

Cannabis is legal, but debate continues: Vast majority would set minimum age for cannabis above 18 years

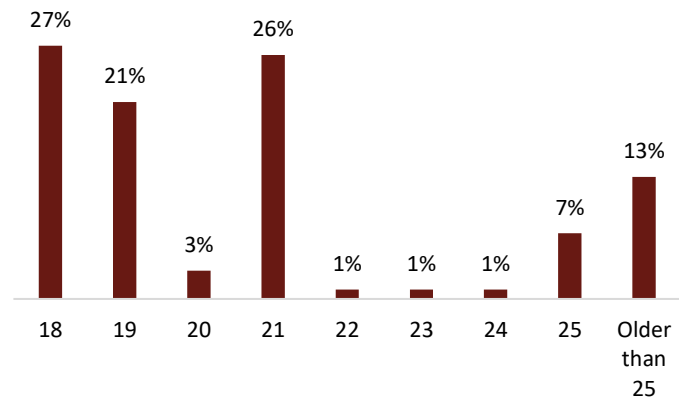
One-in-four Canadians shopped for, purchased, or used cannabis during first two weeks of legalization

November 14, 2018 – Less than a month since Canada became just the second country in the world to legalize the sale and consumption of recreational cannabis a new study from the Angus Reid Institute finds three-quarters of Canadians believe the minimum age to purchase and consume cannabis should be raised.

While just over one-in-four (27%) say that 18, the number set by the federal government as the minimum in any jurisdiction, is the right age, nearly the same number (26%) believe that 21 would be more appropriate. Another 23 per cent would like to see the age raised even higher.

Differences of opinion on this, and issues of satisfaction post-legalization, are driven largely by age. Those respondents between the ages of 18 and 34 are twice as likely to say that they are pleased (44%) rather than disappointed (22%) to see marijuana available for recreational use, while the opinions of those over the age of 55 are inverted, with 23 per cent pleased and 43 per cent disappointed.

What age do you think is the right one to be able to purchase and use cannabis?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from October 24 - 29 among a representative randomized sample of 1500 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 +/- 2.5 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.

More Key Findings:

- Albertans and Atlantic Canadians are most likely to say their province chose the correct minimum age for cannabis use and purchase
- The age of 21 appears to be a dividing point for Canada. Half of respondents (51%) say the minimum age should be 20 or under, while half (49%) say 21 or over.
- Canadians are much more likely to have visited an online cannabis store in October than to have visited a physical store (16% to 6%) but equally as likely to have purchased from each – 4 per cent said they made a purchase online or in person.

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Three-quarters would set legal age higher than 18

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians spent millions of dollars in [the first week](#) of cannabis legalization. But as many enjoy the pot they may now consume as a result of legalization, questions remain over the long-term impacts of marijuana on young people. This, perhaps, why the [government's messaging](#) has been focused on regulation to keep the product out of the hands of children.

One aspect of legalization that Canadians are evidently not settled on is the legal age for purchase and consumption. The federal government has set the minimum age at 18, but provinces are at liberty to raise that age if they please.

Asked what they believe the age *should* be, just over one-quarter (27%) say that the federal minimum is the right one – 18 years of age. Canadians appear divided between three key options, 18, 19, and 21. More than one-in-five choose each. In the table below, the breakdown for each province – and the minimum age for that province – is shown:

	Total	BC (19)	AB (18)	SK (19)	MB (19)	ON (19)	QC (18)	ATL (19)
18	27%	20%	46%	28%	39%	19%	36%	15%
19	21%	36%	3%	25%	17%	30%	2%	42%
20	3%	5%	1%	0%	9%	3%	4%	1%
21	26%	24%	26%	26%	18%	22%	34%	24%
22	1%	0%	0%	2%	3%	2%	0%	1%
23	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
24	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%
25	7%	3%	10%	8%	3%	7%	7%	10%
Older than 25	13%	12%	13%	10%	11%	14%	15%	8%

Regional differences on 18 versus 19

No province has yet set the legal age in their jurisdiction higher than 19. Alberta and Quebec adopted the federal standard at 18, while all other provinces and territories chose to proceed by raising their standard one year above the federal minimum.

