

# Frequency of Electronic Vapor Product Use and Other Risk Behaviors Among High School Students

## 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

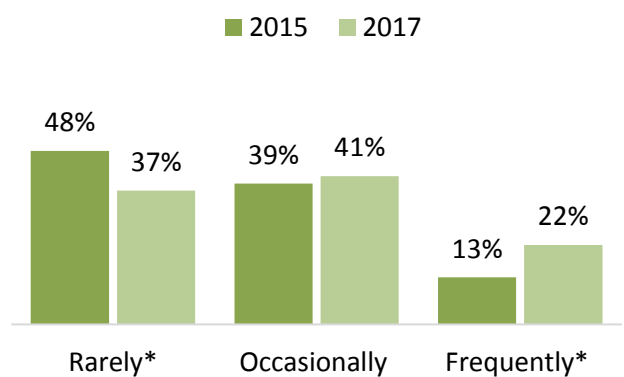
### Background

Electronic vapor products (EVPs), such as electronic cigarettes, are battery-powered devices that typically deliver nicotine through aerosol and are marketed as a cessation tool and an alternative to conventional tobacco products. Recent reports suggest dramatic increases in EVP use, while studies remain uncertain about the continued addictive nature of the products<sup>1</sup>. In 2017, the Vermont high school youth risk behavior survey<sup>2</sup> (YRBS) asked students about EVP use, including current use in the past 30 days and frequency of use.

### Electronic Vapor Product Use

EVPs are the most used tobacco product among high school youth: 12% currently use EVPs compared to 9% of high school students who currently smoke cigarettes. Overall, 34% of high school students have ever tried EVPs. There was a significant increase in ever use, but a significant decrease in current use from 2015 (30% and 15%, respectively) to 2017. The proportion of students who have tried or currently use EVPs increases with grade. By the time they graduate, 44% have tried and 17% currently use these products. Males are more likely than females to have tried (37% vs. 31%) and currently use (14% vs. 9%) EVPs (data not shown). While the prevalence of EVP use has decreased since 2015, the frequency of use has increased. In 2017, among those who currently use EVPs, 37% use them rarely (1-2 days), 41% use them occasionally (3-19 days), and 22% frequently (20+ days).

Frequency of Past 30 Day Electronic Vapor Product Use Among Users High School Students, 2015-2017



\*Statistical difference between 2015 and 2017.

### Alcohol Use

Use of alcohol is correlated with frequency of EVP use. As frequency of use increases, so does each type of alcohol use behavior. Youth who use EVPs are over 3.5 times as likely to currently drink alcohol compared to those who do not use EVPs, and over five times as likely to binge drink. Additionally, those who use EVPs frequently are significantly more likely to have had alcohol before age 13 compared to those that use EVPs less frequently. In contrast, perceived risk of binge drinking decreases with EVP use. Compared with those who do not use EVPs, youth who use EVPs are less likely to think there is significant risk in binge drinking once or twice a weekend.

Alcohol Use by Frequency of Electronic Vapor Product Use High School Students, 2017

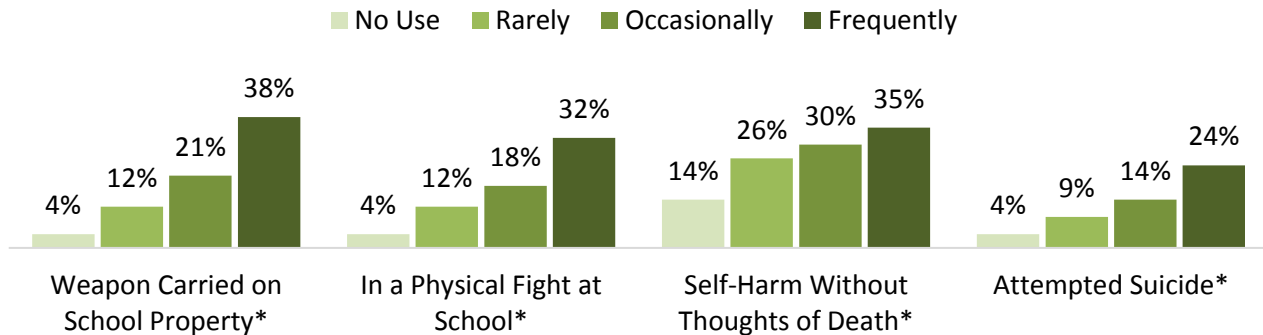


\*Each frequency of use category is statistically different compared with no use group.

