

PARENTS OF CHILDREN UNDER 14 NOVA SCOTIA SAFE STORAGE STUDY

Report

February 2025



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INTRODUCTION



Background, Objectives and Methodology

Background

Child Safety Link (CSL), an injury prevention program of IWK Health serving Atlantic Canada wishes to understand how parents in Nova Scotia store various household products, with a particular focus on cannabis edibles. This survey aims to gather insights from parents of children under 14 years old to assess their awareness and behaviors related to the safe storage of potentially harmful substances.

This research provides valuable insights into the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to safe storage of potentially hazardous substances among families in Nova Scotia. The findings will inform the development of targeted educational campaigns and interventions to promote child safety and prevent unintentional poisonings.

Objectives

The primary goal is to determine current storage practices, awareness of poisoning prevention resources, and knowledge of Child Safety Link and the Atlantic Canada Poison Centre.

Methodology

A sample of n=153 Nova Scotia, parents or guardians with at least one child in the home who is under the age of 14 have been surveyed online.

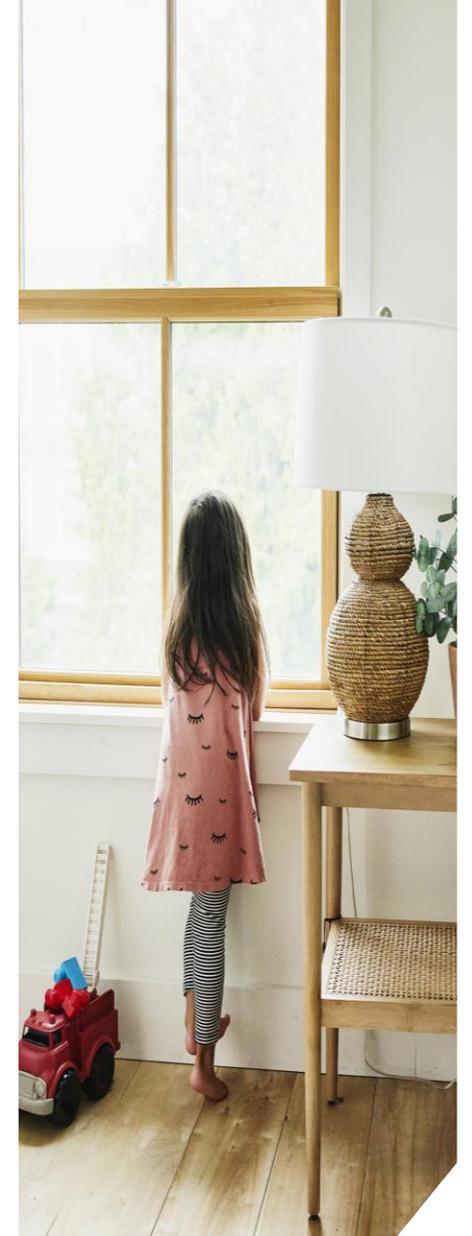
The 7-minute online survey was fielded between January 24th and February 3rd, 2025, in English.

The accuracy of Ipsos online surveys is measured using a credibility interval, a measure similar to a margin of error.

For this study, the overall sample is accurate to within +/- 9.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had all Nova Scotian parents of children under the age of 14 been surveyed.

Smaller subsets of the population will have larger credibility intervals. Where totals do not add to 100% it is due to rounding or to respondents being permitted to offer more than one response.

Weights were not applied to this sample



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Executive Summary

Prevalence of Household Products

Over-the-counter medication is the most common item found in Nova Scotian homes, with 90% of respondents reporting its presence. This is followed by vitamins and dietary supplements.

Interestingly, cannabis products are notably more prevalent in households with younger children aged 0-9 (56-59%) compared to those with older children aged 10-17 (30-38%).

Storage Practices

Nearly three-quarters of respondents store cannabis products in a locked or child-resistant container, indicating a high level of awareness about the importance of safe storage.

However, there is a significant gender difference: 44% of men leave cannabis products accessible to children compared to 22% of women. This highlights a potential area for targeted educational campaigns.

Familiarity with organizations like CSL or ACPC significantly increases the likelihood of using child-resistant containers for cannabis storage, showing the impact of awareness and education.

Challenges in Safe Storage

Half of the parents reported no challenges in safely storing substances, which is encouraging. However, a quarter cited a lack of space as a significant challenge.

Women are more likely to report no challenges compared to men (60% vs. 34%), suggesting that women might be more proactive or resourceful in finding safe storage solutions.

Cannabis users are more likely to face challenges related to information management (42% vs. 18% non-users), indicating a need for better information dissemination and support for this group.

Executive Summary

Cannabis Consumption

Nearly 60% of parents are cannabis users, with most consuming by smoking, vaporizing, or eating edibles. This high prevalence underscores the importance of addressing cannabis storage in child safety initiatives.

Men and parents of younger children are more likely to be cannabis consumers. Interestingly, women are significantly more likely to use edibles compared to men (71% vs. 50%), which may require different storage solutions and safety messages.

Risk Perception and Response

For both cannabis edible and adult medication accidents, calling 911 is the most common first action, followed by going to the ER. This indicates a high level of concern and a preference for immediate professional help.

Women perceive higher risks for accidental consumption compared to men. Parents of young children (0-3 years) are more likely to perceive both actions as extremely high or high risk, reflecting their heightened vigilance.

75% of parents perceive a child accidentally consuming an adult medication as extremely high or high risk, compared to 63% for cannabis consumption. This difference in risk perception could influence how parents prioritize safety measures.

Engagement with Organizations

Just over half of the parents have not engaged with CSL or ACPC. However, familiarity with these organizations correlates with better safe storage practices and higher confidence in handling poisoning incidents.

About 20% have visited the site or heard news about the organizations, and a quarter are familiar and have prior engagement with CSL and ACPC. This suggests that increasing visibility and engagement with these organizations could have a positive impact on safe storage practices.

Parents familiar with CSL and ACPC are more likely to agree with statements about having the knowledge required to act quickly if there's a poisoning and being familiar with what to do if a child is poisoned.

Key Takeaways

Enhance Awareness and Education

Action Item: Increase visibility and engagement with Child Safety Link (CSL) and the Atlantic Canada Poison Centre (ACPC) to improve safe storage practices.

- Targeted Campaigns: Develop targeted educational campaigns focusing on demographics that show lower engagement, such as men and cannabis users.
- Community Outreach: Utilize community events, social media, and partnerships with local organizations to spread awareness about safe storage practices and the resources available through CSL and ACPC.
- Educational Materials: Create and distribute easy-to-understand materials that highlight the importance of safe storage and how to implement it effectively.

Address Storage Challenges

Action Item: Develop and promote affordable and accessible storage solutions to address the lack of space and information management challenges.

- Affordable Solutions: Promote cost-effective storage solutions such as lockable containers and child-resistant packaging that can be easily integrated into households.
- Customized Solutions: Tailor storage solutions to meet the specific needs of different demographics, such as younger parents and cannabis users, who face unique challenges.
- Information Dissemination: Provide clear and accessible information on safe storage practices through various channels, including online resources, brochures, and workshops.

Improve Risk Perception and Response

Action Item: Educate parents on the risks associated with both cannabis and medication consumption by children and the appropriate emergency responses.

