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Key findings from the 2023 Online California Adult Tobacco Survey

The Online California Adult Tobacco Survey (Online CATS) is an online survey funded by the California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Prevention Program. The purpose of the survey is to gather statewide data on tobacco use behavior and tobacco-related beliefs; evaluate tobacco-related policies and campaigns; and create a comprehensive picture of tobacco use among California residents. This data brief focuses on results from the 2023 survey administration. In this data brief, tobacco use refers to commercial tobacco products and not to products used for medicinal and sacred purposes by American Indian communities.

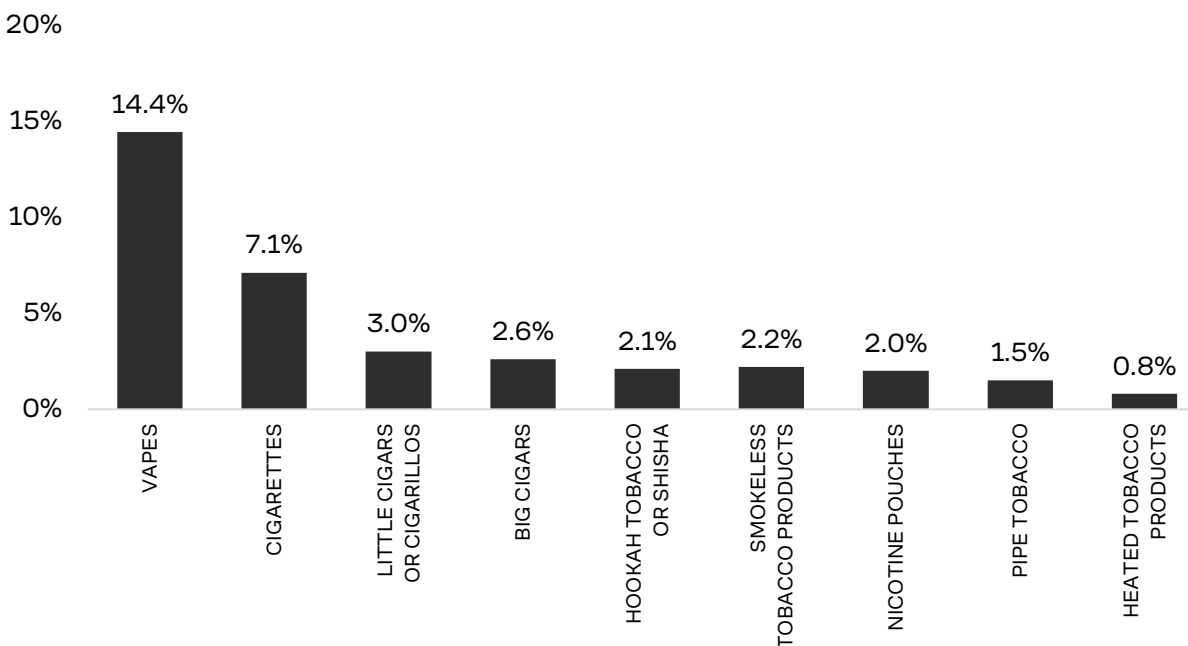
Gallup Inc. was contracted by the California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Prevention Program to administer the Online CATS since 2019. California adults aged 18 to 64 years were recruited by Gallup from the probability-based Gallup Panel and from the non-probability-based Toluna Panel. A total of 7,085 California adults completed the survey in 2023. The survey was administered in two waves: from March 16, 2023, to May 21, 2023 (n=3,401) and from August 21, 2023, to September 18, 2023 (n=3,684). All materials were made available in English and Spanish. Estimates in this data brief have been weighted to account for the sampling design and to be representative of California's adult (age 18 to 64 years) population.

Key findings

Tobacco use

Use of nine tobacco products was measured in Online CATS 2023: vapes (i.e., e-cigarettes), cigarettes, little cigars or cigarillos, big cigars, hookah tobacco or shisha, smokeless tobacco products (e.g., chewing tobacco, dip, snuff, snus), nicotine pouches, pipe tobacco, and heated tobacco products. In 2023, 22.1% of Californians reported using any tobacco product in the past 30 days. Vapes (14.4%) and cigarettes (7.1%) were the most used tobacco product among those surveyed (Figure 1). Among Californians who used tobacco products, 35.0% reported using two or more types of tobacco products.