## Mental Health and Other Risk Behaviors

Participation in risk behaviors such as bringing a weapon to school and fighting at school steadily increases with frequency of EVP use. Whereas only 4% of those that do not use EVPs report having brought a weapon to school or getting into a fight at school during the last 12 months, over a third of frequent EVP users report these risk behaviors. Similarly, self-harm and suicide attempts in the last year increase with frequency of use. Suicide attempts increase from 4% among those who do not use EVPs, to 14% among occasional users, and 24% among frequent users.

**Risk Behaviors by Frequency of Electronic Vapor Product Use  
High School Students, 2017**

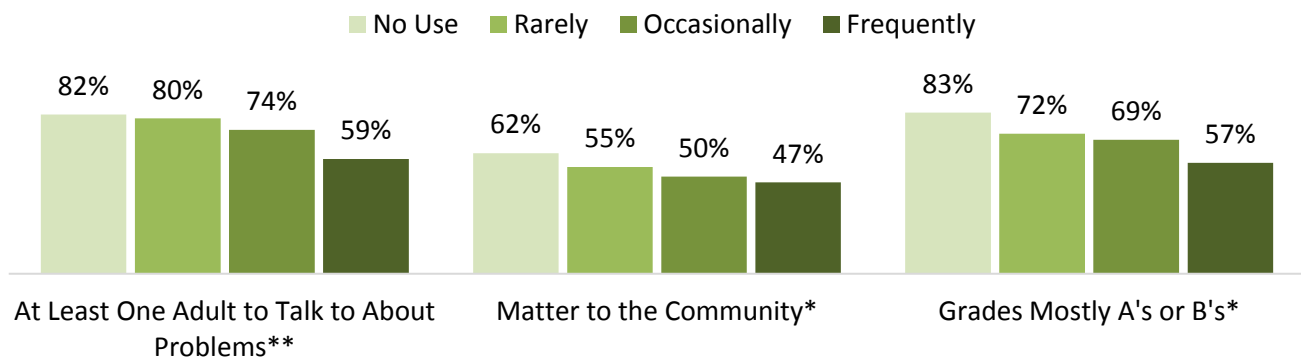


\*Each frequency of use category is statistically different compared with no use group.

## Youth Assets

Frequency of EVP use is negatively correlated to measures of youth assets. As frequency of use increases, student assets decrease. In particular, youth who do not use EVPs are much more likely than frequent users to report at least one adult who they can talk to about problems (82% versus 59%), to believe that they matter in their community (62% versus 47%), and to get grades of A's and B's (83% versus 57%).

**Student Assets by Frequency of Electronic Vapor Product Use  
High School Students, 2017**



\*Each frequency of use category is statistically different compared with no use group.

\*\*Occasionally and Frequently are statistically different compared with no use group.

**For questions on this data brief, please contact:** Erin Singer, PhD, Tobacco Analyst ([erin.singer@vermont.gov](mailto:erin.singer@vermont.gov)) or Kristen Murray, PhD, YRBS Coordinator ([Kristen.murray@vermont.gov](mailto:Kristen.murray@vermont.gov)). Visit the following websites for information about [Tobacco Control](#) and [Tobacco Surveillance](#) in Vermont.

<sup>1</sup> For more information on electronic vapor products and youth tobacco use, visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/ecigarette-ads/>;

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/e-cigarettes/pdfs/2016\\_sgr\\_entire\\_report\\_508.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/e-cigarettes/pdfs/2016_sgr_entire_report_508.pdf)