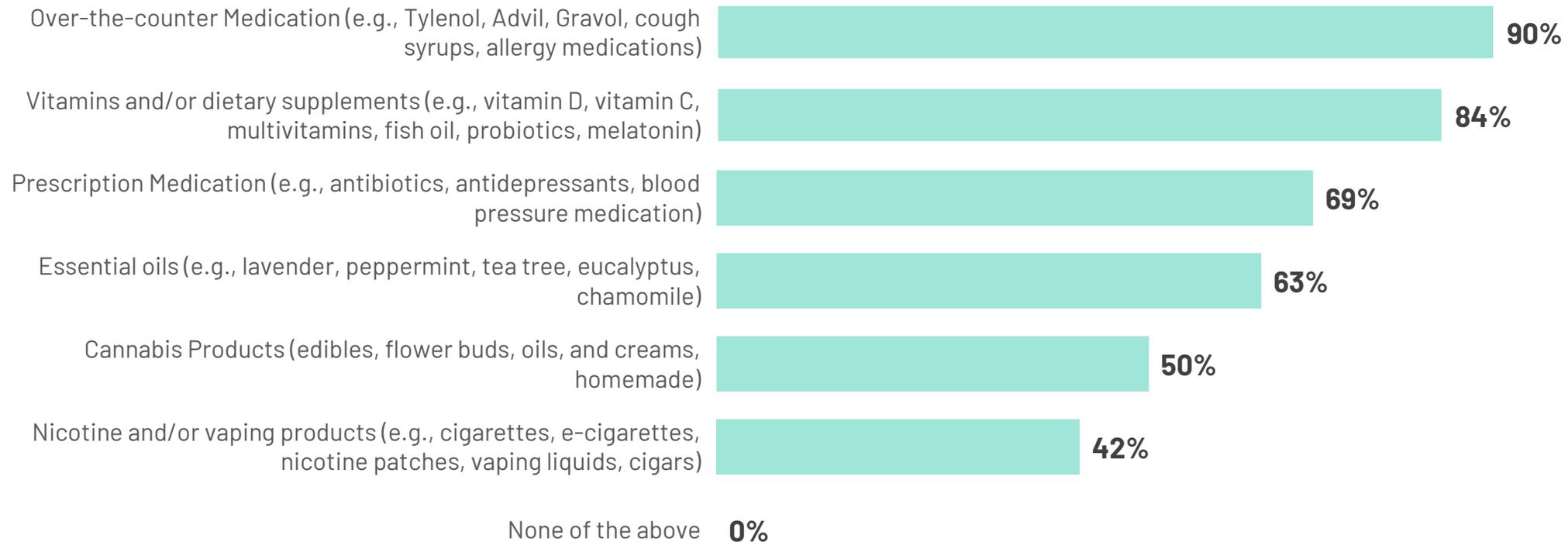
- Risk Awareness: Increase awareness among parents, especially men and those with older children, about the potential risks of accidental consumption of cannabis and medications.
- Emergency Preparedness: Provide training and resources on how to respond effectively in case of accidental ingestion, including when to call 911, visit the ER, or contact a poison control center.
- Consistent Messaging: Ensure that the messaging around risk perception and emergency response is consistent and reinforced through multiple touchpoints, such as healthcare providers, schools, and community organizations.

DETAILED FINDINGS



Over-the-counter medication is the most common item that 9 in 10 Nova Scotians have in their home, followed by vitamins and dietary supplements.

Cannabis products are in half the Nova Scotia homes with children under 14 years, they are more prevalent in households with younger children aged 0-9 (range 56-59%) compared to households with older children aged 10-17 (range 30-38%).



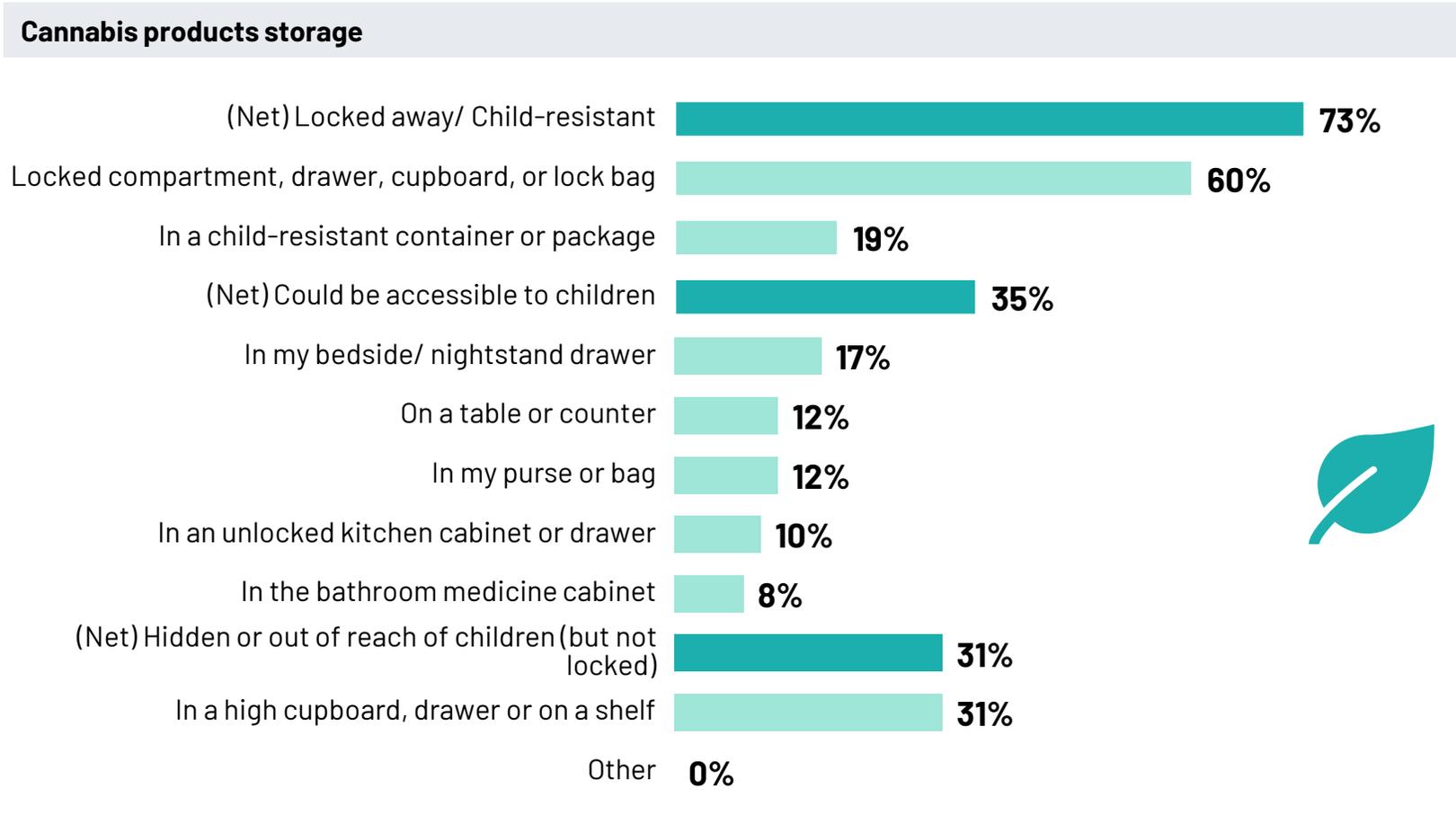
Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q1. Which of the following do you have in your home?

Almost three-quarters of respondents place cannabis products locked away or in a child-resistant container.

Men are significantly more likely to leave cannabis products where it could be accessible to children compared to women (44% men vs. 22% women).

Those who are familiar with or have at least heard of CSL or ACPC are significantly more likely to put cannabis in a child-resistant container or package, a contrast to those who are unfamiliar with both organizations.

