

Vanquishing vaping? Support for tougher regulations rise as positive views of e-cigarettes go up in smoke

Number of Canadians who say vaping does more harm than good nearly doubles from last year

January 6, 2020 – A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds a significant shift in Canadian views on vaping, as more evidence emerges that the trend may be more harmful than anticipated. Indeed, the number of Canadians saying vaping does more harm than good has nearly doubled in the past year, rising from 35 per cent just last year, to 62 per cent.

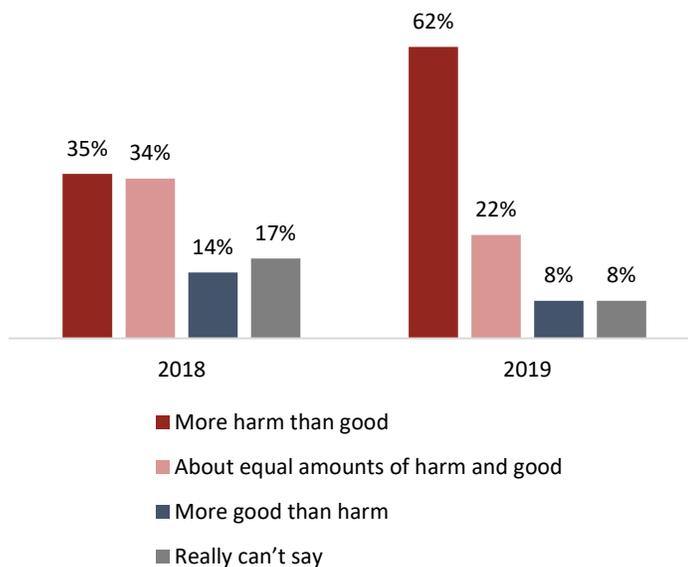
Over the last year, there have been [thousands of injuries and more than 50 deaths](#) reported in the United States related to vaping. Fourteen such cases have been [reported in Canada](#).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, as familiarity with vaping and use of vaping products has grown, so too has concern about children's access to them.

One-in-five parents with children under 19 (17%) are aware of their children vaping, and 92 per cent of these parents say they consider it harmful. Health Canada recently announced an expansion of its testing capabilities to [better understand](#) cannabis vaping products already available in the market.

Other findings reveal massive support for restrictions related to advertisements in this sector. Nine-in-ten Canadians (90%) say it would be a good idea to ban advertising of vaping products in areas that young people frequent – such as bus shelters, parks, and areas around schools, while four-in-five (82%) would like to see the sale of flavoured vaping products restricted to adult-only stores. Notably, the federal government [announced in December](#) that it would implement a ban on promotions of vaping products in areas where youth will see them, including on social media, but would not move forward with regulations on flavours at this time.

In your opinion would you say that vaping does:



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from December 2 – 4, 2019 among a representative randomized sample of 1,655 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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More Key Findings:

- Half of Canadians (46%) would like to see vaping products banned entirely, as has been [done in Massachusetts](#), while one-in-three say this would be a step too far (33%)
- Higher support is found for banning flavoured vaping products. Six-in-ten say (60%) say this would be a good idea, while one-quarter (23%) disagree
- One-in-four Canadians (25%) now say they have vaped, up from 18 per cent in 2018, and just nine per cent in 2013