Figure 1. Past 30-day tobacco use rates by product, California, 2023



California’s statewide flavored tobacco sales restriction law went into effect on December 21, 2022.^{1,2} For the purposes of this data brief, flavored tobacco products do not include unflavored or tobacco-flavored products; however, it does include products with a cooling or numbing sensation. Flavored tobacco product use was highest among individuals who use hookah tobacco or shisha (92.7%), followed by those who use vapes (90.5%), heated tobacco products (81.6%), nicotine pouches (75.4%), smokeless tobacco products (66.0%), pipe tobacco (61.9%), cigarettes (60.8%), little cigars or cigarillos (60.2%), and cigars (40.6%). Comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the flavors restriction law on tobacco use is ongoing.

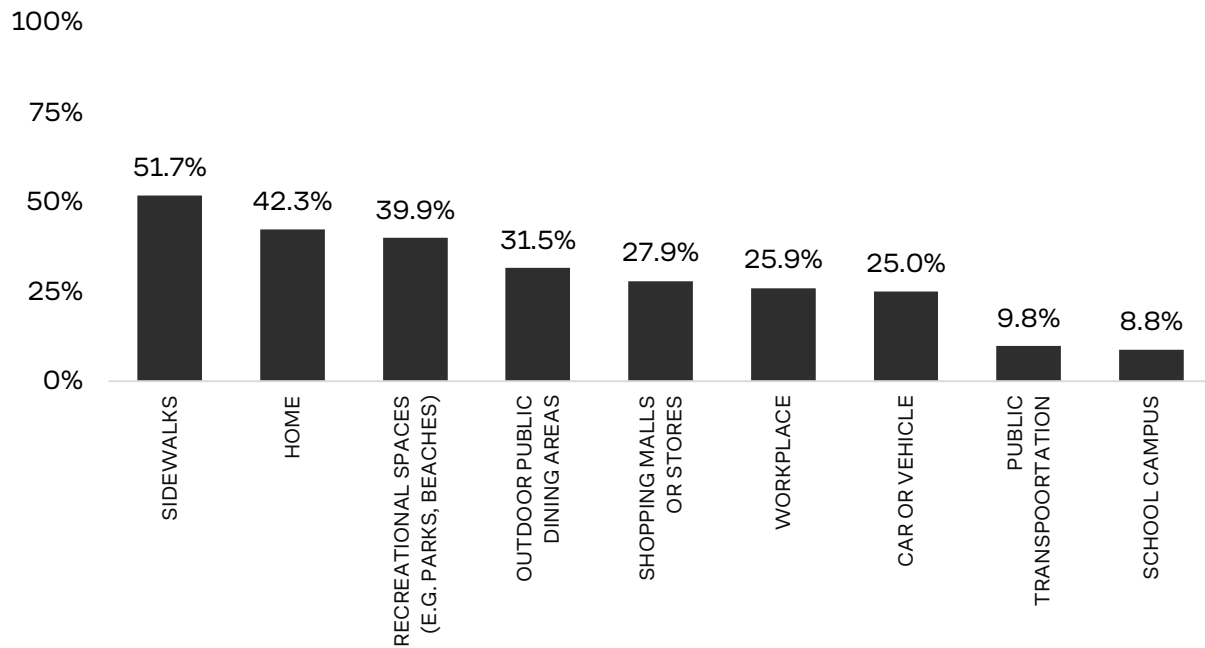
Tobacco cessation

Among Californians who smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days, 43.3% reported that they plan to quit smoking in the next six months and 39.6% made a quit attempt in the past year. Among Californians who used vapes in the past 30 days, 53.7% reported that they plan to quit vaping in the next six months and 47.7% made a quit attempt in the past year.

Secondhand exposure

Approximately half (53.3%) of Californians reported being exposed to either secondhand tobacco smoke or secondhand vape in the past two weeks in 2023. Higher rates of secondhand exposure were observed in Californians who used tobacco products in the past 30 days (77.7%) compared to those who did not (46.4%). Among Californians who reported past two week secondhand tobacco smoke or secondhand vape exposure, sidewalks (51.7%) were the most reported location of exposure (Figure 2), followed by exposure at home (42.3%) and at recreational spaces (39.9%).