In a child-resistant container or package					
CSL			ACPC		
Familiar	Heard of them	Unfamiliar	Familiar	Heard of them	Unfamiliar
50%	20%	0%	27%	23%	0%

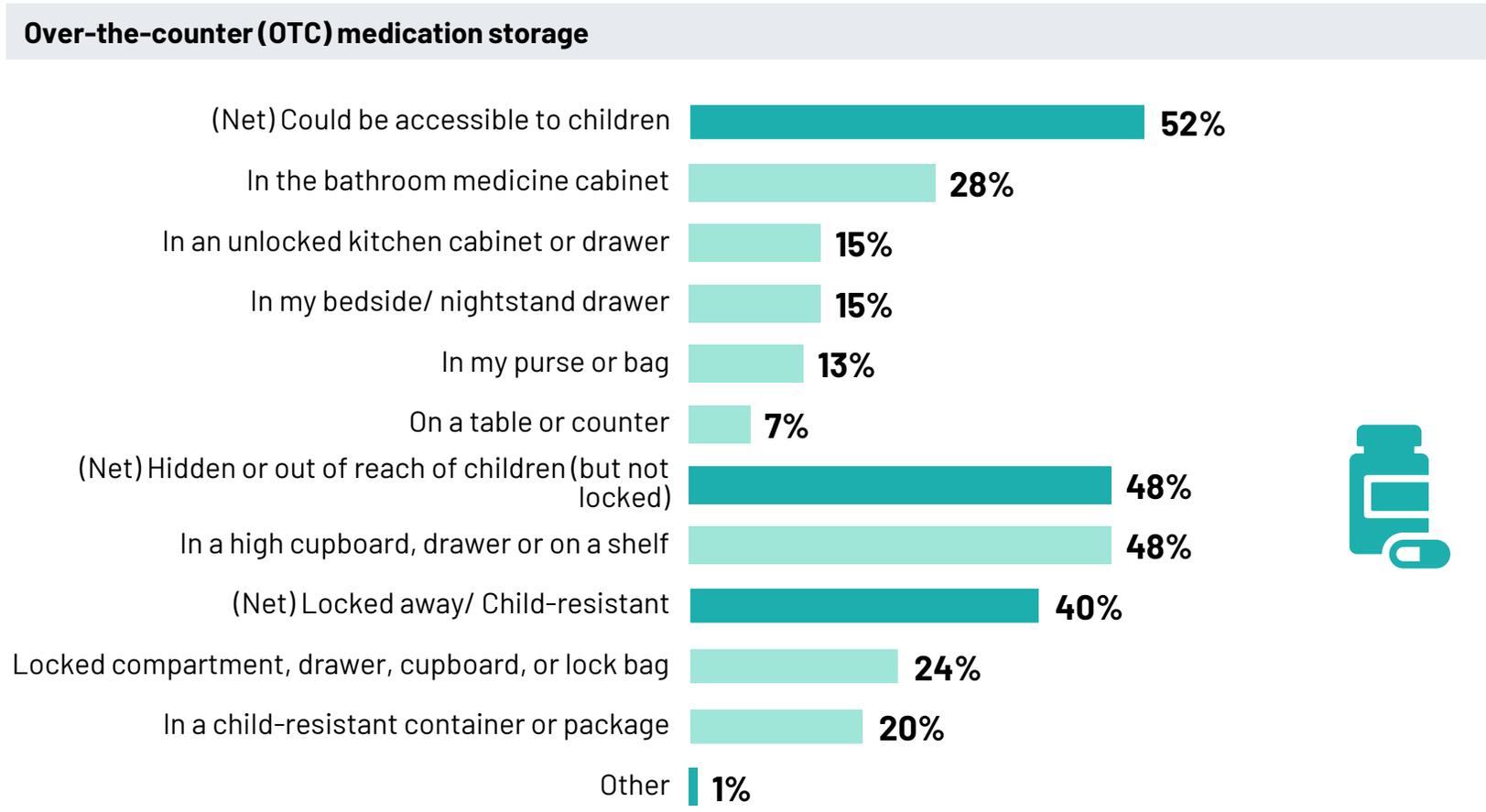


Base: Respondents who have cannabis in home (n=77)
 Q.2 (Cannabis Products) Of the items you selected above, how do you store them in your home?
 *NET: The net is the total number of respondents who selected at least one of the options per category

Just over half store OTC medication in a place that could be accessible to children while 48% place them in a high cupboard, out of reach.

Parents with children under 9 years old are significantly more likely to store OTC medication in a locked compartment, drawer, cupboard, or lock bag (range 25%-32%) compared to parents whose child is between the ages of 10-17 (range 5%-15%).

Respondents aged 18-34 are significantly more likely to have their OTC medication in their bedside drawer (26%) or in a locked compartment (36%) as opposed to other older parent age groups.

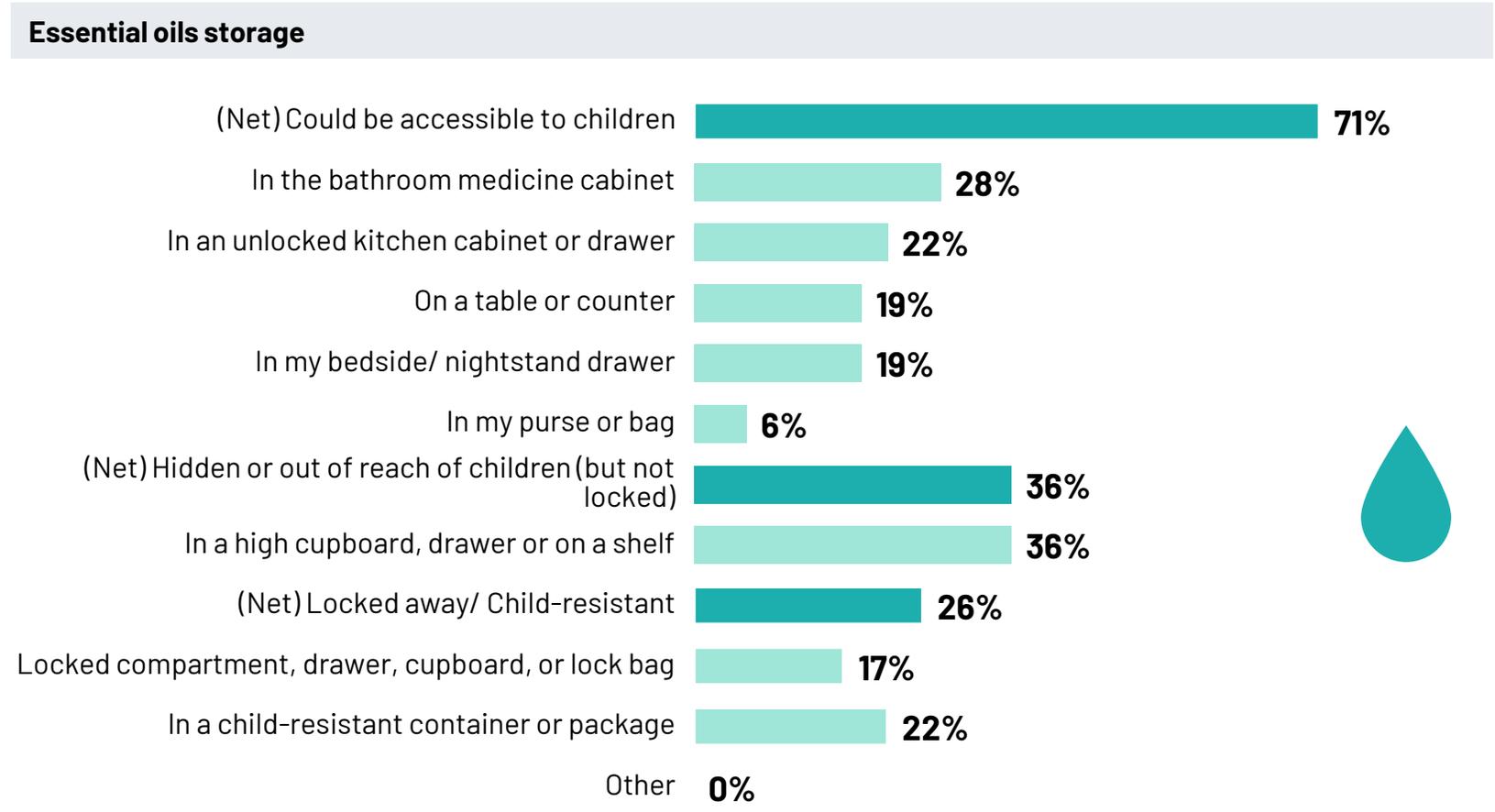


Base: Respondents who have OTC medication in home (n=138)
 Q.2 (Over-the-counter Medication) Of the items you selected above, how do you store them in your home?
 * NET: The net is the total number of respondents who selected at least one of the options per category

Essential oils are stored in an area that can be accessed by children by 7 in 10 respondents or housed in a high cupboard by over a third of Nova Scotian parents.