About ARI

The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

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Part One: Vaping in Canada

Vaping continues to spread

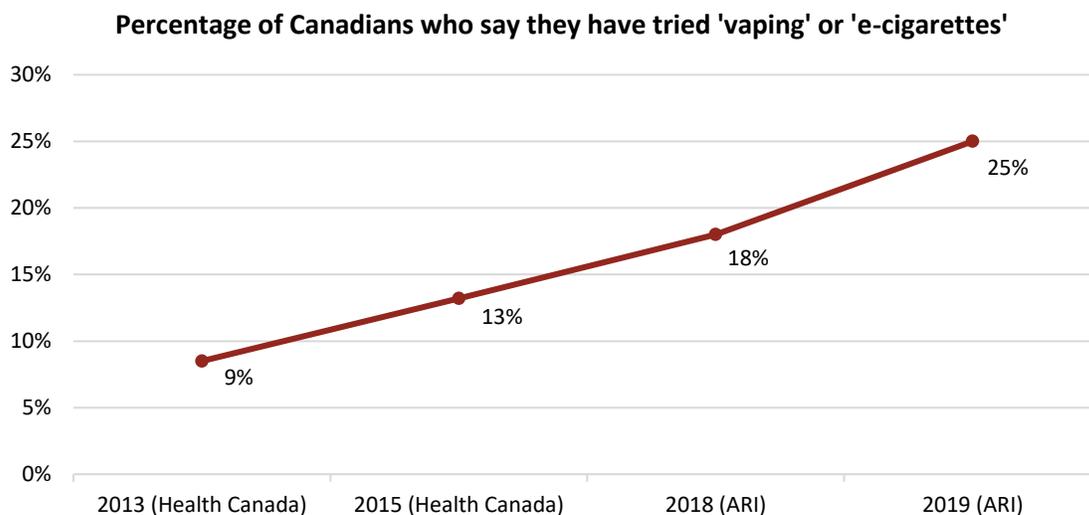
When introduced to the Canadian market in 2007, vaping was promoted for its health benefits as an alternative to traditional smoking. Since then, adoption and awareness has increased year over year. Indeed, six-in-ten Canadians (57%) say they are “quite familiar with vaping”, nearly twice the number who said the same a year ago ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

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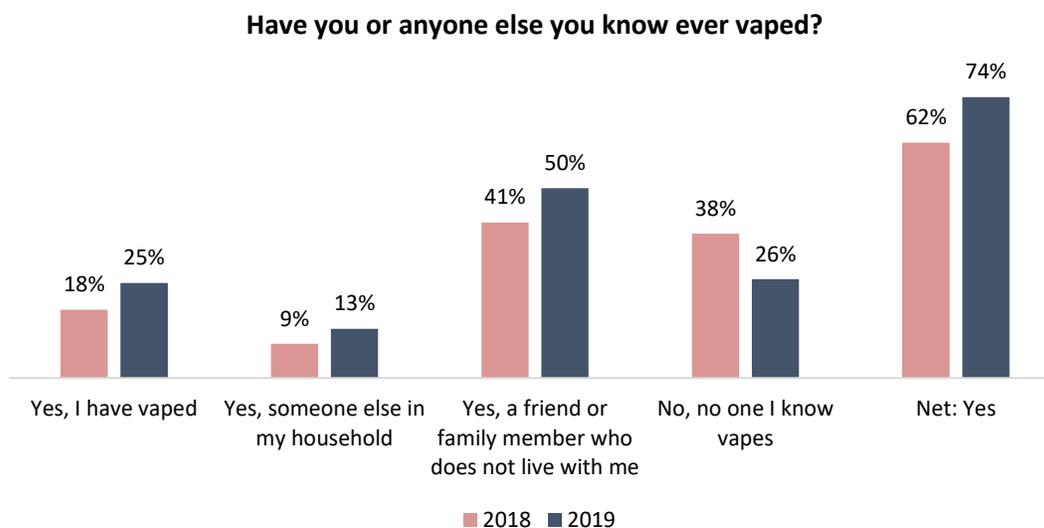
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The increased familiarity with vaping is perhaps reflective of the host of new products and legislation generating attention in Canada over the past year. [Cannabis vaping products](#), for instance, became legal in Canada just this past December. Part this heightened awareness may also be owed to the fact that the use of vapes is also on the rise.

Comparing responses from over the last six years, the upward trend of vaping use becomes clear. The Angus Reid Institute finds that in 2019, one-quarter of Canadians now say they have vaped.

