

NEWSHEALTH

Heroin use among young adults increases, study finds; daily cannabis use also up



Cannabis plants in a Michigan facility. Heroin use nationwide increased significantly among young adults in 2025 and daily use of cannabis continues to rise, according to a University of Michigan survey. Credit: AP/Paul Sancya

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2:00 am
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Heroin use nationwide increased significantly among young adults in 2025 for the first time in years, mirroring a similar trend among adolescents, [a report released on Wednesday](#) found.

Although occasional or moderate use of cannabis among adults has stabilized for most age groups in recent years following sharp increases during the

2010s, daily use continues to rise, according to the University of Michigan survey, which is sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

The spring 2025 survey of more than 11,000 adults does not break down use by state or county. [Data on adolescents was released in May.](#)

On Long Island, some drug and alcohol treatment organizations said they see the national data reflected locally in more people seeking treatment for addiction to heroin or the powerful and deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl. Others said they are not seeing an increase.

All said the new data is a warning that the [sharp drop over the past decade in the use of opioids](#) and in opioid-related overdoses is no reason to be complacent.

Heroin use had declined in the mid-2010s for young adults and had been roughly stable since then — until it shot up from 0.1% of people 19 to 30 in 2024 to 0.6% in 2025. Fentanyl use among young adults rose from 0.2% to 0.6% — although researchers said that is not considered statistically significant.

At Wellbridge Addiction Treatment and Research Center in Calverton, "we are noticing an uptick" in people with heroin and fentanyl use, said Steve Chassman, a vice president.

He attributes it in part to people struggling to make ends meet amid higher prices and other stressors turning to opioids "for relief."

With more treatment options than in the past, expanded education efforts and widespread use of the anti-overdose nasal spray naloxone, "we're better prepared than 20 years ago" to combat any increase, Chassman said.

Nonmedical use of opioid medications remained stable, at below 3% in all age groups, a fraction of the percentages from 15 years ago. Stricter controls on opioid medications have helped keep those numbers from rising, but an unintended effect is that some people may be turning instead to heroin or synthetic opioids, said Sherri Kaplan, vice president of program excellence at CN Guidance & Counseling Services in Hicksville.

Daily cannabis use has been rising steadily for years among all adult age groups, despite numbers generally leveling out for less frequent consumption.

Daily use among adults 35 to 50 doubled between 2019 and 2025, from 4.3% to 8.5%.

Easier access to marijuana following legalization led many adults who hadn't used weed in years to try it again, said Jeffrey Reynolds, president and CEO of the Garden City-based Family and Children's Association.

Most didn't become heavy users. Some, though, started using it initially to relax or for help in sleeping, "and before you know it, you're not only using it to go to sleep, you're using it to take the edge off in the morning," he said. "You're using it on your lunch hour."

Cigarette use had been falling for decades, but that decrease is leveling out, data shows. Yet, said Megan Patrick, principal investigator of the survey and a research professor at Michigan, "the increase in the use of nicotine pouches is quite striking."

Use of nicotine pouches more than doubled between 2023 and last year, with use highest among young adults — rising from 4.8% to 12.7%.

Vaping nicotine remains popular among young adults: A quarter reported vaping nicotine. "There's a shift in how people are using nicotine," Patrick said.

Kaplan said that unlike cigarettes, people can use the tiny nicotine pouches discreetly.

"We're starting to see pouch use where smoking was prohibited before — in workplaces, in restaurants, in airports," she said.



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