Men parents are more likely to keep essential oils in an accessible place (81% men vs. 63% women), most notably in an unlocked kitchen cabinet (36%) or on a table or counter (29%).

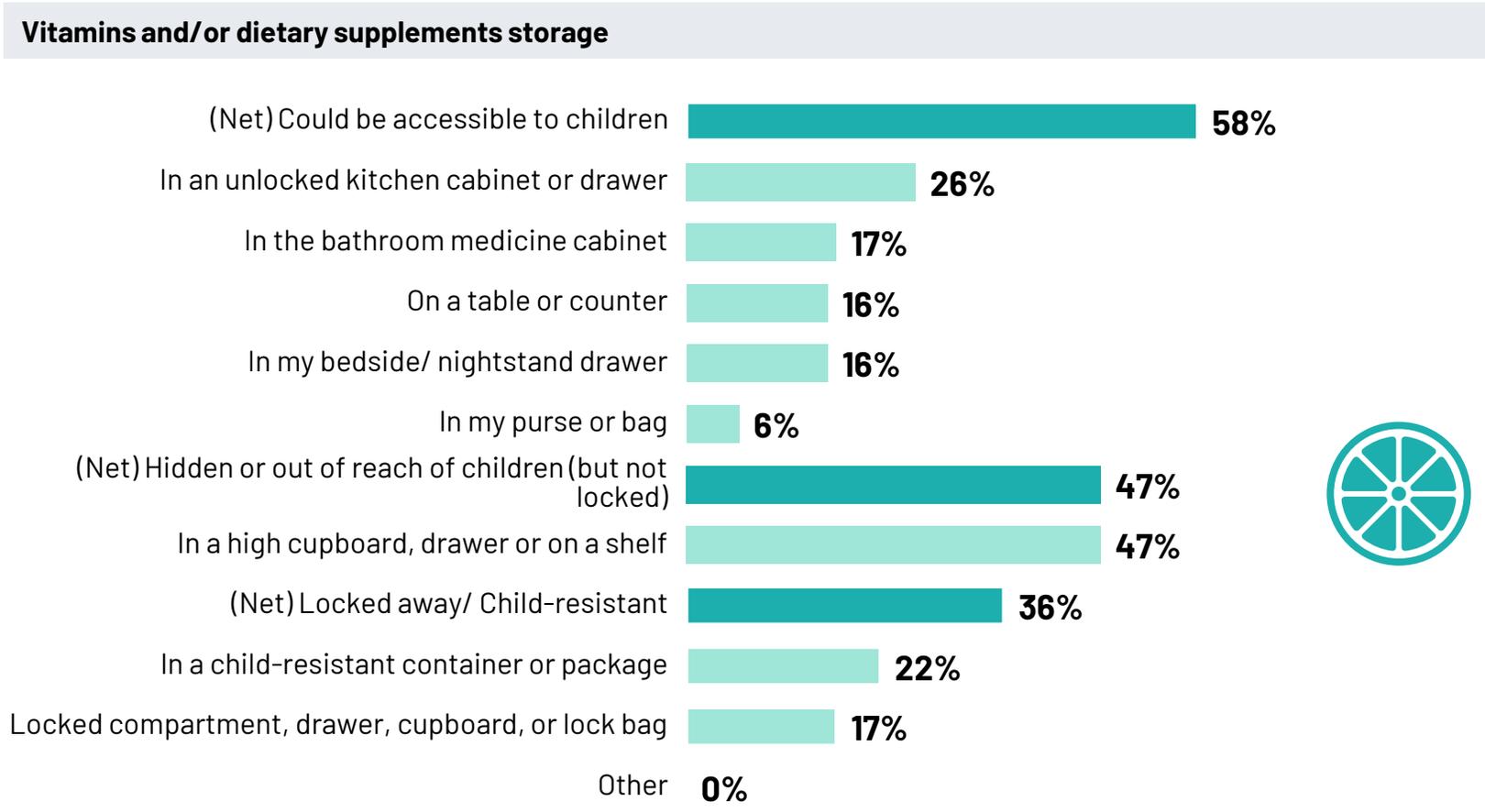
Younger parents, aged 18-34, are more likely to have essential oils locked away (32%) or in a child-resistant container (18%) compared to their older counterparts.



Base: Respondents who have essential oils in home (n=96)
 Q.2 (Essential oils) Of the items you selected above, how do you store them in your home?
 * NET: The net is the total number of respondents who selected at least one of the options per category

Almost half of Nova Scotian parents place their vitamins or dietary supplements in a high cupboard, drawer or on a shelf, out of reach of children

Similar trend to essential oils, younger parents (aged 18-34) are significantly more likely to place their vitamins and/or dietary supplements in a child resistant container (36%) or in a locked compartment (22%) than older parents.



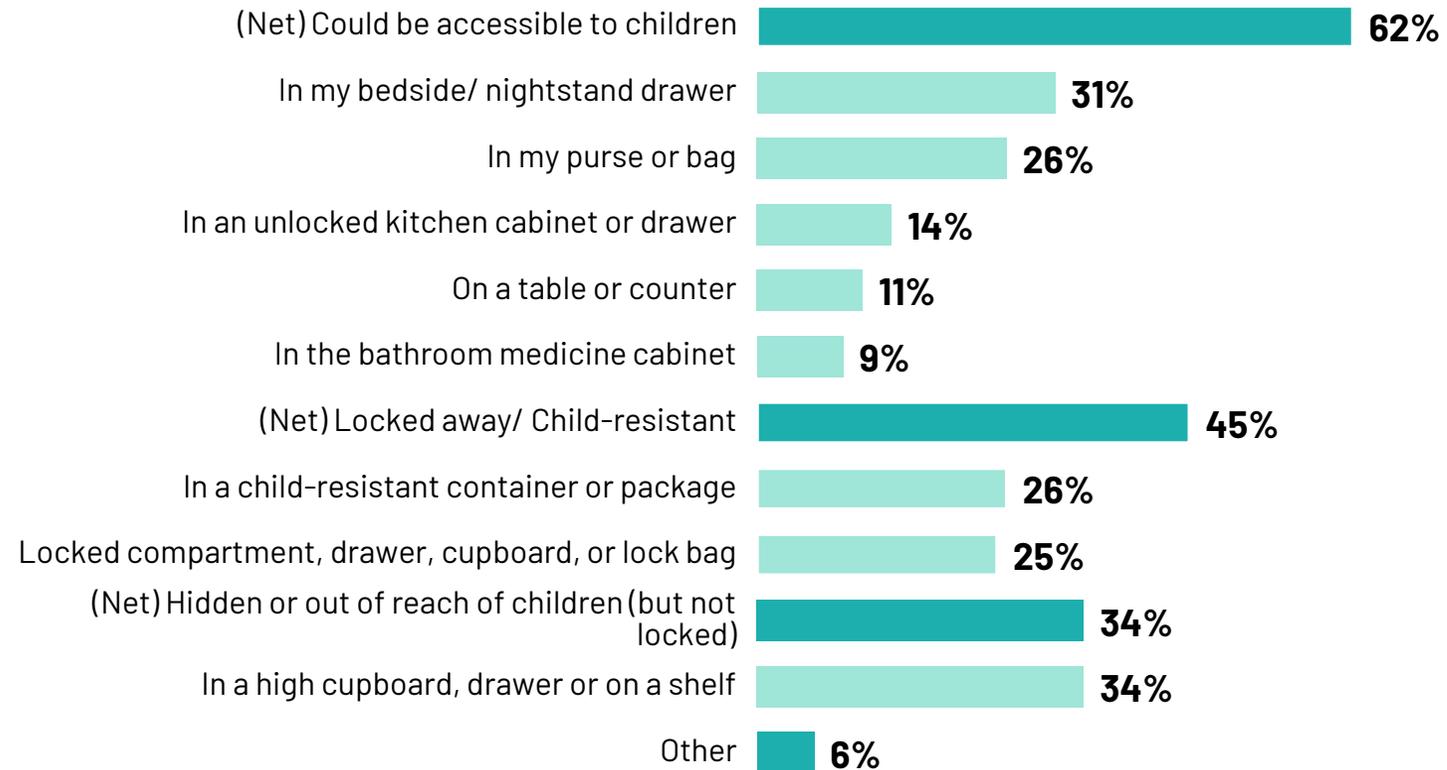
Base: Respondents who have vitamins or dietary supplements in home (n=129)
 Q.2 (Vitamins and/or dietary supplements) Of the items you selected above, how do you store them in your home?
 * NET: The net is the total number of respondents who selected at least one of the options per category

About 6 in 10 parents place their nicotine products in a place that could be accessible to children, most commonly in the bedside or bags.