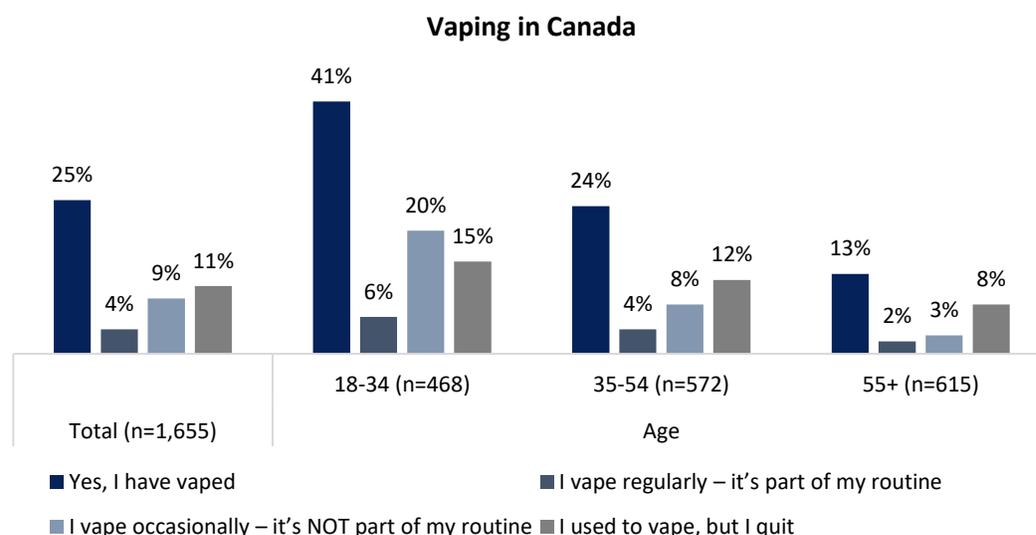


Moreover, three-quarters of Canadians say they have been exposed to vaping within their social circle. This number is also up from last year:

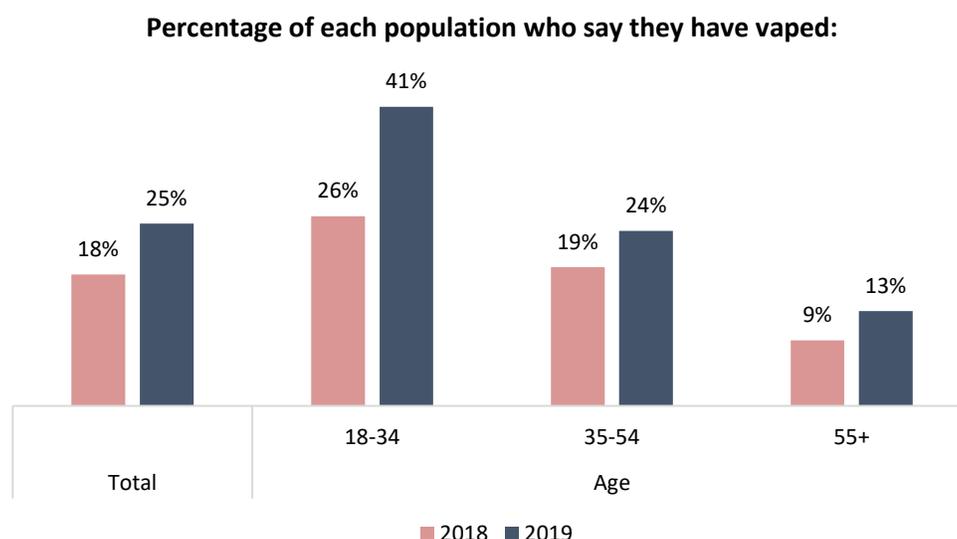


Young people more likely to have vaped

Advertising for vaping products is most often targeted at younger people. A [recent study](#) by Stanford University found that the largest vaping company in the market, Juul, had been targeting youth in its advertising since its foundation. It is then perhaps unsurprising that the largest number of vaping adopters are under the age of 35. Among that group, 41 per cent say they have vaped, while 26 per cent do it at least occasionally. Among the next oldest group, 35 to 54 year olds, just 12 per cent say they currently vape:



This trend is evidently still growing. Asked in 2018, 26 per cent of the millennial cohort say that they had vaped. That number is up 15 percentage points in 2019, while use among older age groups has also increased:

