

Legal vs Illegal Cannabis Markets in Canada

Statistics Since Legalization



48%
of consumers
always obtain their
cannabis from a
legal source¹

VS

5%
of consumers
always obtain their
cannabis from an
illegal source¹



Legal cannabis is mainly sourced from:¹

- Authorized storefront (87%)
- Authorized online retailers (20%)
- Someone sharing (19%)



Illegal cannabis is mainly sourced from:¹

- Someone they know (52%)
- Unauthorized online retailers (21%)
- A dealer (19%)



While a gram of legal cannabis was reported costing **55% more** than illicit cannabis in 2019,² other research in recent years shows price of legal and illegal cannabis is much closer than we think and the gap is becoming smaller.³



Factors that most influenced from whom consumers usually obtain cannabis...¹

1. Price (30%)
2. Safe supply (23%)
3. Quality (12%)

Risk of Illegal Cannabis

- Have unpredictable THC amounts (the compound that changes the way we think, feel and act)⁴
- Higher THC levels than what is regulated, leading to risk of overconsumption or dependency⁴
- Contamination due to unsanitary handling⁴
- Legal consequences of possession of illegal cannabis regardless of age⁴
- Products may be laced with other substances⁴

Harm Reduction Strategies



Choose products from a legal source



Avoid mixing cannabis with other substances

25

Delay cannabis use until the age of 25 to reduce harm to the developing brain

References

1. Canadian Cannabis Survey (2022). Canadian Cannabis Survey 2022: Summary. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/research-data/canadian-cannabis-survey-2022-summary.html>
2. Public Safety Canada (2020). Cannabis Black Market. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/trnsprnc/brfng-mtrls/prlmntry-bndrs/20200930/026/index-en.aspx>
3. Statistics Canada (2020). Dried Cannabis Averages. <https://stratcann.com/insight/price-of-legal-and-illegal-cannabis-in-canada-is-much-closer-than-you-think/>
4. Health Canada (2018). Cannabis impairment and safety risk. <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-medication/cannabis/health-effects/impairment-safety-risk.html>