Men are significantly more likely to have nicotine in their bedside compared to women (41% men vs. 18% women).

Parents of older children, between the ages of 10-17, are less likely to place nicotine and vaping products in a locked/child-resistant area (range 17-38%) compared to parents of children under 9 (range 44-64%).

Nicotine and/or vaping products storage



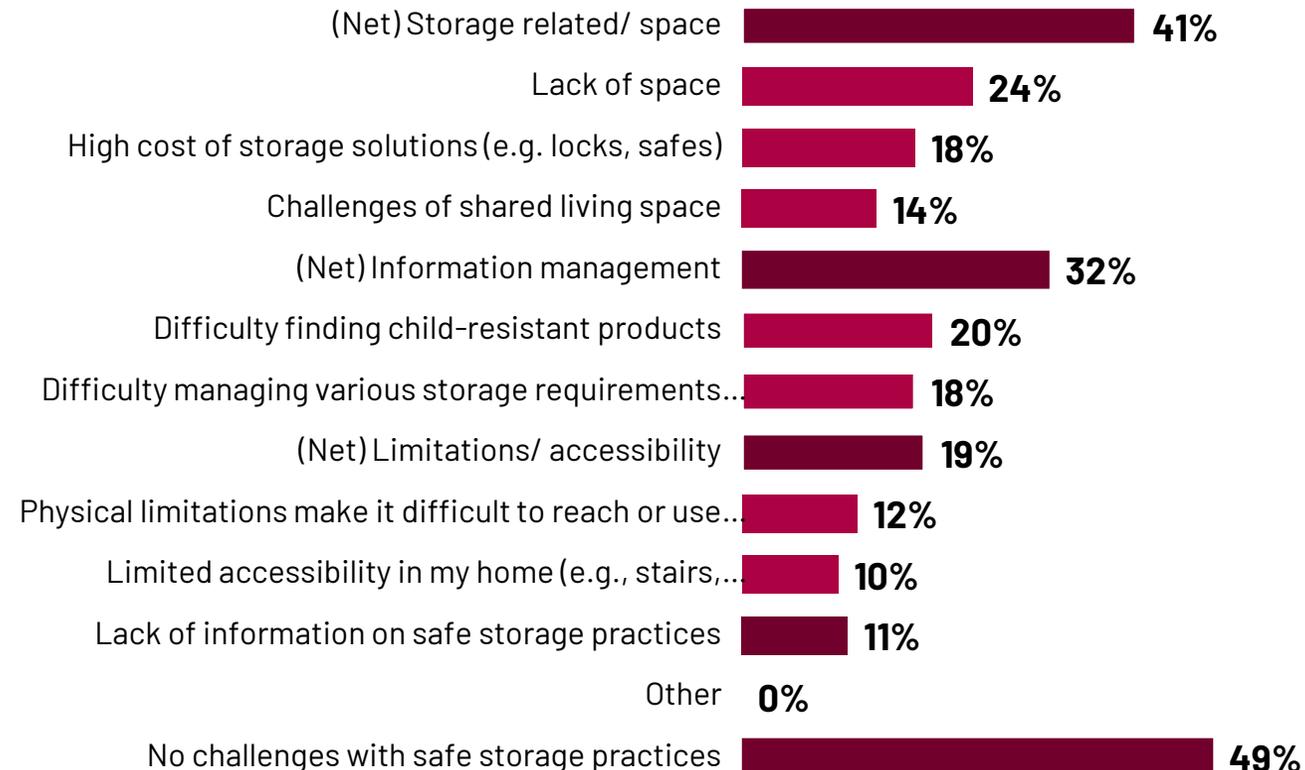
Base: Respondents who have nicotine or vaping products in home (n=65)
 Q.2 (Nicotine and/or vaping products) Of the items you selected above, how do you store them in your home?
 * NET: The net is the total number of respondents who selected at least one of the options per category

Half of Nova Scotian parents say they do not have any challenges when it comes to safely storing substances. A quarter struggle with a lack of space.

Challenges to safely storing substances like medications, cannabis or nicotine products at home

Women parents are significantly more likely to state that they have no challenges with safe storage practices (60% women vs. 34% men).

Cannabis users are significantly more likely to cite information management as a limitation when it comes to safe storage practices (42% cannabis user vs. 18% non-user).



Base: All respondents (n=153)

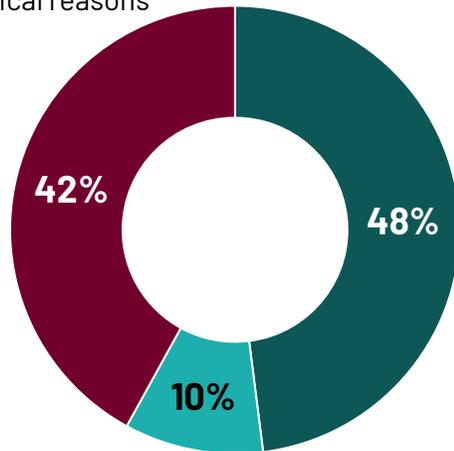
Q.2a What challenges, if any, do you face when it comes to safely storing substances like medications, cannabis, or nicotine products at home?

Almost 6 in 10 parents are cannabis users, with most users consuming cannabis by smoking, vaporizing or eating edibles.

Men (69%) and parents of children under 9 (range 60-67%) are more likely to be cannabis consumers. Interestingly, women are significantly more likely to have edibles compared to men (71% women vs. 50% men).

Consumption of cannabis (marijuana)

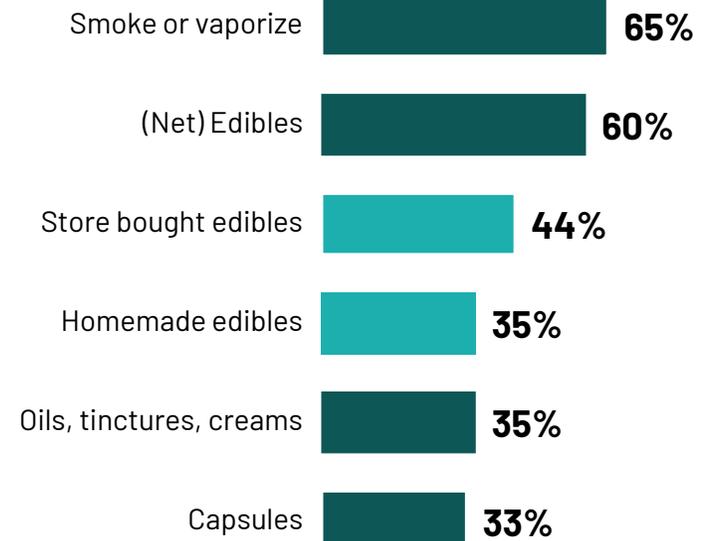
- Yes, recreationally
- Yes, for medical reasons
- No, never



58%
Yes

Among cannabis consumers

How cannabis (marijuana) is consumed



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.3 Do you consume cannabis (marijuana)?

Base: All cannabis users (n=88)
Q.4 How do you consume cannabis?