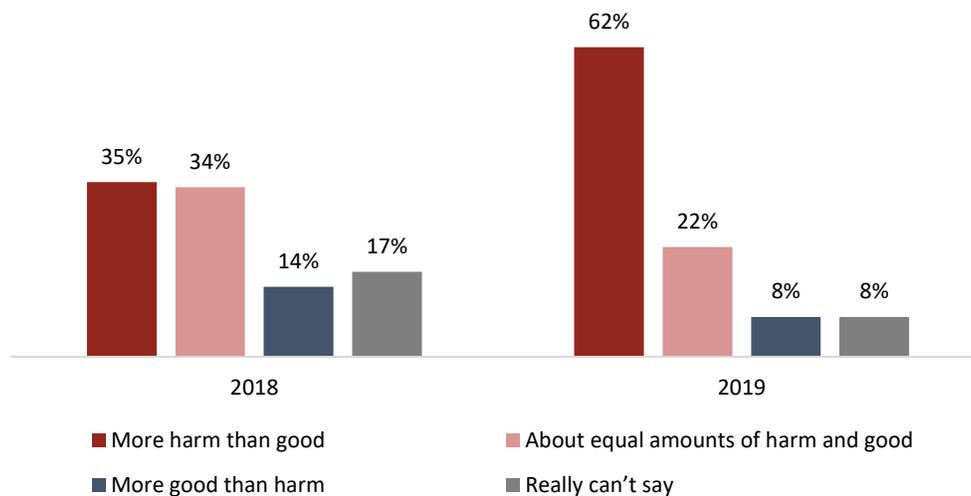


Most now believe vaping does more harm than good

While vaping has been sold as a replacement for traditional smoking, research has suggested it is not without harms of its own. As noted in a recent article from Johns Hopkins Medicine, [vaping is less harmful than smoking, but it's still not safe](#). With that in mind, Canadians were asked to assess the practice on its own. Is vaping doing more good than harm, or more harm than good?

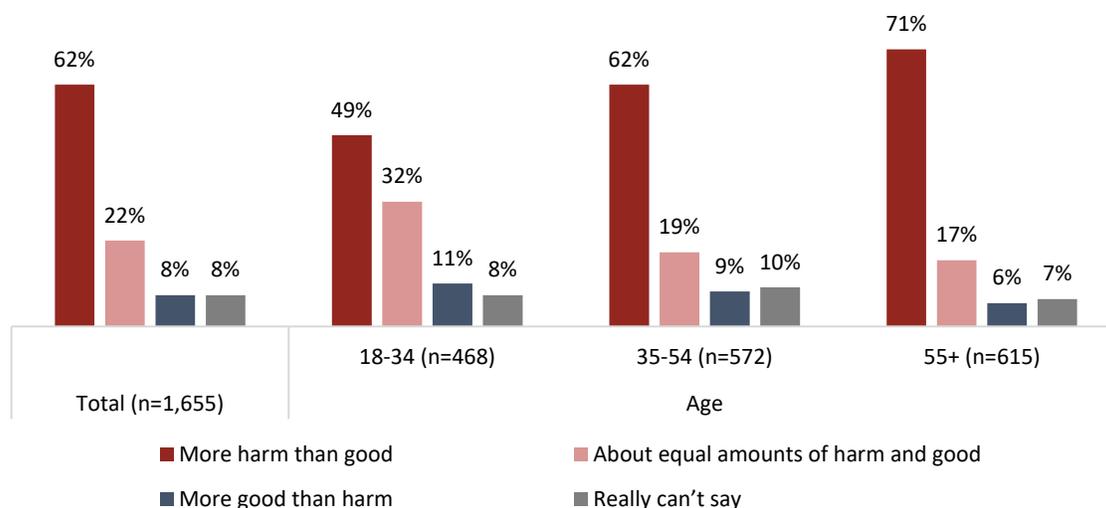
In 2018, Canadians were relatively divided. One-in-three said that it does more harm than good, but one-in-three also said that the outcome is likely close to equal amounts of both. In 2019, the percentage saying vaping does more harm than good has skyrocketed to 62 per cent. Notably, the number of Canadians with no opinion on the matter dropped by half:

In your opinion would you say that vaping does:



Negative opinions are concentrated more heavily among older Canadians, who have less exposure to these products, while younger people are most likely to say that there is a balance of good and bad generated by vaping. That said, still half (49%) of 18 to 34-year-olds feel vaping does more harm than good:

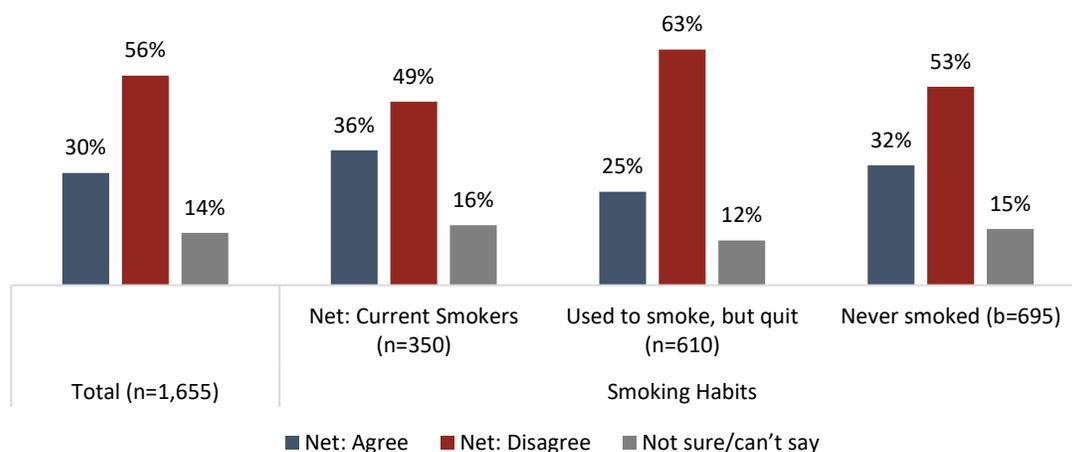
In your opinion would you say that vaping does:



