

Teasing out where the tokers live

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(HealthDay)—Whether you smoke pot might depend on what part of the United States you live in, a new survey suggests.

Marijuana use by Americans is highest in the West and lowest in the South, according to a federal government report that also examined people's beliefs about the risk of harms associated with the drug.

Among people 12 and older, rates of [marijuana](#) use in the past month were close to 10 percent in the West and slightly over 6 percent in the South, according to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

People in the West were least likely (over 25 percent) to believe that monthly marijuana use poses significant risk, while people in the South were the most likely (over 32 percent) to believe it.

Even among states, there were significant differences in marijuana use and whether people believed regular pot use was risky.

For example, current marijuana use ranged from a low of almost 4 percent in one region in the southernmost part of Texas to a high of 16 percent in San Francisco.

Rates of concern about the risks of regular marijuana use ranged from a high of just over 49 percent in Miami-Dade County and Monroe County in Florida to a low of about 14 percent in Ward 3 of the District of Columbia.

Recreational use of marijuana is legal in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Washington state and the District of Columbia, while [medical marijuana](#) is legal in 20 other states.

"This report provides a very detailed understanding of marijuana use and perception patterns in communities across the nation," said Fran Harding, director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention.

"This information can help [public health officials](#) and others better gauge the marijuana-related prevention and treatment needs in their communities and fine-tune their programs and services to best address them," Harding said in an agency news release.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse has more about [marijuana](#).

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