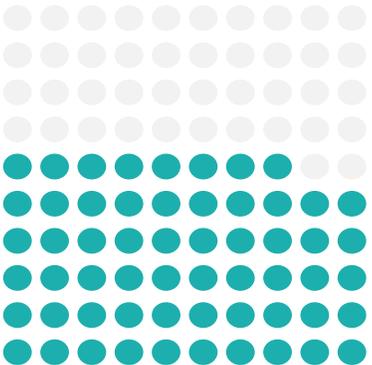
Among cannabis users who are parents, 8 in 10 strive to 'always/most of the time' put their cannabis products away immediately after use. About half have past experiences of guests bringing over cannabis edibles to their home.

Women are significantly more likely to always put it away immediately (71% women vs. 43% men). Parents in the younger age bracket (18-34) are significantly more likely to have ever had guests bring cannabis edibles into their home (63%).

Consumption of cannabis (marijuana)

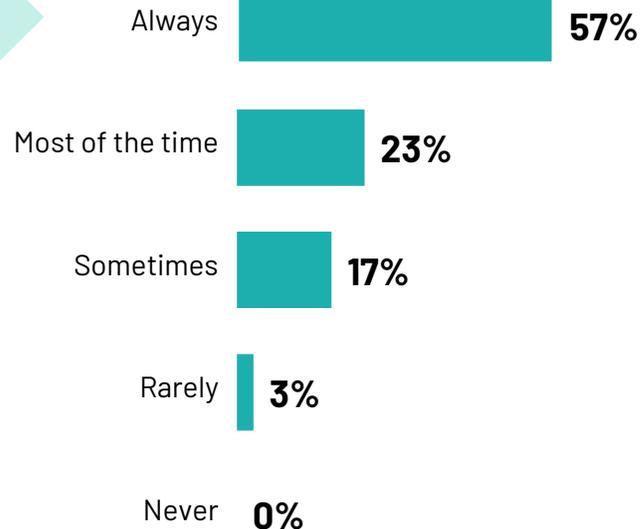
58%

Cannabis user

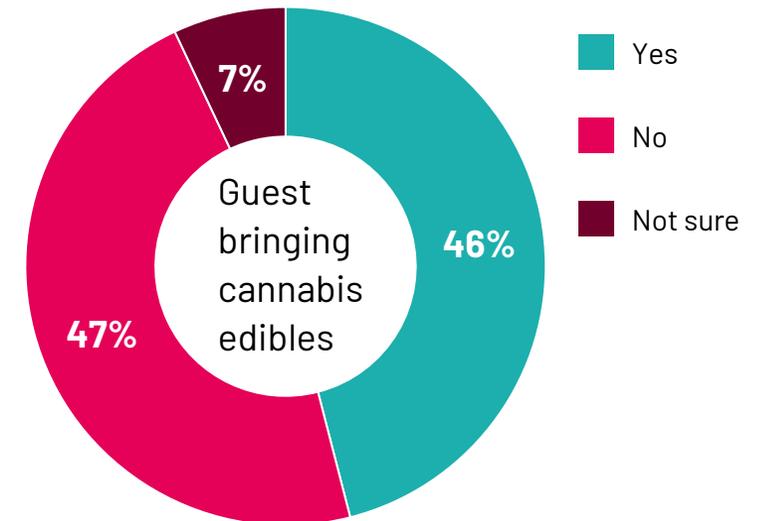


Among cannabis consumers

Putting cannabis products away immediately after use



Guests who have brought over cannabis edibles



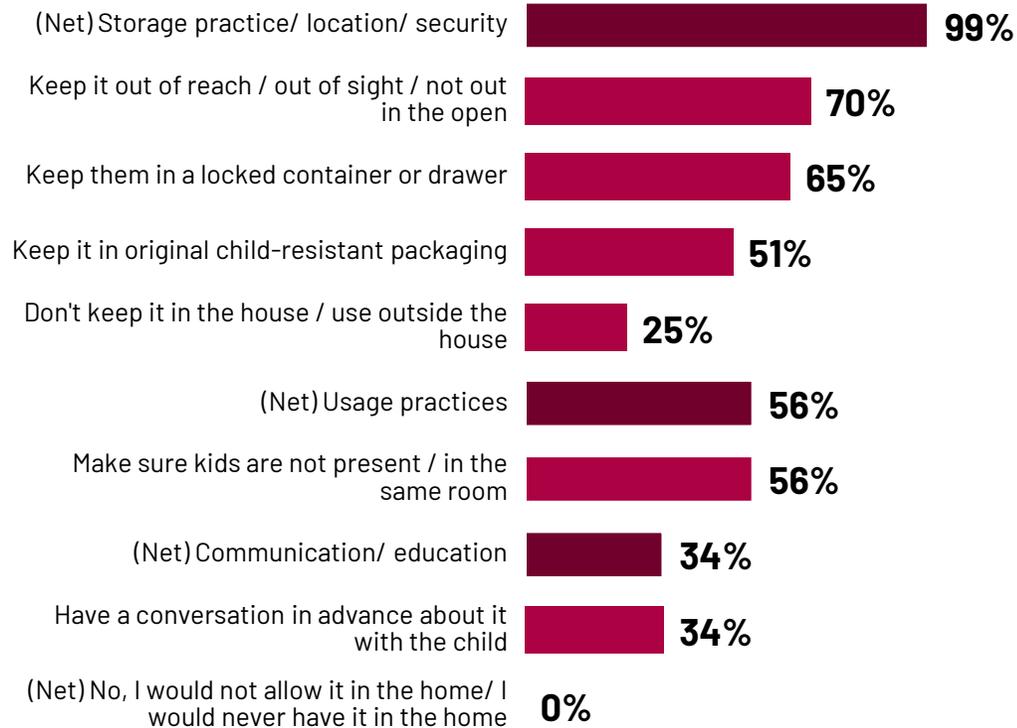
Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.3 Do you consume cannabis (marijuana)?

Base: All cannabis users (n=88)
Q.5 Do you put your cannabis products away immediately after using them ...

Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.6 Have you had ever guests over who brought cannabis edibles?

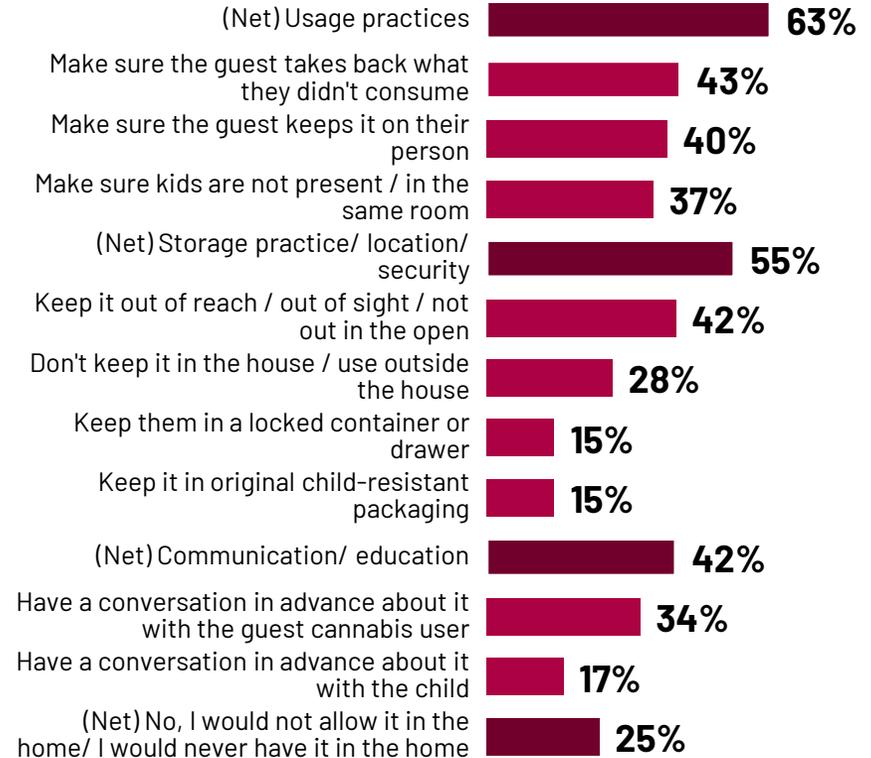
In cannabis-using households, keeping cannabis out of children's reach and sight is the top action considered. For households with guests who use cannabis, ensuring guests take back any leftovers is essential to keep it away from children under 14.