But should smokers still switch?

While the sentiment overall is that vaping is doing more harm than good, three-in-ten Canadians say it would be smart for someone who is smoking combustible cigarettes to make the switch to e-cigarettes. A study [published this year](#) in the New England Journal of Medicine found that using e-cigarettes as part of a smoking cessation program was more effective than other nicotine replacement products, when accompanied by other behavioural therapies. That said, Canadians – including those who are current smokers – remain unconvinced:

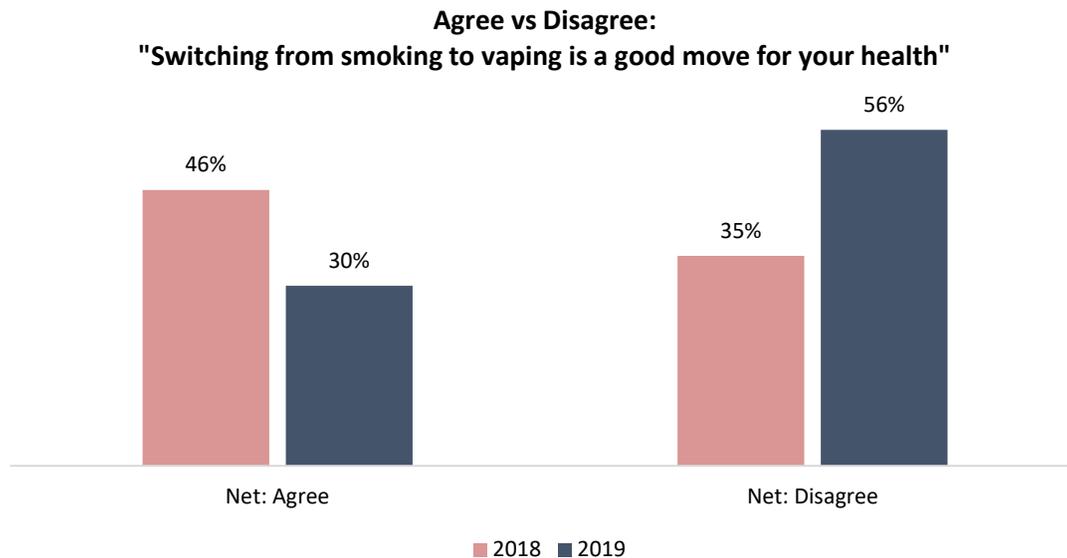
**Agree vs Disagree:
"Switching from smoking to vaping is a good move for your health"
(All respondents)**



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This finding is most striking when compared with data from last year. In 2018, 46 per cent of Canadians said switching to vaping would be a good move, and one-in-three (35%) felt it would be a bad one. Canadians now lean quite heavily in the other direction:



Part Two: Exposure among children

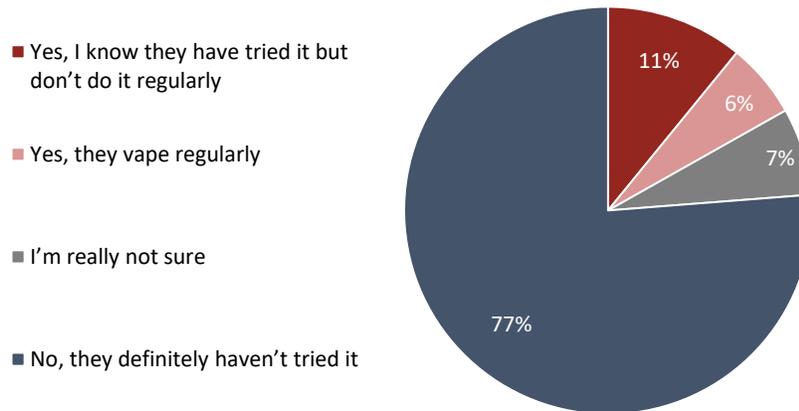
One-in-five parents of minors say their child has vaped