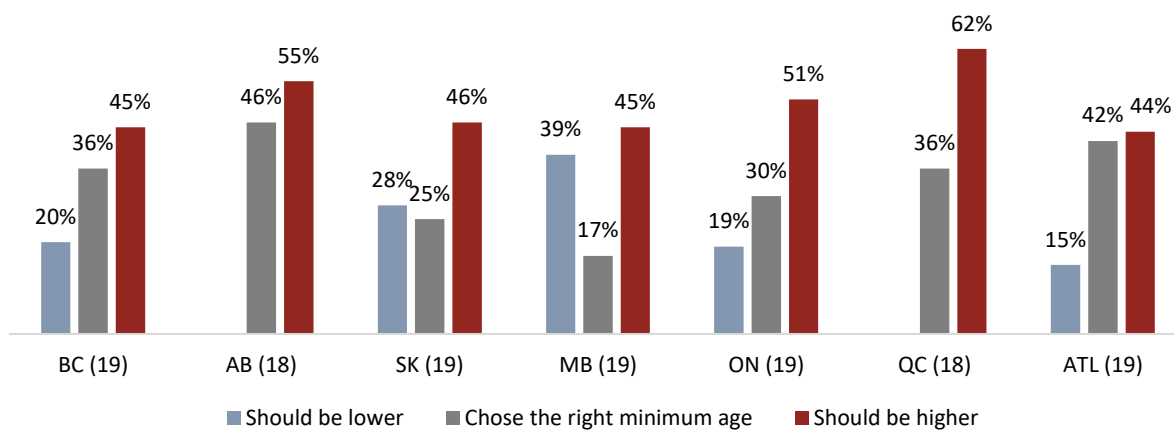
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By highlighting the percentage of residents who chose the actual age that their province has set for legal sale, one can see how in-step each provincial government is with their populations. For example, only one-in-five Manitoba residents say their province chose the right age by going with 19 as the minimum. Four-in-ten (39%) would like to see the age lowered, and slightly more (45%) would like to see it raised.

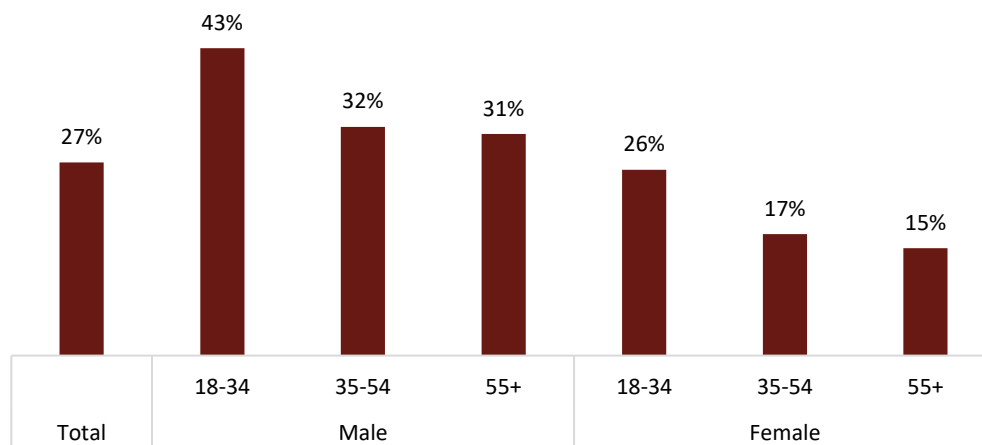
Likewise just one-in-four (25%) Saskatchewan residents say 19 was the right choice. On the other side of the spectrum, almost half of Alberta residents agree that 18 was the proper minimum, the highest level of agreement in the country:

Opinion on their own province's choice for minimum age of sale/consumption for cannabis. Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding



Young men, in particular, are most supportive of setting the age as low as is federally permissible. Just over four-in-ten (43%) say 18 is the right age, more than 10-points higher than any other age and gender combination:

Percentage saying 18 is the proper minimum age for cannabis purchase and consumption



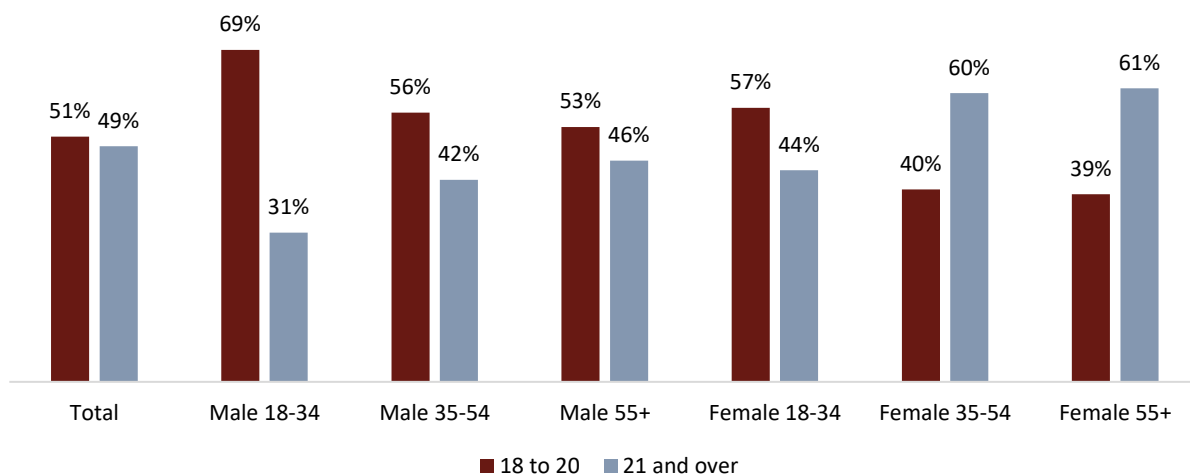
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Half say 20 and under, half say 21 and over

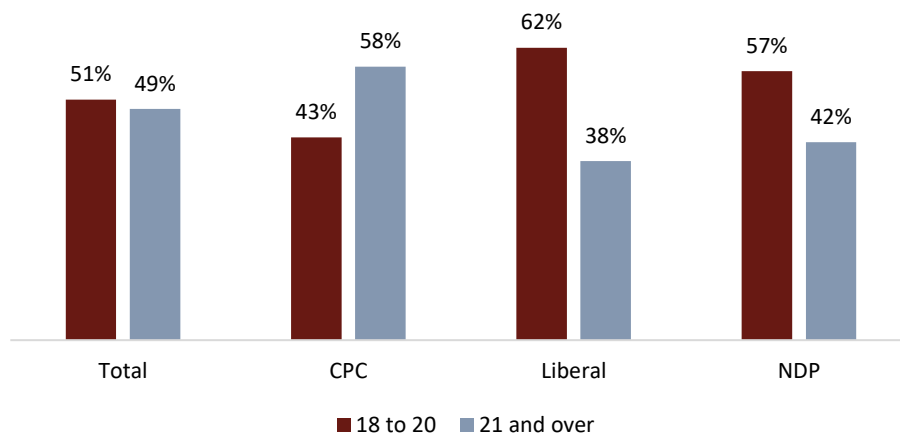
There is a notable divide in public opinion that hinges on a hypothetical minimum age of 21. Indeed, half of Canadians say 20 and under is appropriate, while half say 21 and would be better. Men and women lean in opposite directions on this, driven largely by their age. A majority of young men (69%) and young women (57%) choose an age under 21, while their older peers are much less likely to do so:

What age do you think is the right one to be able to purchase and use cannabis?



Age of access is also an issue associated with political affiliation. Past Conservative voters are significantly more likely to lean toward raising the age to 21 or over. In fact, one-quarter of this group would prefer the age be 25 or older ([see comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)).