Personal considerations (among users), to keep cannabis away from children



Base: All cannabis users (n=88)
 Q.7a If you bring cannabis into your home, what actions would you take, or have you considered taking, to keep it away from children under 14?

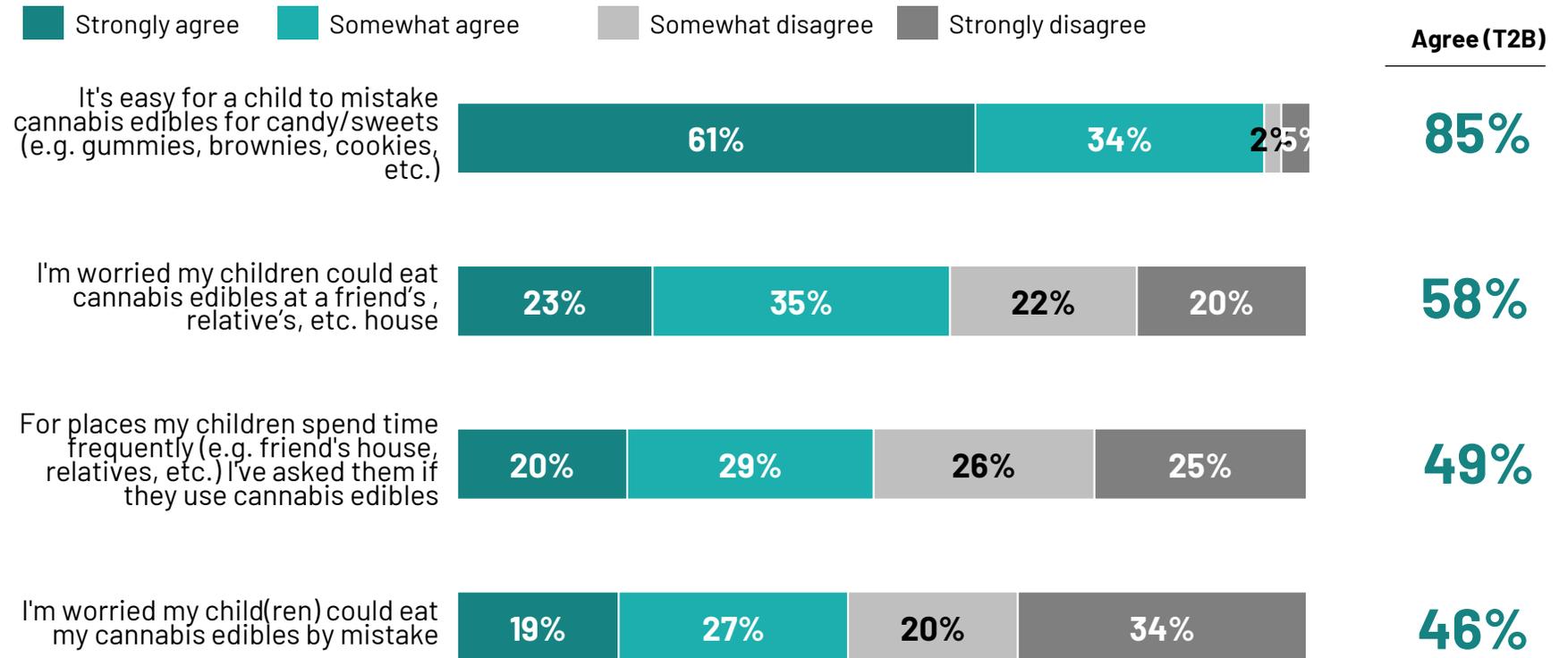
Considerations, if guest bring cannabis, to keep it away from children



Base: All non-cannabis users (n=65)
 Q.7b If a guest were to bring cannabis into your home, what actions would you take, or have you considered taking, to keep it away from children under 14?

85% of parents agree that it is easy for a child to mistake cannabis edibles for candy and yet only 46% are worried that their child could eat it by mistake.

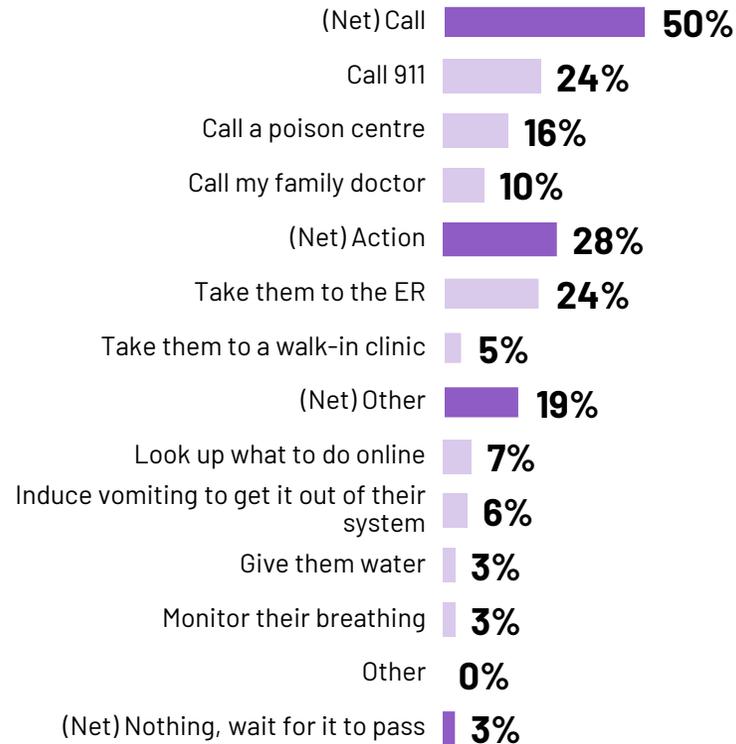
Men are more likely to agree to the statements compared to women. For example, they are more likely to agree they are worried that their child could eat at a friend's house (72% vs. 47% women), agree they have asked places if they use cannabis edibles (57% vs. 43%) and agree they worry their child could eat an edible by mistake (63% vs. 34% women).



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.8 How much do you agree or disagree with the following?.

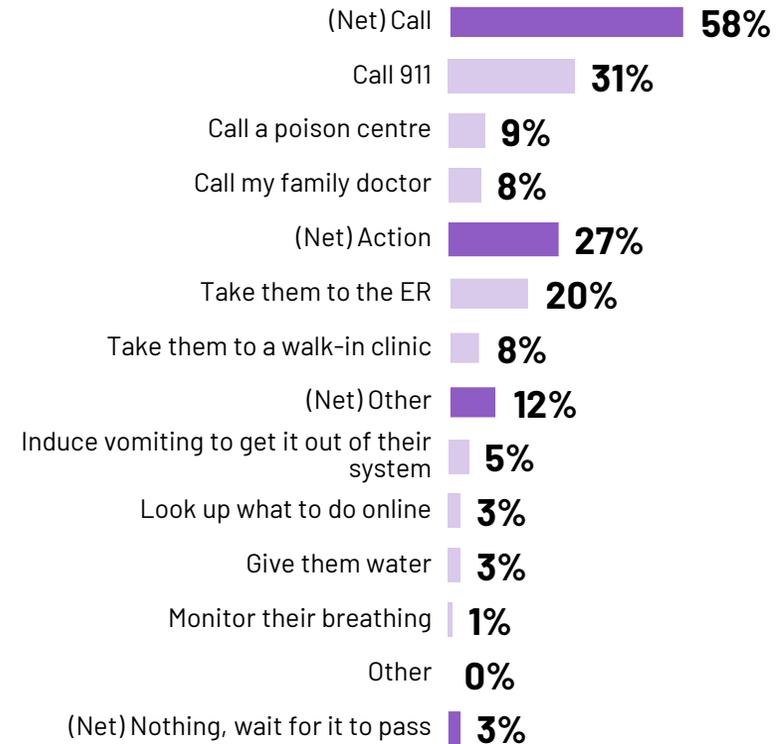
For both cannabis edible and adult medication accidents, calling 911 is the most common first action residents consider taking, followed by going to the ER.