Data on vape usage among children is more difficult to come by. Research by [the University of Waterloo](#) found that among teenagers ages 16 to 19, monthly vaping had risen from 8.4 per cent to 14.6 between 2017 and 2018. The Angus Reid Institute asked parents about their own awareness of their children's use of vaping products. While three-quarters say their children have never vaped, one-in-five say they have (17%). Six per cent say their children vape regularly:

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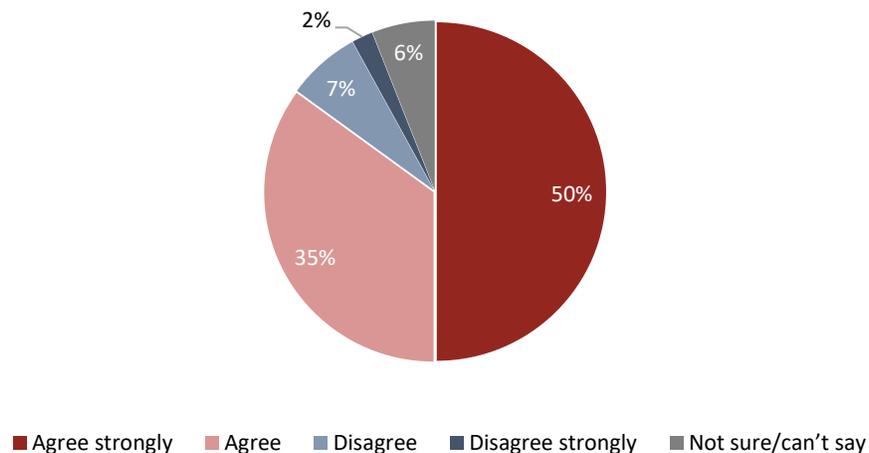
**Are you aware of your child (or any of your children if you have more than one) vaping?
(Have children under 19, n=479)**



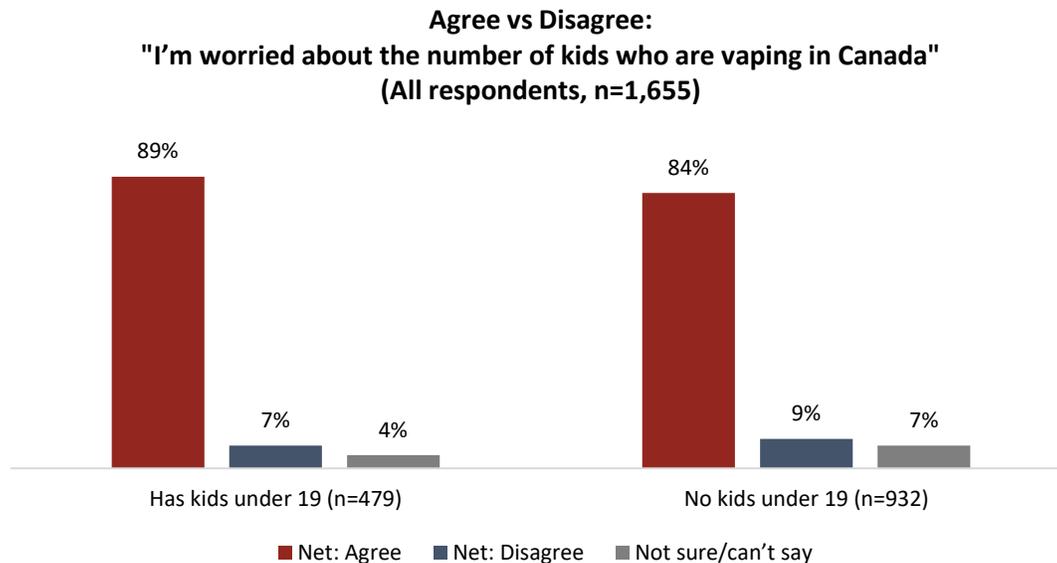
Most worried about number of kids vaping

Asked whether they are worried about the number of kids they have seen vaping in Canada, 85 per cent say they are:

