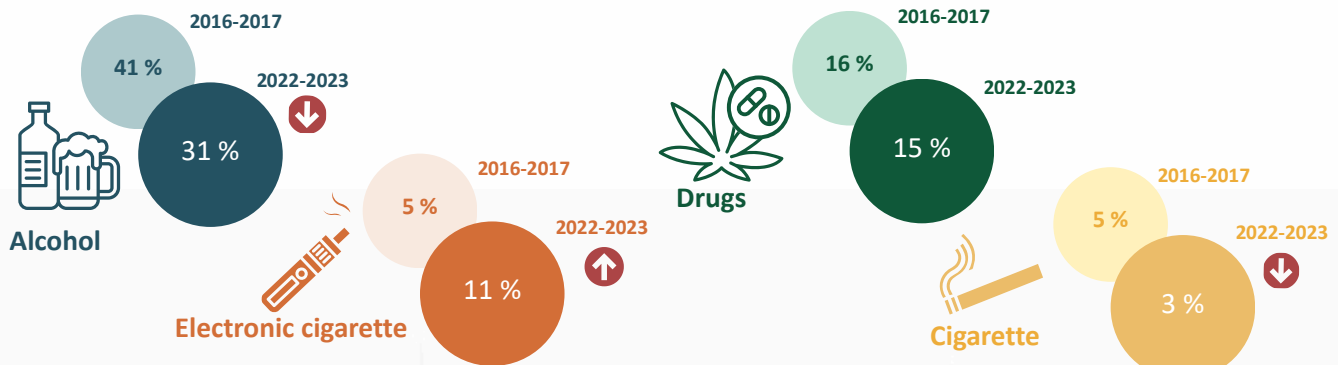


Substance Use Among High School Students

Adolescence is a period marked by experimentation, during which the use of psychoactive substances may occur. However, it is important to ensure that such use does not lead to risky behaviors or become problematic, as it can have harmful effects on youth’s health and safety, as well as negatively impact their life trajectories and long-term well-being ¹.

HIGHLIGHTS

Trends over time in the proportion of youth using substances vary by substance:



↓ ↑ indicate a significant decrease or increase in proportion compared to the previous cycle.

As the indicator of alcohol use over the past 12 months is affected by the collection period, tests of difference in proportions between 2016-2017 and 2022-2023 were confirmed with a direct standardization method, in order to confirm significant differences.

For the first time, a higher proportion of girls than boys report using psychoactive substances.

In 2022-2023, the proportions are higher among girls than boys for alcohol (34% vs. 29%), drugs—including cannabis—(17% vs. 13%) and electronic cigarettes (12% vs. 9%).

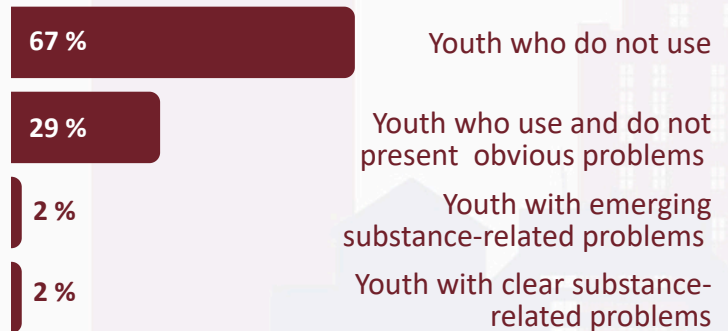
A higher proportion of girls experienced at least one negative consequence related to their substance use, particularly psychological difficulties.

In 2022-2023, among Montreal youth who reported using alcohol and/or drugs in the past 12 months, 23% of girls experienced at least one negative consequence, compared to 18% of boys.

More than one in ten youth report using at least three substances.

In 2022-2023, 12% of high school students in Montreal used three substances or more—alcohol, cannabis, and at least one other drug—within the past year. This was more common among girls (14%) than boys (10%).

Most youth either do not use substances or do not experience problems related to their alcohol or drug use.



Prevention: Possible Courses of Action

- Address upstream factors related to substance use by improving environments (e.g. regulation of legal substances, increased access to youth activities).
- Strengthen prevention efforts among youth, including gender-responsive approaches.
- Prevent risky substance use behaviors and reduce associated negative consequences.
- Reduce stigma to encourage youth to seek help.

Reference :

1. Canadian Public Health Agency. (2018). REPORT OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER ON THE STATE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN CANADA 2018: Preventing Problematic Substance Use Among Youth.