

How are adolescents getting their vaping products? Findings from the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Youth Tobacco and Vaping Survey

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Abstract

Objective: To examine the sources of vaping products reported by adolescents, and the characteristics of adolescents who reported purchasing a vaping product in the past year in the United States (US), Canada (CA), and England (EN).

Methods: Data were from the 2017 ITC Youth Tobacco and Vaping Survey, a web-based survey of 12,128 respondents aged 16-19 years recruited from commercial panels in the US, CA, and EN. Respondents who have vaped in the past 12 months were asked whether they had purchased a vaping product, and from where (vape shop, online, retail), as well as whether anyone refused to sell them a vaping product because of their age. Respondents who reported vaping in the past 30 days were asked where they had obtained their vaping product from a social and/or commercial source.

Results: Only about 7.5% of respondents reported having purchased a vaping product in the past year. Among those who had vaped in the past year, 32.6% reported having purchased a vaping product in the past year. Purchasing prevalence was significantly higher among US respondents compared to those from CA and EN; purchase prevalence was also higher among Canadian adolescents than respondents from England. The most commonly reported purchase location for vaping products in all countries was vape shops. Among past 30-day vapers, 42.5% reported getting their vaping products only from social sources, 41.4% only from commercial sources, and 13.4% from both types of sources. Purchasing a vaping product in the past year was associated with being male, of legal age to buy tobacco and vaping products, and greater frequency of smoking and vaping in the past 30 days.

Conclusions: Most adolescents have not purchased a vaping product, but among those who had, vape shops were the mostly commonly reported location for buying a vaping product. Purchasing of a vape product was more commonly reported by those who vape more frequently and by those of legal age to buy a vaping product.

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