Cannabis questions in national surveillance systems implemented by states and other jurisdictions

Revised 9-22-2020

This document describes standardized questions that are currently available in CDC-sponsored surveillance data systems that are implemented by states and local jurisdictions.

Some of these questions are included as standard measures within surveys, and some are offered in “optional modules” or question sets that jurisdictions can add to their own surveys. Typically, local jurisdictions have flexibility to also add other questions that are identified as priorities for their area.

Jurisdictions that oversee the planning and implementation of these surveys have different procedures for deciding what questions to include. Anyone wishing to discuss addition of questions to their jurisdiction’s survey should contact their local coordinator; contact information from the CDC website for each survey is included in the following descriptions, when available.

Contents
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)........................................................................................................ 2
Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)................................................................................................................................... 5
Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) ................................................................................................. 7
Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

CDC’s BRFSS website: https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.html
State BRFSS coordinators https://www.cdc.gov/brfss/state_info/coordinators.htm

There are no cannabis or marijuana questions on the CDC “core” survey questionnaire implemented by all US states and territories at this time, or planned for 2021.

CDC offers an optional “marijuana use module” that jurisdictions can include. The marijuana module was developed with input from the first states to add questions to their state’ BRFSS. In 2019, 2020, and 2021, the state-added questions module offered by CDC included 3 questions.

A copy of the module is accessible online from the 2019 BRFSS questionnaire (the most recent that is available online):

- Module questions are also shown on pages 3-4 of this document, as copied directly from the 2019 questionnaire.

BRFSS data users should be aware of two important points:

- BRFSS questions use the term “marijuana”, and in the interview notes this is inclusive of CBD (see following documentation)
- The BRFSS module offered by CDC has a question about mode of marijuana use (e.g., smoking, edibles), but allows only one answer for “usual mode of use”. Smoking remains the most common mode of use among a majority of cannabis users. Use of higher-potency products such as dabs may be of concern, but many dab users will also smoke. Thus, allowing only one answer option will underestimate the prevalence of use of non-smoked products. **CSTE recommends that if jurisdictions using this module are concerned about measuring higher-potency product use, they should consider adapting the question to allow multiple answers (e.g., “choose all that apply”). This approach has been used successfully by several states.**
Module 25: Marijuana Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Question text</th>
<th>Variable names</th>
<th>Responses (DO NOT READ UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)</th>
<th>SKIP INFO/ CATI Note</th>
<th>Interviewer Note(s)</th>
<th>Column(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| M25.01          | During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use marijuana or cannabis? | MARIJAN1 | _ _ 01-30 Number of days 
88 None 
77 Don't know/not sure 
99 Refused | | Marijuana and cannabis include both CBD and THC products. | 415-416 |
| M25.02          | During the past 30 days, which one of the following ways did you use marijuana the most often? Did you usually... | USEMRJN2 | Read: 
1 Smoke it (for example, in a joint, bong, pipe, or blunt). 
2 Eat it (for example, in brownies, cakes, cookies, or candy) 
3 Drink it (for example, in tea, cola, or alcohol) 
4 Vaporize it (for example, in an e-cigarette-like vaporizer or another vaporizing device) 
5 Dab it (for example, using waxes or concentrates), or 
6 Use it some other way. Do not read: 
7 Don't know/not sure 
99 Refused | | Select one. If respondent provides more than one say: which way did you use it most often. | 417 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M25.03</th>
<th>When you used marijuana or cannabis during the past 30 days, was it usually:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| RSNMRJN1 | Read:  
1 For medical reasons (like to treat or decrease symptoms of a health condition);  
2 For non-medical reasons (like to have fun or fit in), or  
3 For both medical and non-medical reasons.  
Do not read:  
7 Don’t know/Not sure  
9 Refused       |
Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

CDC’s YRBS website: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm

YRBS participation history by state and local jurisdiction is shown here (no list of coordinators is available) https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/participation.htm

Not all states participate in the YRBS. Notably, two of the states that were among the first to legalize adult use cannabis in the US (Washington State, Oregon) do not routinely participate in the YRBS; however, each of these states has state-driven robust and well-established school-based risk surveys that incorporated similar measures.

CDC included several marijuana questions on the 2019 Core YRBS questionnaire for state and local jurisdictions:

- Questions are also shown on the following page.
- Note: a question on “synthetic marijuana” was also included in 2019 and other YRBS surveys: The next question asks about synthetic marijuana use. Synthetic marijuana also is called Spice, fake weed, K2, King Kong, Yucatan Fire, or Skunk. “Synthetic marijuana” is different from plant-based marijuana, and results from these questions should not be combined.

States have freedom to modify some of their YRBS questions. An ALTERNATIVE OPTION USED BY SOME STATES to ask about marijuana use in a format consistent with YRBS questions on alcohol, cigarette use is:

During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use marijuana? A. 0 days B. 1 or 2 days C. 3 to 5 days D. 6 to 9 days E. 10 to 19 days F. 20 to 29 days G. All 30 days

The standard YRBS currently does not offer any questions on mode of cannabis use. The Subcommittee strongly recommends adding a question on mode of cannabis use to youth surveys. As with BRFSS, a question with “choose all that apply” answers (i.e., multiple select) is preferred to maximize sensitivity for measuring use of high-potency cannabis products.

