



# 3 in 4 Kentucky adults favor tax on e-cigarettes at rate similar to cigarettes

The 2019 **Kentucky Health Issues Poll** asked Kentucky adults their opinions about taxing e-cigarettes and about their experience using e-cigarettes. KHIP is sponsored by Interact for Health and the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.

## Majority of Kentucky adults favors excise tax on e-cigarettes

Currently, e-cigarettes are the only nicotine-containing product sold in Kentucky that are not subject to an excise tax.<sup>1</sup> Given this, along with the increasing popularity of these products among youth and young adults, a bill was filed in advance of the Kentucky General Assembly's 2020 session to impose an excise tax of 27.5% on the sale of e-cigarettes.<sup>2</sup> KHIP asked Kentucky adults, "Do you favor or oppose the Commonwealth of Kentucky placing an excise tax on the sale of e-cigarettes so that e-cigarettes are taxed at a rate similar to a pack of cigarettes?" Three in 4 Kentucky adults (75%) reported they favor such a tax. Support has

<sup>1</sup> An excise tax is paid when a specific good or product is purchased. Generally, excise taxes are included in the price of the product.

<sup>2</sup> Kentucky General Assembly. (2019). *Bill Request 32*. Retrieved from <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/20rs/prefiled/BR32.html>

### Percentage of Kentucky adults who favor Kentucky placing an excise tax on the sale of e-cigarettes



SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)



increased since KHIP last asked this question in 2014 when only half of Kentucky adults (53%) favored such a tax. Support was high across all political parties. More than 7 in 10 Democrats, Republicans and Independents favor an e-cigarette tax.

## 1 in 4 Kentucky adults have tried an e-cigarette

Electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes are also known as vapes, vape pens or e-hookahs. Many are known by their brand names.<sup>3</sup> In 2019, about 1 in 4 Kentucky adults (26%) reported they had ever tried an e-cigarette.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *About Electronic Cigarettes (E-Cigarettes)*. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/about-e-cigarettes.html](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/about-e-cigarettes.html)

This is unchanged since KHIP first asked this question in 2016.

E-cigarettes are more popular among youth and young adults than among older adults. KHIP found that adults between the ages of 18 and 45 are more likely than older adults to have ever tried an e-cigarette. (See graph on next page.) Similarly, the Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that the percentage of high school students who had ever tried an e-cigarette rose from 44% in 2015 to 53% in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The Youth Risk Behavior Survey occurs in odd-numbered years only. Kentucky Department of Education. (2019). *2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Results - Kentucky High School Survey - Trend Analysis Report*. Retrieved from <https://education.ky.gov/districts/Documents/2019KYH%20Trend%20Report.pdf>

KHIP asked adults who had tried an e-cigarette, “Do you now use e-cigarettes or other electronic ‘vaping’ products every day, some days or not all?” About 1 in 10 Kentucky adults (9%) reported currently using e-cigarettes every day or some days. This is unchanged from 2017 (7%).

## Half think e-cigarettes just as harmful as regular cigarettes

E-cigarettes are not safe for children, youth or pregnant women.<sup>5</sup> According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, those who have never smoked should not begin using e-cigarettes.<sup>6</sup>

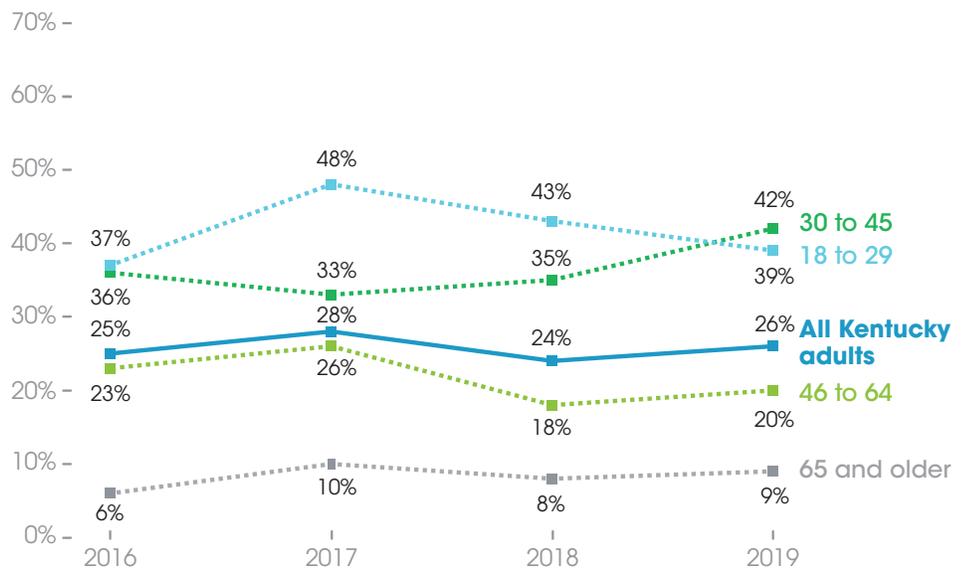
KHIP asked Kentucky adults whether they believed e-cigarettes were less harmful, more harmful or just as harmful as traditional cigarettes for youth ages 11 to 17 and for adults.<sup>7</sup> About half of Kentucky adults said that e-cigarettes are **just as harmful** as traditional cigarettes for both youth (45%) and adults (54%). Four in 10 said e-cigarettes are **more harmful** than regular cigarettes for youth (40%). Just 2 in 10 said this for adults (21%). About 1 in 10 reported that e-cigarettes were **less harmful** than traditional cigarettes for youth (9%), while about 2 in 10 said this for adults (19%).

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). *Electronic Cigarettes: What's the Bottom Line?* Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/Electronic-Cigarettes-Infographic-p.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/pdfs/Electronic-Cigarettes-Infographic-p.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Electronic Cigarettes*. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/index.htm)

<sup>7</sup> KHIP asked “In your opinion, are e-cigarettes or vaping products less harmful, more harmful or just as harmful as regular cigarettes for young people between the ages of 11 and 17?” and “In your opinion are e-cigarettes or vaping products less harmful, more harmful or just as harmful as regular cigarettes for adults?”

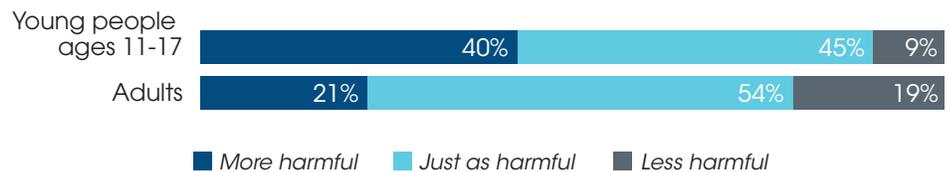
## Percentage of Kentucky adults who have ever used an e-cigarette, by age



SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)



## In your opinion, are e-cigarettes or vaping products less harmful, more harmful or just as harmful as regular cigarettes for ... (Percentages do not add to 100% because the response “don’t know” is not included.)



SOURCE: 2019 Kentucky Health Issues Poll (released January 2020)