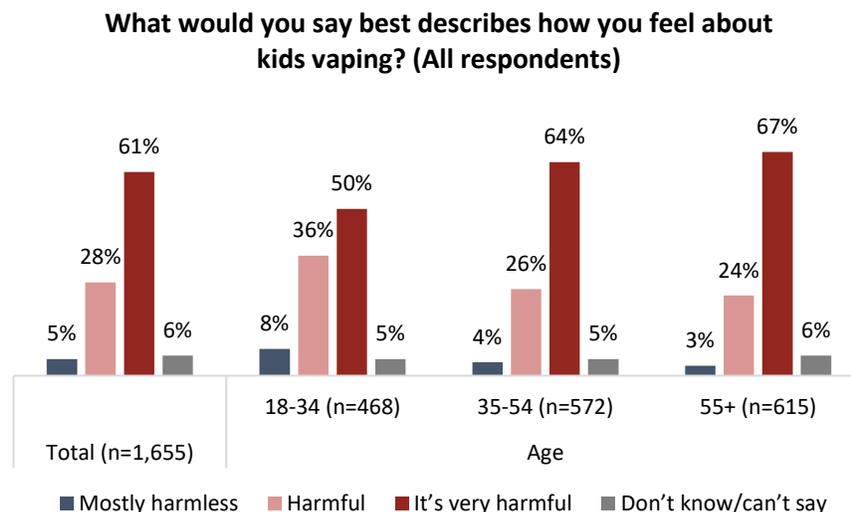
**Agree vs Disagree:
"I'm worried about the number of kids who are vaping in Canada"
(All respondents, n=1,655)**



This sentiment is most pronounced within the group of Canadians who have children under the age of 19, but importantly, is nearly as high with those who have no children who are minors:



Driving these views is the belief vaping is harmful for kids. Asked whether they feel this practice is harmless or not, just five per cent of respondents say it is mostly harmless. Three-in-five meanwhile, say it is very harmful. Canadians across all ages are concerned about the side effects of children engaging in vaping:

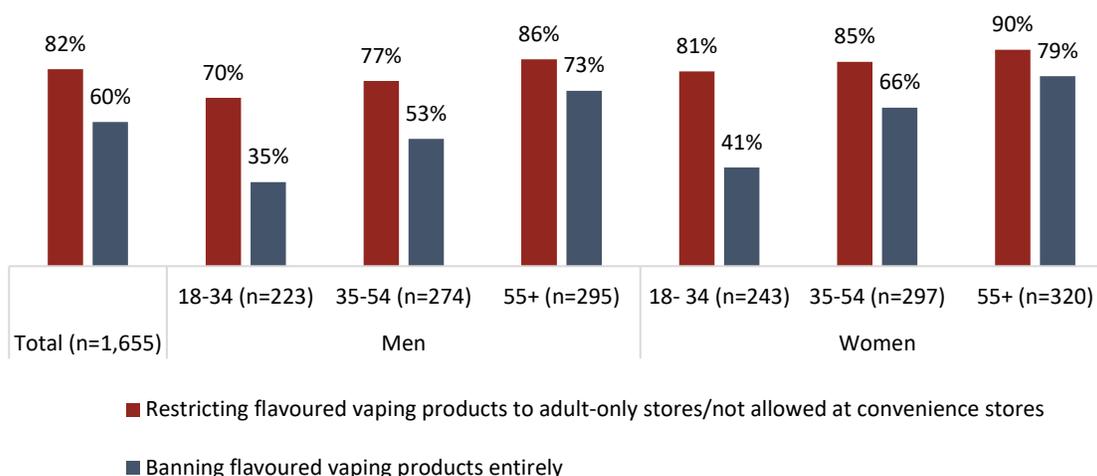


Part Three: Regulations

High support for restrictions targeting flavoured products

The regulatory environment in Canada has been evolving in recent years as vaping has become a bigger part of society. In April, [Nova Scotia](#) became the first province in Canada to ban the sale of flavoured vaping products, something the federal government has chosen [not to pursue at this time](#). Dealing with flavoured products is something most Canadians are keen on, but the approach influences opinions. For example, 60 per cent of Canadians say banning flavoured products entirely would be a good idea, though support among 18 to 34-year olds is low. Restricting flavoured products to adult-only stores, however, is near unanimously supported, in an effort to prevent children from accessing them:

Percentage of Canadians who consider each of the following a "good idea"