What age do you think is the right one to be able to purchase and use cannabis?

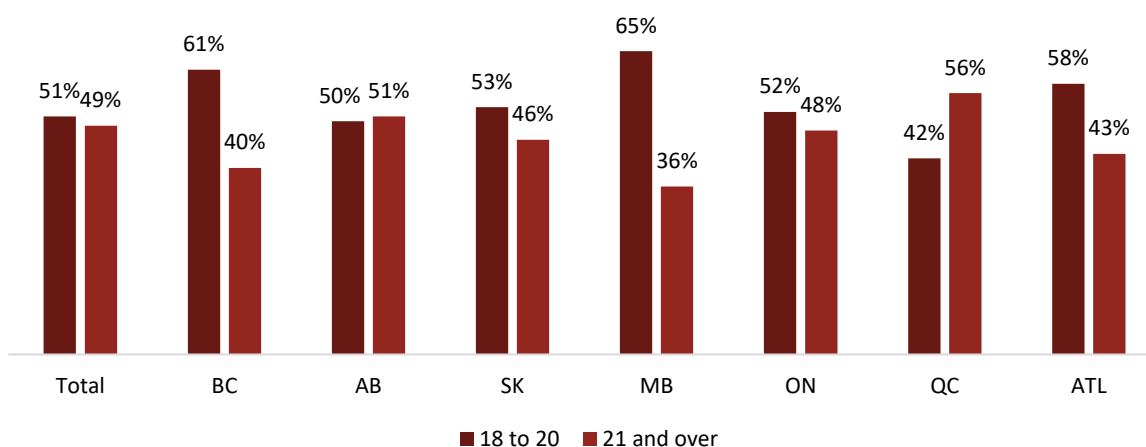


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Regionally, close to six-in-ten residents in Manitoba (65%), B.C. (61%) and Atlantic Canada (58%) choose an age under 21, the highest such proportions in the country. Quebec residents are most likely to say a legal minimum of 21+ should be established for marijuana:

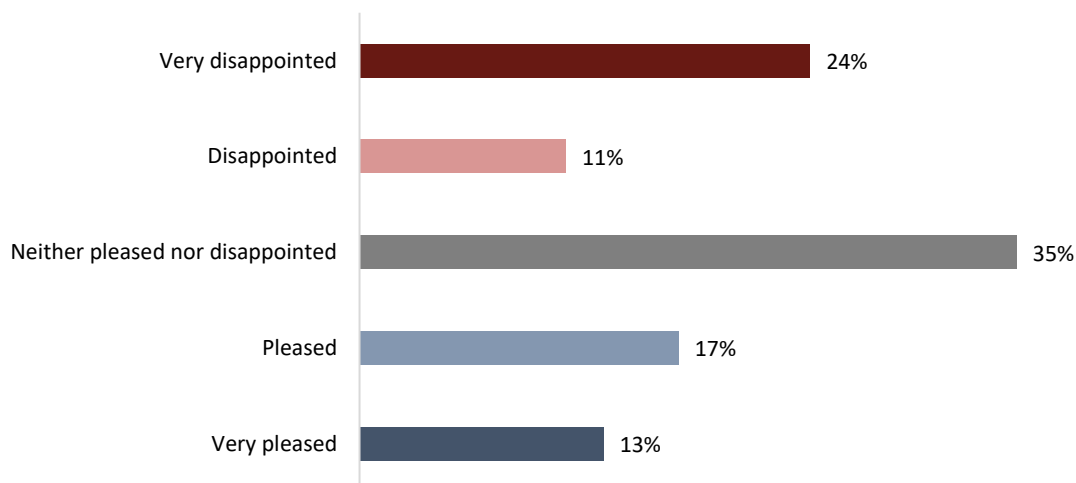
What age do you think is the right one to be able to purchase and use cannabis? Totals may not add to 100 due to rounding



Pleased or disappointed?