PREFERRED MULTIPLE SELECT QUESTION OPTION: During the past 30 days, if you used marijuana, how did you use it? (Select one or more responses).

SINGLE ANSWER QUESTION OPTION: During the past 30 days, if you used marijuana, how did you usually use it? (Select one response)

A. I did not use marijuana during the past 30 days.
B. smoked it (in a joint, bong, pipe, blunt).
C. Vaporized it (e.g., vapor pen).
D. Ate it (in brownies, cakes, cookies, candy).
E. Drank it (tea, cola, alcohol).
F. Dabbed it.
The next 3 questions ask about marijuana use. Marijuana also is called pot, weed, or cannabis.

45. During your life, how many times have you used marijuana?
   A. 0 times
   B. 1 or 2 times
   C. 3 to 9 times
   D. 10 to 19 times
   E. 20 to 39 times
   F. 40 to 99 times
   G. 100 or more times

46. How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?
   A. I have never tried marijuana
   B. 8 years old or younger
   C. 9 or 10 years old
   D. 11 or 12 years old
   E. 13 or 14 years old
   F. 15 or 16 years old
   G. 17 years old or older

47. During the past 30 days, how many times did you use marijuana?
   A. 0 times
   B. 1 or 2 times
   C. 3 to 9 times
   D. 10 to 19 times
   E. 20 to 39 times
   F. 40 or more times

Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

CDC’s PRAMS website: https://www.cdc.gov/prams/index.htm
State PRAMS coordinators https://www.cdc.gov/prams/states.htm

PRAMS questionnaires are in two parts: core questions used by all states, and standard questions that can be added by states. PRAMS surveys are usually adopted for four-year cycles; however, different states may use different approaches for their survey content planning.

The most current “Phase 8” PRAMS survey was implemented in 2016. A copy of the survey is available https://www.cdc.gov/prams/questionnaire.htm

The core questionnaire currently asked by all states includes one question related to marijuana (copied below).

| 14. During any of your prenatal care visits, did a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker ask you any of the things listed below? For each item, check No if they did not ask you about it or Yes if they did. |
|---|---|
| a. If I knew how much weight I should gain during pregnancy | No | Yes |
| b. If I was taking any prescription medication | No | Yes |
| c. If I was smoking cigarettes | No | Yes |
| d. If I was drinking alcohol | No | Yes |
| e. If someone was hurting me emotionally or physically | No | Yes |
| f. If I was feeling down or depressed | No | Yes |
| g. If I was using drugs such as **marijuana**, cocaine, crack, or meth | No | Yes |
| h. If I wanted to be tested for HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) | No | Yes |
| i. If I planned to breastfeed my new baby | No | Yes |
| j. If I planned to use birth control after my baby was born | No | Yes |

There are a large number of optional (identified as “standard” on CDC’s website) cannabis-related questions available that can be added by jurisdictions implementing PRAMS. The following 5 pages indicate different cannabis-related questions as included in a more general drug-related module, and also in a set of “marijuana supplement” questions.

CDC also provides a “topic reference” of questions that have been developed and used in individual states (not included in this document, available at https://www.cdc.gov/prams/questionnaire.htm).
DRUG2. **During the month before you got pregnant, did you take or use any of the following drugs for any reason?** Your answers are strictly confidential. For each item, check **No** if you did not use it or **Yes** if you did.

- Over the counter pain relievers such as aspirin, Tylenol®, Advil®, or Aleve®
- Prescription pain relievers such as hydrocodone (Vicodin®), oxycodone (Percocet®), or codeine
- Adderall®, Ritalin® or another stimulant
- Marijuana or hash
- Synthetic marijuana (K2, Spice)
- Methadone, naloxone, subutex, or Suboxone®
- Heroin (smack, junk, Black Tar, Chiva)
- Amphetamines (uppers, speed, crystal meth, crack, ice, ague)
- Cocaine (crack, rock, coke, blow, snow, nieve)
- Tranquilizers (downers, ludes)
- Hallucinogens (LSD/acid, PCP/angel dust, Ecstasy, Molly, mushrooms, bath salts)
- Sniffing gasoline, glue, aerosol spray cans, or paint to get high (huffing)

DRUG3. **During your most recent pregnancy, did you take or use any of the following drugs for any reason?** Your answers are strictly confidential. For each item, check **No** if you did not use it or **Yes** if you did.

- Over the counter pain relievers such as aspirin, Tylenol®, Advil®, or Aleve®
- Prescription pain relievers such as hydrocodone (Vicodin®), oxycodone (Percocet®), or codeine
- Adderall®, Ritalin® or another stimulant
- Marijuana or hash
- Synthetic marijuana (K2, Spice)
- Methadone, naloxone, subutex, or Suboxone®
- Heroin (smack, junk, Black Tar, Chiva)
MARIJUANA SUPPLEMENT QUESTIONS

DRUG1. During any of the following time periods, did you use marijuana or hash in any form? For each time period, check No if you did not use then or Yes if you did.