Mixed reviews for banning vaping entirely

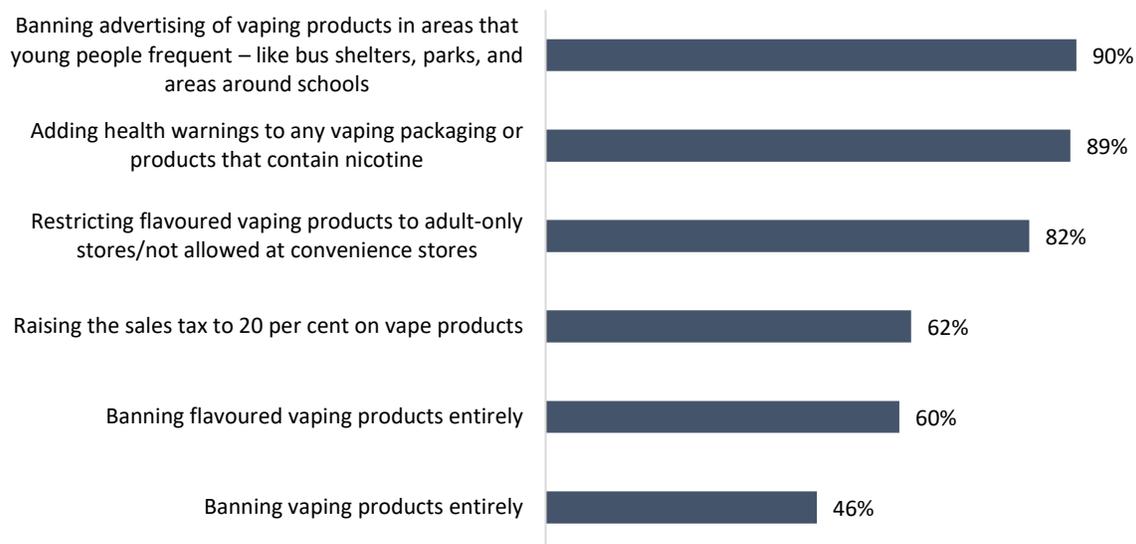
Another regulation [recently adopted](#) by the federal government is banning advertisements of vaping products in areas frequented by young people. This includes areas such as bus shelters or parks, and digital spaces like social media. Nine-in-ten Canadians say that is a good idea. Another popular proposal is adding health warnings to vape product packaging. The federal government created the capacity to do this under the law when it passed the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act in May of 2018.

The only proposal that receives fewer than half of Canadians' support is banning vaping product entirely. Nearly half, 46 per cent, say this is a good idea, but for many this is a step too far:

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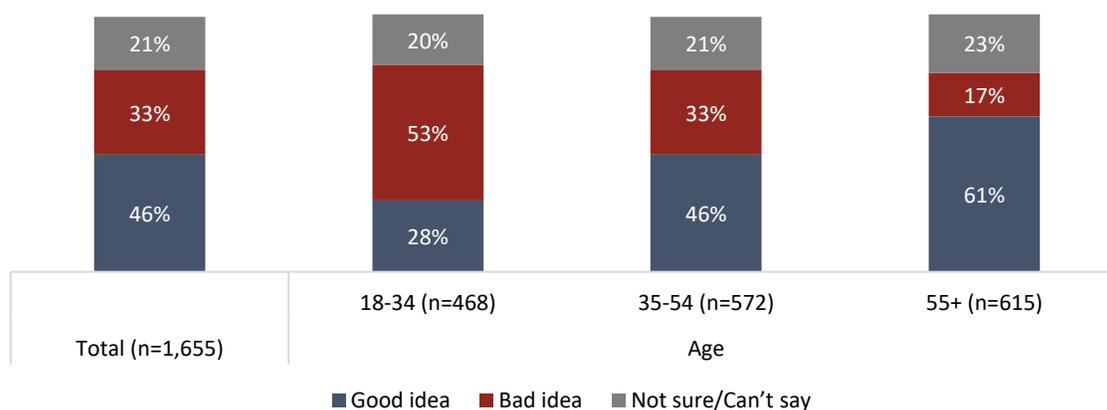
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**Percentage of Canadians who consider each of the following a "good idea"
(All respondents, n=1,655)**



The largest source of generational disagreement in this study is found with the proposal to outright ban vaping. In this case, six-in-ten (61%) Canadians 55 years of age and older say this would be a good path to follow, while a majority of Millennials (53%) say it would be a bad idea:

**Good idea or bad idea - Banning vaping products entirely?
(All respondents)**



For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

For detailed results by parental status and experience with smoking, [click here](#).

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