There is neither an overwhelming sense of joy nor discontent among Canadians now that marijuana has been legalized. When asked, during the second week following legalization (October 24 – 29), the largest group appears to collectively shrug at Canada’s new reality:

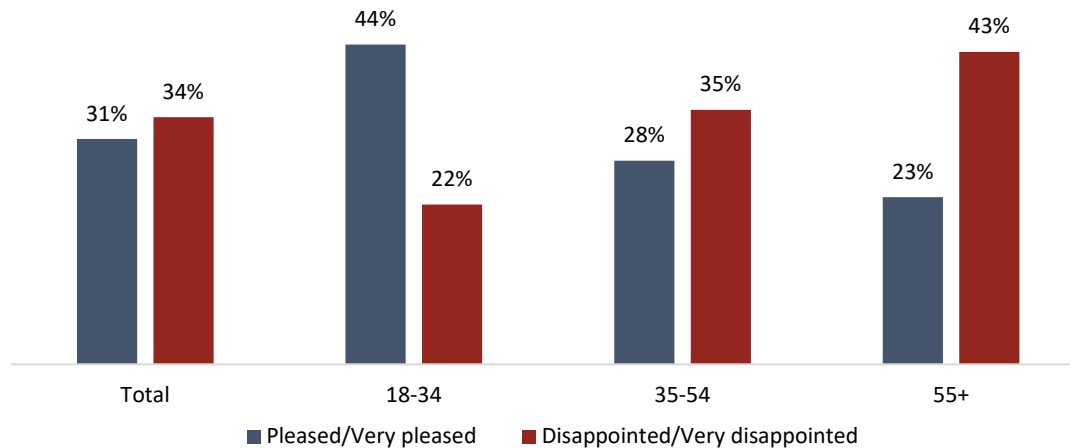
Now that cannabis is legal for recreational use, would you say you are:



This is perhaps unsurprising. In 2016, with legalization a forthcoming reality, more than half of Canadians said they would rate it as [a low priority](#) when considering ongoing issues in Canada. That said,

excitement is much more concentrated in the younger generation. Canadians aged 18 to 34 are twice as likely to say they are pleased than disappointed, while older generations lean toward disappointment:

Now that cannabis is legal for recreational use, would you say you are:



One-in-eight have used pot since legalization; one-quarter looked into it

For a snapshot of this moment in time, the Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians if they had engaged in any cannabis related activities in the first week of legalization. Nationwide, the week was a busy one, with thousands of purchases and millions of dollars in sales, which led to shortages across the country.

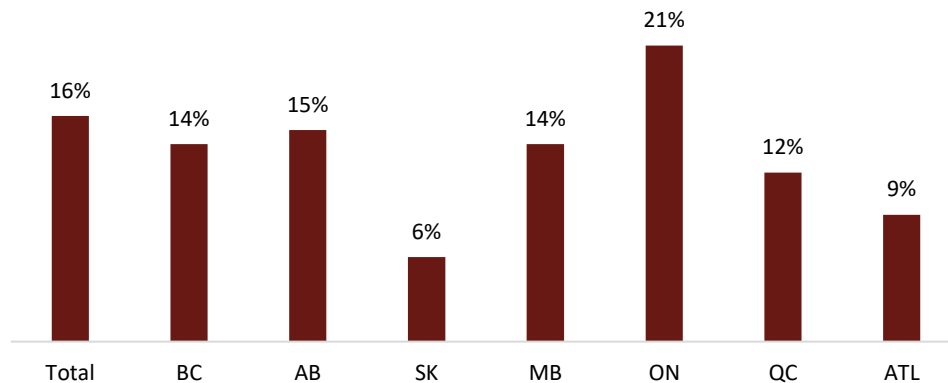
Some may have been hampered however in the pursuit of pot. Many provinces still lack the infrastructure to accommodate consumers and are relying on online sales, and a relatively small number of physical stores, as the industry gets up to speed.

