

Poll finds Americans rate cigarettes as most unsafe, addictive substance among options surveyed

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In a new national poll, Americans widely agreed that cigarettes are unsafe (84%) and addictive (87%), and yet a fifth (21%) reported

smoking every day. The vast majority of people believe alcohol, opioids, and vapes are addictive, and about two-thirds said alcohol and opioids are unsafe, while more than three-fourths said vaping is unsafe.

People were less likely to believe cannabis was addictive compared to the other substances and behaviors polled. While about three in four people consider technology addictive, most think it's safe (only 23% said it was unsafe).

This is according to an annual survey by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) and Morning Consult, which complements the association's Healthy Minds Monthly poll. This poll was conducted April 20-22, 2023, among a sample of 2,201 adults. Results have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.

When asked about [addiction](#), those polled reported on how often they used a particular substance or engaged in a certain behavior, and whether they thought it was safe and/or addictive. The results were:

Substance	% Using Daily	% Rating Very or Somewhat Unsafe	% Rating Very or Somewhat Addictive
Technology	67%	23%	75%
Cigarettes	21%	84%	87%
Cannabis/Marijuana	13%	38%	64%
Vapes	8%	76%	81%
Alcohol	7%	64%	84%
Prescribed Opioids	4%	66%	83%
Nonprescription Opioids	2%	75%	74%

"It is clear that we have gotten the message through that cigarettes are dangerous and addictive," said APA President Petros Levounis, M.D., M.A. "We can help prevent more Americans from other potentially addictive behaviors, like drinking alcohol and technology use. For instance, vaping is just as, if not more addictive than cigarette smoking. We can also make sure that people know about our current safe and effective treatments for both [substance use disorders](#) and the behavioral addictions. Addiction treatment works."

The APA is launching a public awareness initiative on addiction and substance use disorders that will last throughout the year, beginning this month with vaping, focusing on [opioids](#) later in the summer, alcohol in the winter, and technology next spring.

When they were asked about their perceptions, U.S. adults were divided on whether addictions are a result of personal weakness (47% say yes, and 53% say no), but a strong majority (93%) agreed that substance use disorders can be treated. 76% agree that addictions are medical disorders, and 76% agree that they are preventable.

A majority of adults (71%) say if they or someone they knew was struggling with addiction, they would feel knowledgeable about ways to help. That said, as it pertains to [opioid addiction](#) and safety, there's a gap between adults who have heard of naloxone or Narcan, a life-saving medicine now available over the counter, and those who know where to find it.

Three-in-five (58%) adults said they have seen, read, or heard about Narcan and/or naloxone before, but only one-third (35%) of adults said in the case of an opioid overdose, they would know where to find it.

"In 2022, opioids killed more than 100,000 people," said APA CEO and Medical Director Saul Levin, M.D., M.P.A. "While it is encouraging that

most Americans see substance use disorder as a treatable medical condition, we can do more to ensure that more of us in our communities are aware of and can access naloxone, which saves lives."

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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