

Changes in smoking, vaping and oral nicotine product use among Australian youth: Findings from the 2024–2025 ITC Australian Survey

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Introduction: Preventing uptake of tobacco and nicotine products among young people remains a central objective of tobacco control policy. The aim of this study is to examine changes in cigarette, vaping and oral nicotine pouch use among Australian youth aged 16–19 years between 2024 and 2025.

Methods: Repeated cross-sectional data were analysed from the Australia arm of the International Tobacco Control (ITC) Youth Tobacco and Vaping Survey, conducted in 2024 and 2025. Australian youth aged 16–19 years (N=4,646) completed online surveys including measures on vaping, smoking and use of other nicotine products. Survey-weighted prevalence estimates were calculated for lifetime use and past-30-day use of combustible cigarettes, vapes and oral nicotine pouches (ONP). Differences between 2024 and 2025 were tested overall and, where relevant, stratified by vaping status.

Results: Lifetime cigarette smoking increased from 34.1% [95% CI:32.1–36.1] in 2024 to 44.4% [41.6–47.3] in 2025 ($p<0.001$), while past-30-day smoking declined from 5.7% [5.2–6.3] to 4.8% [4.4–5.3] ($p=0.011$). Stratified analyses showed the increase in lifetime smoking was predominantly observed among adolescents who had never vaped. In contrast, lifetime vaping remained stable from 34.8% [32.8–36.9] to 36.9% [34.2–39.7] ($p=0.236$) as did past-30-day vaping from 15.1% [13.7–16.6] to 15.6% [13.8–17.6] ($p=0.664$). Lifetime ONP use did not change significantly from 5.7% [4.8–6.7] to 5.0% [4.0–6.3] ($p=0.411$), but past-30-day ONP use declined from 2.4% [1.9–3.1] to 1.5% [1.0–2.2] ($p=0.041$).

Conclusions: Lifetime smoking increased among Australian adolescents between 2024 and 2025, despite no increase in past 30-day smoking, suggesting the increase may reflect experimentation rather than sustained smoking behaviour. Continued surveillance is needed to determine whether there is any progression to sustained use, particularly in the context of Australia's expanding illicit tobacco market, lack of anti-smoking campaigns and the wider cultural re-normalisation of smoking.

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