Roughly one-in-six Canadians (16%) say they visited a website to browse cannabis options in the first week. This group is led by Ontario, where one-in-five looked online, owing partly to the fact that there are no legal brick and mortar stores currently available.

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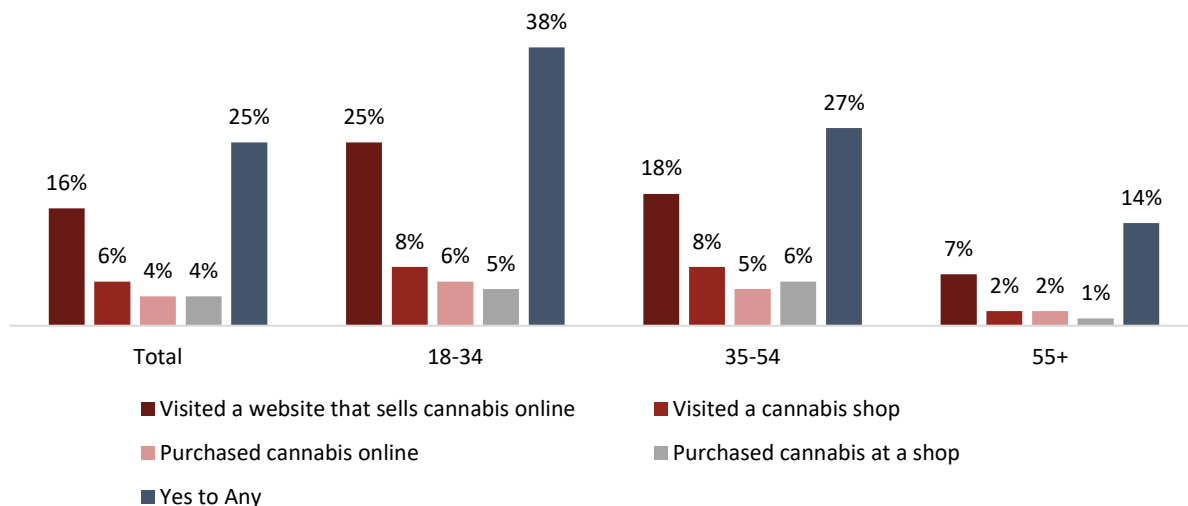
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**Visited a website that sells cannabis online
Between October 17 - 29**



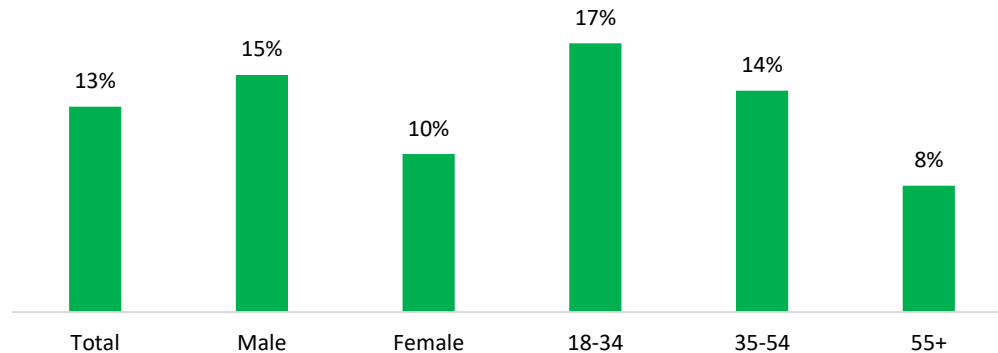
While 16 per cent say they have visited an online shop, far fewer (6%) have visited a physical cannabis shop. Notably, four per cent say that they have purchased cannabis from either venue. Younger Canadians are much more likely to have visited an online shop, but 35 to 54 year old's are just as likely to have partaken in the other three activities:

Since October 17, have you done any of the following?



Men are more likely to have used cannabis in the first seven to 10 days of legalization, and close to one-in-five Millennials (17%) also say they partook:

Used cannabis between October 17 - 29



*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.*

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