



## Summary

This report is based on data from CAN's national school survey, performed annually among ninth graders and students in year 2 in upper secondary school. The purpose is to report on young people's experiences of alcohol, narcotics, tobacco and gambling, among other things. The report reveals differences in usage patterns between boys and girls, and between younger and older students. Another purpose of the report is to provide a snapshot of what young people's experiences of various substances looked like at the time of the latest survey in 2024. The following are chapter-specific summaries.

### *Alcohol*

Overall, several measures regarding alcohol use indicate that alcohol consumption has decreased among Swedish school students over a longer time period. However, the downward trend has ceased and plateaued in recent years, in both grades. In this year's survey, 35% of ninth graders and 69% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school responded that they had drunk alcohol in the preceding 12 months. Annual consumption in litres of pure alcohol (100%) was 0.8 litres in ninth grade and 2.2 litres in year 2 of upper secondary school.

The most common problems that students reported having experienced in connection with alcohol consumption were damage to objects or clothing, arguing and being photographed or filmed in an embarrassing or demeaning situation. There are differences in which problems are reported by girls and boys, respectively. For instance, a larger proportion of girls than boys reported having problems in relationships with parents and friends. Among boys, it was instead more common to have driven a motor vehicle or gotten into a fight in connection with alcohol consumption.

### *Tobacco and nicotine*

Cigarette smoking has decreased dramatically among Swedish school students. The downward trend was particularly strong during the 2010s. In this year's survey, 8% of ninth graders and 21% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school indicated that they smoke. In the latter group, a small increase has occurred since 2021.

Use of snus has increased in both grades in recent years. The increase has been particularly large among girls and use is now at historically high levels. However, it is still more common for boys to use snus. In 2024, 16% of ninth graders and 29% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school used of snus. Nicotine pouches is the most common type of snus used by young people.



Vaping has become more common among young people. In 2022, usage increased dramatically. In this year's survey, usage decreased slightly, but the levels are still much higher than during the 2010s. In 2024, 16% of ninth graders and 20% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school reported having vaped in the preceding month. Vaping is now more common among girls.

In 2024, 23% of ninth graders and 39% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school reported having used any tobacco or nicotine product in the preceding month. In the last ten years, the overall share of nicotine users has increased among girls, whereas levels among boys are relatively unchanged.

### *Narcotics*

Experience of narcotics has been at a fairly steady level over the last 20 years among ninth graders, albeit with some year-to-year variation. In 2024, 6% of ninth graders responded that they had ever used narcotics. This was more than twice as common among those in upper secondary school, where 15% reported having ever used narcotics. Over time, there has been an increase in how often students with experience of narcotics have used narcotics. The increase is clearest among ninth graders. This increase has plateaued in recent years, but ninth graders with experience of narcotics have, on average, used narcotics twice as many times compared with the same group 30 years ago.

In both grades, cannabis was the most common substance among those who had used narcotics. The survey also includes a separate set of questions on whether or not students have used prescription medication without a doctor's prescription. The purpose of this is to capture non-prescribed use of medication classified as narcotics. If the students who reported having used such prescription medication without a doctor's prescription are also defined as having experience of narcotics, the proportion in this year's survey that had ever used narcotics would be 9% instead of 6% among ninth graders. Among secondary school students, it would be 18% instead of 15%.

### *Prescription medication*

Nonmedical use of sleep aids or sedatives has, in the grand scheme of things, been relatively stable over the last 30 years. Use of such medication was around 3% in the early 90s. It then increased somewhat, but decreased again in the early 00s. In the last 20 years, use has varied from year to year, but with a slight upward trend in both grades. In grade 9, the increase stopped at the end of 2022, and in upper secondary school, it stopped in 2023.

The survey's questions cover use of three different types of medication:

- Sleep aids or sedatives classified as narcotics
- Analgesics classified as narcotics
- Central stimulants classified as narcotics



If all three types of medications are combined, the total proportion that had used medication classified as narcotics without a doctor's prescription within the preceding 12 months was 5% in both grades.

### *Sniffing, inhalation and nitrous oxide*

The proportion of students who have sniffed or inhaled substances has decreased over time and is now at a relatively low level. In 2024, 2% of ninth graders and 1% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school reported having done this in the preceding 12 months. In the last ten years, there have been no large gender differences among students as regards experiences of sniffing/inhalation.

Since 2022, questions about use of nitrous oxide ("laughing gas") have been included in the survey. In 2024, 2% of ninth graders reported having used nitrous oxide in the preceding 12 months. In upper secondary school, the corresponding figure was 5%. Compared with 2022, these are significant decreases in both grades, from 4% in ninth grade and 14% in upper secondary school. Nitrous oxide use was roughly equally common among boys and girls. A separate analysis from 2022 showed that usage was more common in metropolitan areas, and correlated with use of alcohol, narcotics and tobacco.

### *Doping*

The rate of ever having used anabolic androgenic steroids (AAS) has been at around 1% for the last 20 years in both grades. In this year's survey, 0.8% of students in ninth grade and 0.5% of students in year 2 of upper secondary school reported lifetime prevalence of AAS. The behaviour is more common among boys and seems to be somewhat related to students with a lower socioeconomic position. No differences in use depending on type of municipality can be identified. It is clear that students who had used AAS in the preceding 12 months had a relatively large use of other substances during the same period, in particular narcotics.

### *Gambling*

Overall, an increase can be seen in the proportion of upper secondary school students who had gambled in the preceding 12 months – in particular among boys, where the proportion has increased year-on-year since 2019. At that time, it was 27%. This year, it was 43%. Among girls in upper secondary school, it has also increased, from 4% in 2019 to 8% in 2024. Among boys in ninth grade, the proportion gambling in the last 12 months has increased from 20% in 2019 to 27% in 2024. The corresponding proportion among girls has been 9% over the previous four years.



### *Age at first use*

Early age at first use is defined as before the age of 14 years. The proportion of ninth graders with an early first use of either alcohol, cigarettes or cannabis has decreased since 1999. In 1999, 63% of ninth graders had an early first use of any of these substances. In 2010, early first use of snus also began to be studied. At that time, 39% had started using snus or one of the aforementioned substances before the age of 14 years. The downward trend stopped in 2017 (17%). After that, there has been a significant increase. In this year's survey, the proportion of students in ninth grade reporting early first use of any substance was 21%. Among students with an early first substance use, it was most common to have drunk a glass of alcohol followed by having used snus. It is the first time since 2010 that snus is the second most common substance among students with an early first substance use. In past years, it has been smoking.