



Teens find a new use for e-cigarettes: Vaping marijuana

[Christine Rushton](#), crushton@usatoday.com, USA TODAY 5:15 p.m. EDT September 7, 2015

Teenagers have discovered a new way to inhale marijuana — e-cigarette vaporizers, according to a study released Monday.

About 27% of high school students who have used both marijuana and e-cigarettes reported using the devices to vaporize cannabis. Those most likely to vaporize pot with e-cigarettes included males and younger students.

E-cigarettes are designed to vaporize solutions containing nicotine, said co-author Meghan Rabbitt Morean. But, she noted, “teenagers are resourceful, and it was only a matter of time.”

Vaporizers give kids a better way to hide what they're inhaling.

“It’s so much easier to conceal e-cigarette pot use,” said Morean, an assistant professor at Oberlin College. “Everybody knows that characteristic smell of marijuana, but this vapor is different. It’s possible that teenagers are using pot in a much less detectable way.”

Researchers at Yale University based their findings on answers from a survey sent to nearly 4,000 Connecticut students. [The study was published Monday in *Pediatrics*.](#)

About 28% of students in the study had tried e-cigarettes.

Morean said people should remember to be cautious when interpreting her findings. There haven't been any other studies showing teens are using e-cigs to vaporize marijuana. She noted that scientists don't fully understand the health effects of e-cig-vaporized cannabis.

Marijuana use in other forms can cause several health problems such as short-term memory loss, slow learning, decreased sperm count and lung damage, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"We now know it's happening, but there are more questions about who is using and how damaging it is," Morean said.

E-cigarette use among youth increased more than 200% from 2011 to 2013, according to [a report in the journal *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*](#). Those surveyed had not tried regular cigarettes.

"Unfortunately, there is really no end for what can be vaporized in these devices," said Erika Sward, a spokeswoman for the American Lung Association.

Supporters of e-cigarettes, who describe them as a healthier alternative to regular cigarettes, found fault with the new survey. The study may not accurately reflect what teens across the country are doing because it surveyed students in only one state, said Phil Daman, president of the Smoke-Free Alternatives Trade Association and attorney for Daman & Associates.

His group strongly discourages underage use of vapor products.

"While some teens experiment, it's vital that parents and guardians talk to their children about not using any age-restricted products including vapor products," Daman said.

Morean said she and her colleagues plan to conduct additional studies.

She hopes researchers in other states will provide additional data, to provide a clearer picture of national trends.

"This research is so new," Morean said.

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/09/04/e-cigarettes-vape-marijuana-students-connecticut/71703472/>