

Substance Use & Mental Health in Washington County

Substance use

Since the start of the pandemic, substance use has increased among Washington County residents.

Marijuana and alcohol use has increased the most among residents, but for the majority of residents, substance use has remained the same.

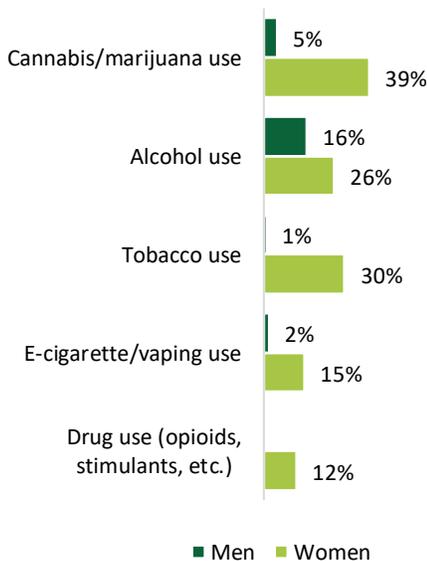
1. CHANGES IN SUBSTANCE USE SINCE THE ONSET OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

	Increased	Remained the same	Decreased
Cannabis/marijuana use	22%	76%	2%
Alcohol use	20%	71%	9%
Tobacco use	16%	80%	3%
E-cigarette/vaping use	8%	88%	4%
Drug use ^a	5%	95%	0%

^a Opioids, stimulants, hallucinogens, inhalants, or any other substance for non-medical purposes.

Substance use among women increased markedly since the start of the pandemic compared to men.

2. INCREASE IN SUBSTANCE USE BY GENDER

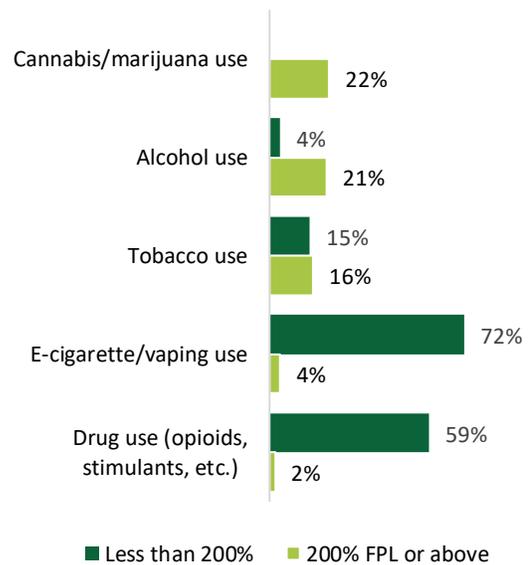


Nearly half of residents that reported an increase in substance use, said they are at least “somewhat concerned” about their increase in substance use.

Increases in substance use vary by poverty status and by substance type.

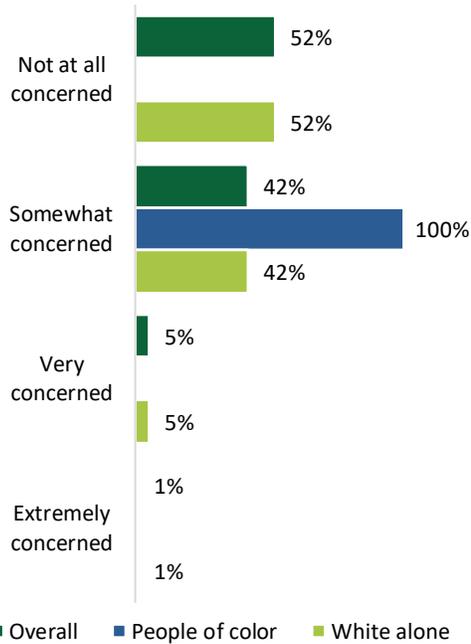
A higher percentage of residents living at or above 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) reported an increase in marijuana and alcohol use compared to residents living below 200% of the FPL. Alternatively, residents living in poverty reported an increase in e-cigarette and drug use at higher rates.

3. INCREASE IN SUBSTANCE USE BY POVERTY STATUS



Substance use has increased more among White residents, but concern about substance use was expressed by a greater proportion of residents of color who reported an increase in use.

4. LEVEL OF CONCERN ABOUT INCREASE IN SUBSTANCE USE BY RACE



For some substances, an increase in use was only reported among White residents (alcohol, cannabis/marijuana, and drugs (opioids, stimulants, etc.)). However, 100% of residents of color that reported an increase in substance use, reported that they are at least “somewhat concerned” about their increase in substance use in contrast to 47% of White residents.

Stress and boredom are common contributors to increases in substance use during the pandemic.

5. CONTRIBUTORS TO INCREASE IN SUBSTANCE USE



Note. Respondents could select all that apply.

Mental health

More than one in five residents (22%) reported that their mental health has gotten worse since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A higher proportion of young residents and essential workers reported worsened mental health since the pandemic compared to their older and non-essential worker counterparts.

6. CHANGES IN MENTAL HEALTH SINCE THE ONSET OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY AGE AND ESSENTIAL WORKER STATUS

	Gotten worse	Remained the same	Gotten better
Overall	22%	70%	8%
Age			
18-44	37%	51%	12%
45-64	18%	77%	6%
65+	7%	87%	6%
Essential worker status			
Frontline/essential worker	30%	63%	6%
Non-frontline/essential worker	17%	74%	9%

4% of residents reported suffering from serious psychological distress.¹ The highest rates of serious psychological distress are among middle-aged residents (age 35-44) at 11%.

¹Serious psychological distress is measured by a score of 13 or greater on the Kessler 6 (K6) nonspecific distress scale. The K6 obtains information on the frequency of six psychological distress symptoms. All six items were included in the survey.

For more information

This fact sheet presents findings related to overall health from the Washington County COVID-19 Impact Survey. For more information about this report, contact 651-430-6655 or PHE@co.washington.mn.us.

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NOVEMBER 2022

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