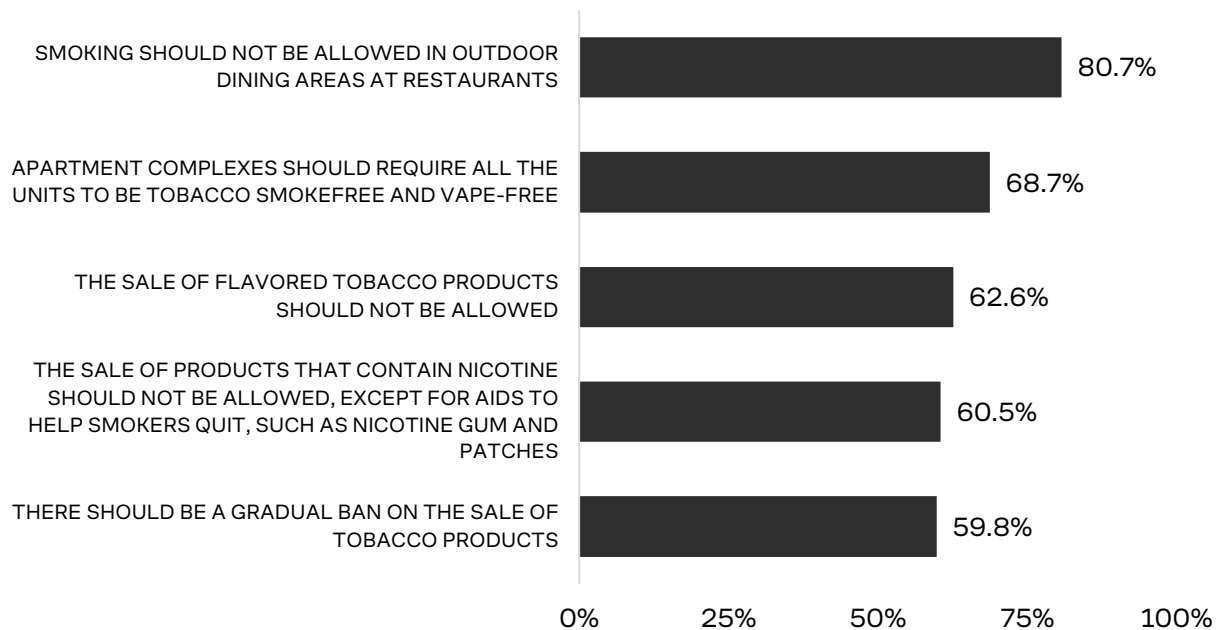
Figure 2. Location of secondhand tobacco smoke or vape exposure among individuals that reported secondhand exposure in the past two weeks, California, 2023



Tobacco-related attitudes

Californians were asked their opinions about policy strategies that would advance California’s goal of ending the commercial tobacco epidemic. Overall, more than half of Californians agreed with these tobacco-related policy strategies (Figure 3). The highest agreement was for smokefree outdoor dining areas (80.7%), followed by smokefree multi-unit housing (68.7%), and flavored tobacco product sales restriction (62.6%).

Figure 3. Agreement with tobacco-related policy strategies, California, 2023



References

1. Cal Health & Safety Code §104559.5.
2. *Special Notice: New Law Prohibits Retail Sales of Menthol Cigarettes and Most Flavored Tobacco Products*. California Department of Tax and Fee Administration; December 2022. CDTFA publication L-885. Accessed December 14, 2023.
<https://www.cdtfa.ca.gov/formspubs/L885.pdf>

Suggested citation

California Department of Public Health, California Tobacco Prevention Program. *Key Findings from the 2023 Online California Adult Tobacco Survey*. California Department of Public Health; January 2024.

California Tobacco Prevention Program's adult surveillance system

The California Tobacco Prevention Program's adult surveillance system comprises of several projects, including the California Health Interview Survey and Online CATS. Online CATS is used by the program for emerging tobacco-related topics that requires rapid response and for gathering beliefs, attitudes, and opinions among California adults. Due to the smaller sample size compared to the California Health Interview Survey, Online CATS is not intended to provide demographic subanalysis. Additionally, the results in this data brief may lack agreement with other surveys due to differing methodology; however, this does not reduce the value of one survey over another.

Additional factsheets, infographics, and reports from surveys that are part of the program's adult surveillance system can be found at [CDPH.ca.gov/tobacco](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/tobacco).