No  Yes

a. During the 12 months before I got pregnant
b. During my most recent pregnancy
c. Since my new baby was born

LI.2. During any of the following periods, did anyone smoke marijuana products inside your home, including you? For each time period, check No if no one smoked marijuana inside your home then, or Yes if someone did.

No  Yes

a. During the 12 months before I got pregnant
b. During my most recent pregnancy
c. Since my new baby was born

LI.3. During any of the following periods, did anyone keep edible marijuana products, such as brownies, cookies, or candy with THC, inside your home? For each time period, check No if no one kept marijuana inside your home then, or Yes if someone did.

No  Yes

a. During the 12 months before I got pregnant
b. During my most recent pregnancy
c. Since my new baby was born

LI.4. Do you think pregnant women harm their unborn baby’s health if they use marijuana during pregnancy? Check ONE answer

No
Yes, slightly
Yes, moderately
Yes, greatly

LI.5. Do you think pregnant women harm their own health if they use marijuana? Check ONE answer

No
Yes, slightly
Yes, moderately
Yes, greatly
LL6. At any time during your most recent pregnancy, did you use marijuana or hash in any form?

No ➔ Go to Question ##
Yes

LL7. During your most recent pregnancy, how often did you use marijuana products in an average week?

Daily
2-3 times per week
Once a week
2-3 times per month
Once a month or less

LL8. During your pregnancy, how did you use marijuana? Check ALL that apply

Smoke it
Eat it
Drink it
Vaporize it
Dab it
Other ➔ Please tell us: ________________

LL9. Why did you use marijuana products during pregnancy? For each one, mark No if it was not a reason for you or Yes if it was

No ☐ Yes ☐

a. To relieve nausea
b. To relieve vomiting
c. To relieve stress or anxiety
d. To relieve symptoms of a chronic condition
e. To relieve pain
f. For fun or to relax
g. Other ➔ Please tell us: ________________

LL10. During the 3 months before you got pregnant, how often did you use marijuana products in an average week?

Daily
2-3 times per week
Once a week
2-3 times per month
Once a month or less

LL11. During the first 3 months (1st trimester) of your pregnancy, how often did you use marijuana products in an average week?

Daily
2-3 times per week
Once a week
2-3 times per month
Once a month or less
I did not use marijuana products then ➔ Go to Question X
LL12. During the first 3 months (1st trimester) of your pregnancy, how did you use marijuana? Check ALL that apply.

- Smoke it
- Eat it
- Drink it
- Vaporize it
- Dab it
- Other → Please tell us: ______________

LL13. During the middle 3 months of your pregnancy, how often did you use marijuana products in an average week?

- Daily
- 2-3 times per week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times per month
- Once a month or less
- I did not use marijuana products then → Go to Question X

LL14. During the middle 3 months of your pregnancy, how did you use marijuana? Check ALL that apply.

- Smoke it
- Eat it
- Drink it
- Vaporize it
- Dab it
- Other → Please tell us: ______________

LL15. During the last 3 months of your pregnancy, how often did you use marijuana products in an average week?

- Daily
- 2-3 times per week
- Once a week
- 2-3 times per month
- Once a month or less
- I did not use marijuana products then → Go to Question X

LL16. During the last 3 months of your pregnancy, how did you use marijuana? Check ALL that apply.

- Smoke it
- Eat it
- Drink it
- Vaporize it
- Dab it
- Other → Please tell us: ______________
NOTE: Skip LL17 if the mother did not have prenatal care (Core 13).

LL17. During any of your prenatal care visits, did a doctor, nurse, or other health care worker do any of the following things? Please include if you were asked on a form or verbally by your provider. For each one, mark No if they did not do this or Yes if they did.

a. Ask you if you were using marijuana
b. Recommend that you use marijuana for any reason
c. Advise you not to use marijuana
d. Advise you not to breastfeed your baby while using marijuana

LL18. Since your new baby was born, have you used marijuana or hash in any form?

No ➔ Go to Question##
Yes

LL19. Since your new baby was born, how often do you use marijuana products in an average week? Check ONE answer

Daily
2-3 times per week
Once a week
2-3 times per month
Once a month or less

NOTE: Skip LL19 and LL20 if the infant is not alive or not living with the mother (Core 32 and/or Core 33) or if the mother is not currently breastfeeding (Core 36)

LL20. How long after you use marijuana do you wait before you breastfeed or pump milk? Check ONE answer and fill in blank if needed

____ minutes
____ hours
____ days

LL21. How long do you think it is necessary to wait after using marijuana before breastfeeding your infant? Check ONE answer

I don’t think I need to wait at all
I think it is best to wait until I am no longer high
I think it is best to wait at least 2-3 hours after I am no longer high
I don’t think it is safe to use marijuana at all while I’m breastfeeding