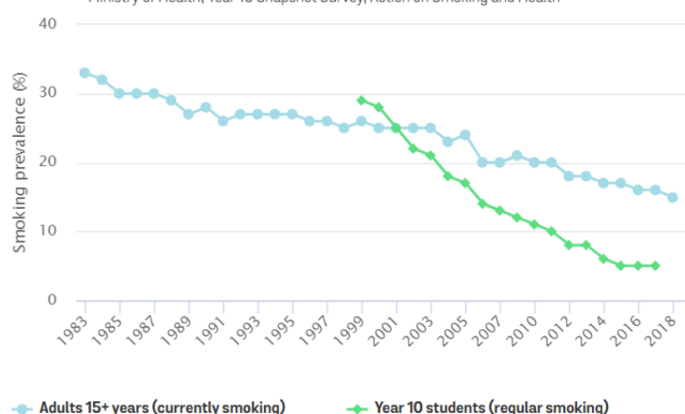


# Smoking and Vaping in Rangatahi

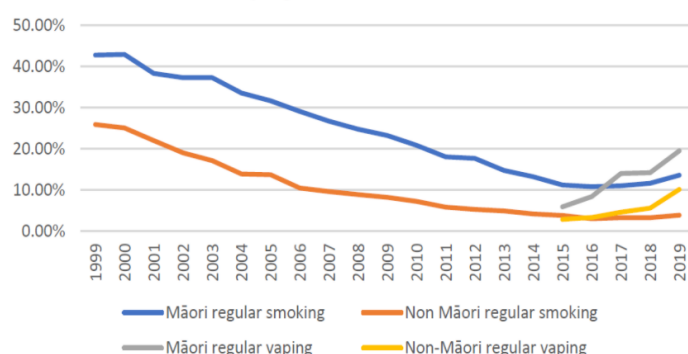
Tobacco control efforts have been successful in Aotearoa New Zealand with smoking rates declining in recent decades, particularly among young people.

Figure 1. Smoking prevalence in New Zealand from 1983 to 2018 Sources: Tobacco Trends 2008: A brief update of tobacco use in New Zealand, Ministry of Health, 2008; New Zealand Health Survey, Ministry of Health; Year 10 Snapshot Survey, Action on Smoking and Health



However, for the first time in 20 years, smoking in school-aged children has increased rather than decreased in recent years, and this reversal has occurred alongside a rapid increase in vaping.

Trends in Māori and non-Māori regular smoking and vaping in Year 10 Students



Vaping is a relatively new phenomenon, so the evidence base is still building. Early data indicated that while rangatahi may have been experimenting with vaping, few were doing so on a daily basis and students who smoked were much more likely to have tried an e-cigarette than students who never smoked.

However, emerging information suggests more young people are not only experimenting with vaping, but are transitioning into being more regular vapers which could indicate a growing dependence on nicotine. In 2019, 3% of year 10 students were vaping daily and 12% vaping regularly. The latter showing a 3-fold increase from 2015. Also of concern is that there now appears to be evidence that vaping is attracting youth who would not normally have smoked cigarettes. Nearly two-thirds of students who had ever vaped, and almost half of regular vapers had never smoked cigarettes. Since vaping is not harmless this brings into question how much public health harm will be caused by vaping attracting youth who would not normally have smoked cigarettes.

Vaping appears to appeal to a wider audience than traditional tobacco smoking and it can vary by school. However, it is typically more common in boys, older ages and in European and Māori students compared with other ethnicities. Whilst smoking in high decile schools is now rare, vaping is relatively common across decile ranges. Although overall smoking rates continue to be very low in youth, Māori and Pacific have higher rates than other ethnicities and Māori girls have the highest daily smoking rates.

## Data sources used:

**ASH Year 10 snapshot survey** – surveys 20,000-30,000 students every year on their smoking behaviour and attitudes. The survey is part of the Youth Tobacco Monitoring Programme and began in 1992 and has been undertaken annually since 1999 (with the exception of 2020 due to Covid). It provides important evidence of trends over time, of one particular year group.

[ASH Year 10 Archive - Action for Smokefree 2025](#)

**Youth19** – is part of the Youth2000 series of health and wellbeing surveys being conducted by researchers from the University of Auckland, Victoria University of Wellington, University of Otago & Auckland University of Technology. In 2019 the Youth19 survey was the first survey to look at vaping in secondary school students of all ages and involved over 7700 students from Auckland, Waikato and Northland.

[Youth19 - A Youth2000 Survey](#)

[Youth19 Vaping fact sheet](#)