

Issue 3: September 11, 2020

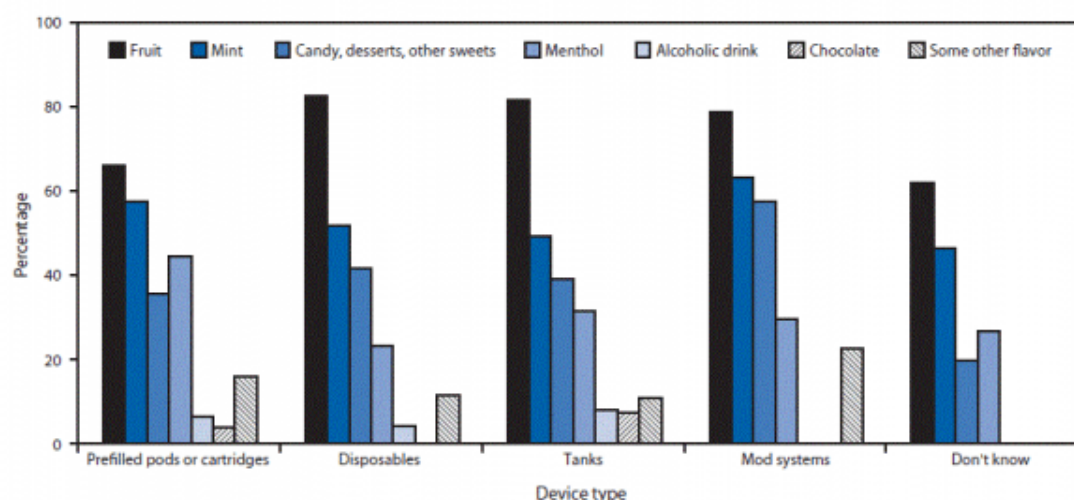
**NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)**

**New NPS Snapshot from Cayman Chemical: Nitazenes**

Nitazenes are a type of novel analgesic developed in the 20th century as an alternative to traditional opiates. According to a [new NPS Snapshot released by Cayman Chemical](#), although etonitazene and related benzimidazoles were discovered in the 1950s, they did not emerge on illicit markets and in chat forums until October 2018. Isotonitazene was temporarily categorized as a Schedule I drug by the DEA in June, and NPS Discovery, a program developed by the Center for Forensic Science Research and Education (CFSRE) in collaboration with NMS Labs, published [a monograph](#) concerning metonitazene in July.

**RECENTLY PUBLISHED**

**FIGURE. Percentage of flavor types used by current (past 30-day) flavored e-cigarette users among U.S. middle and high school students,\* by device type<sup>1,§</sup> — National Youth Tobacco Survey, United States, 2020**



**New CDC report: E-cigarette use among middle and high school students**

[A new MMWR report](#) was released this week. Using data from the 2020 National Youth Tobacco Survey, the CDC found that e-cigarette use declined among high school students between 2019 and early 2020 from 28% to 20%. E-cigarette use also decreased among middle school students from 11% to 5%. Twenty-three percent of high school students reported daily use. "Although these data reflect a decline in current e-cigarette use since 2019, 3.6 million U.S. youths still currently used e-cigarettes in 2020, and among current users,

more than eight in 10 reported using flavored e-cigarettes." [Read the full report here.](#)

---



## New report from Global Drug Survey Special Edition on COVID-19: Key findings

[A recent article](#) describes new findings from the [Global Drug Survey Special Edition on COVID-19](#), focused specifically on alcohol use in Australia. The first finding was that 39% of those sampled were drinking alcohol more than before COVID-19. On the other hand, 37% of the sample were drinking less. The article lists a myriad of factors for this decrease, including less access to settings where they usually drink (67%) and less contact with people who they normally drink with (77%).

Binge drinking has also changed due to COVID-19. Thirty-seven percent of the sample has reduced their binge drinking since COVID-19, while 30% have increased binge drinking. Australians in the sample who increased drinking also noted worse physical and mental health outcomes, highlighting the risk of choosing alcohol as a coping strategy for stress. [Read the full Key Findings Report here.](#)

---



## New study: A low dose of LSD decreases pain perception in healthy volunteers

Clinical studies conducted in the 1960s and 1970s noted that LSD had powerful analgesic effects for terminally-ill patients. [A new study](#) has revisited LSD as an analgesic at doses that do not produce mind-altering effects.

Twenty four volunteers were given varying doses of LSD and were administered the cold pressor test. LSD 20  $\mu$ g significantly increased the time that participants were able to tolerate the cold water and decreased experienced pain. [Read the full article here.](#)

---





## How does medical and non-medical use of z-drugs relate to psychological distress and use of other depressant drugs?

Over 3% of Americans used a z-drug in the past year. Z-drugs are used for insomnia and have considerable potential for abuse. With this in mind, the authors of a [recently published study](#) set out to find if there was an association of z-drugs with psychological distress and depressant drug use.

The study main findings were statistically significant correlations between z-drugs and this distress, benzodiazepine use, and benzodiazepine use disorders. Past-year use of tranquilizers had a risk ratio of 4.70 among medical users of z-drugs, and this ratio increased to 6.56 among non-medical users.

[Read the full article here.](#)



## History of opioid use as a risk factor for current use and mental health consequences among retired National Football League athletes: A 9-year follow-up investigation

Many NFL athletes manage their pain with opioids during their playing career and in retirement. A new longitudinal study from NDEWS PI Dr. Linda Cottler and collaborators assessed the relationship between opioid use in 2010 and current use, symptoms, and health-related quality of life for retired NFL players. The study found that nearly 50% of retired players are still using opioids. Along with this, compared to non-users, users had greater odds of current opioid use and experiencing depressive symptoms. [Read the full article here.](#)

IN THE NEWS

## Office of Field Operations Nationwide Drug Seizures

Numbers below reflect FY 2014 - FY 2019 and FY20 To Date (TD).

Fiscal Year 2020 runs October 01, 2019 - September 30, 2020.

	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19	FY20 TD AUG
Cocaine	45,323	38,346	52,838	62,415	51,592	89,207	37,380
Heroin	4,356	6,023	4,224	3,398	5,205	5,427	4,552
Marijuana	438,146	602,821	516,122	366,627	299,419	289,529	313,813
Methamphetamine <sup>5</sup>	19,613	25,495	33,086	46,247	57,440	68,585	141,663
Fentanyl	n/a	70	596	1,875	1,895	2,545	3,302

\*weights are in pounds (lb)

### New drug seizure data from Customs and Border Patrol: Methamphetamine seizures steadily increased between FY2014 and FY2020 (TD Aug)

According to [new data released by Customs and Border Patrol](#), illegal drug seizures have been increasing along the U.S.-Mexico border. The amount of methamphetamine seized has doubled from 2019, fentanyl seizure has increased 30%, and over 24,000 pounds of marijuana have been seized.

[Coverage of this data in a recent news report](#) adds that cartels and drug trafficking organizations have focused their efforts on drugs like meth, heroin, and fentanyl because they are easier to conceal. Seizures of these drugs were up 56% in August compared to July alone.

---

Share your research, news, and events through our [submission form](#)

Share your comments on our newsletter through our [feedback form](#)

Follow NDEWS on Twitter: [@NDEWSnews](#)

**N·DEWS** | NATIONAL DRUG EARLY  
WARNING SYSTEM