First actions if child consumed a cannabis edible by mistake



Base: All respondents (n=153)
 Q.9a Sometimes things happen at home, what would you do first if a child consumed a cannabis edible by mistake?

First actions if child consumed a prescribed adult medication by mistake



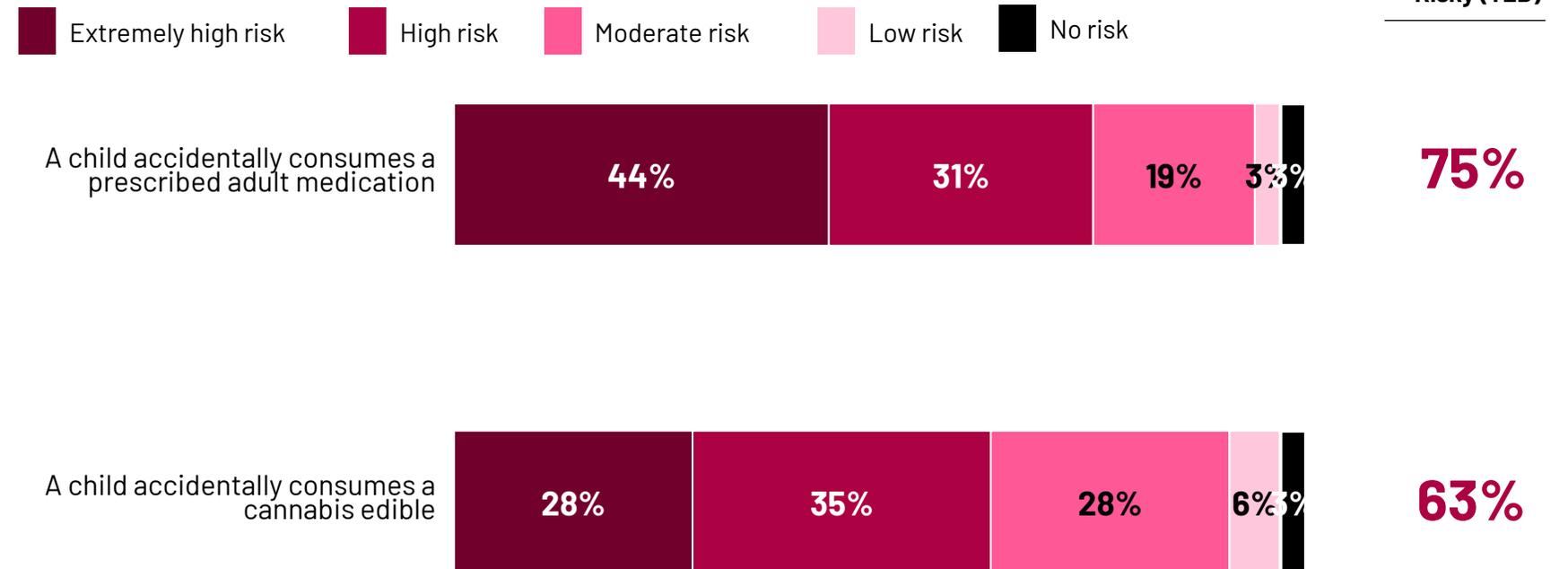
Base: All respondents (n=153)
 Q.9b Sometimes things happen at home, what would you do first if a child consumed a prescribed adult medication by mistake?

75% of parents perceive a child accidentally consuming an adult medication as extremely high or high risk, compared to 63% for cannabis consumption.

Women tend to perceive risk as higher than men for both accidental medication consumption (86% vs. 61% men) and cannabis consumption (72% vs. 52% men).

Parents with young children between the ages of 0-3 are significantly more likely to perceive both actions as extremely high or high risk (82% medication, 79% cannabis).

Perception of risk of potential harm to a child for each scenario

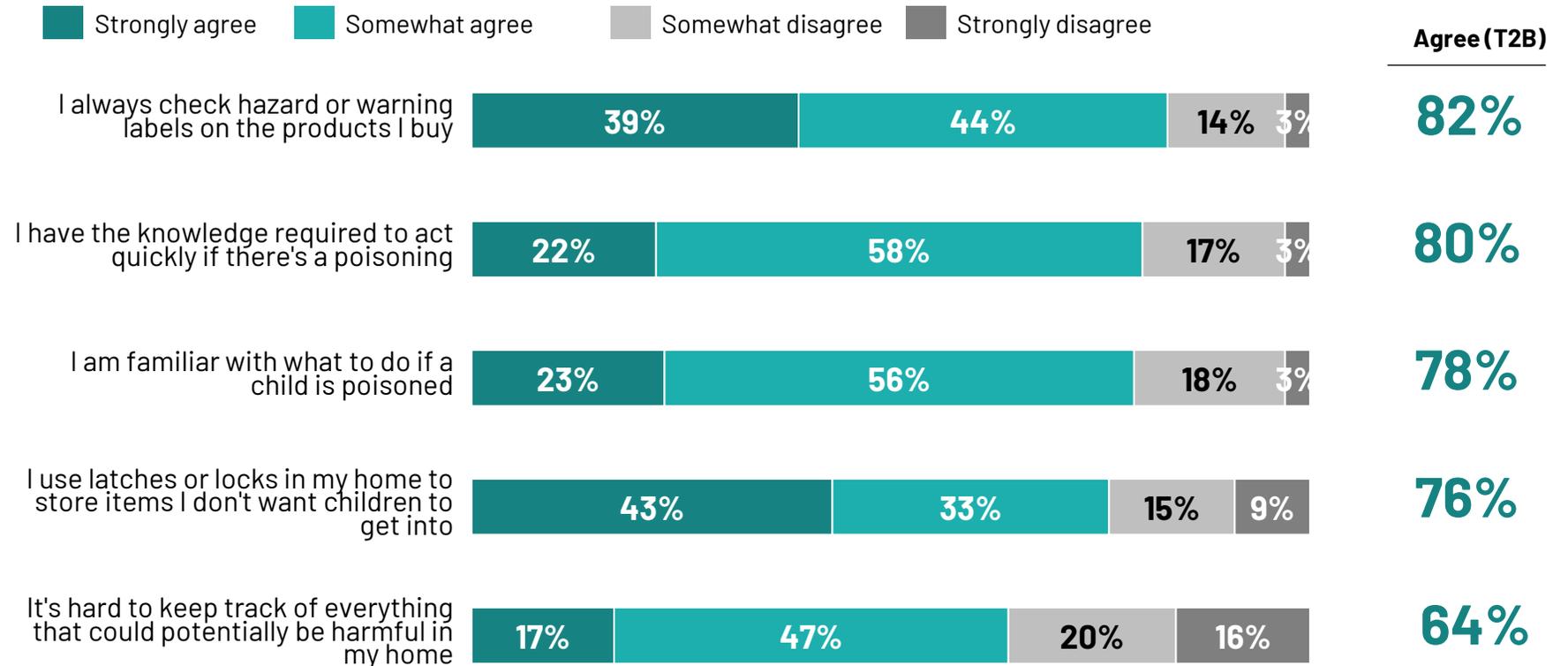


Base: All respondents (n=153)
 Q.10 For each scenario below, please rate the level of risk to a child, considering the potential harm they might experience.

Among parents, 8 in 10 agree they have the knowledge required to act quickly if there's a poisoning and are familiar with what to do if a child is poisoned.

Parents who are familiar with ACPC are more likely to agree to the statements compared to those who are unfamiliar with the organization.

Male parents are significantly more likely to agree that it is hard to keep track of everything that could potentially be harmful in their home (81% men vs. 51% women).



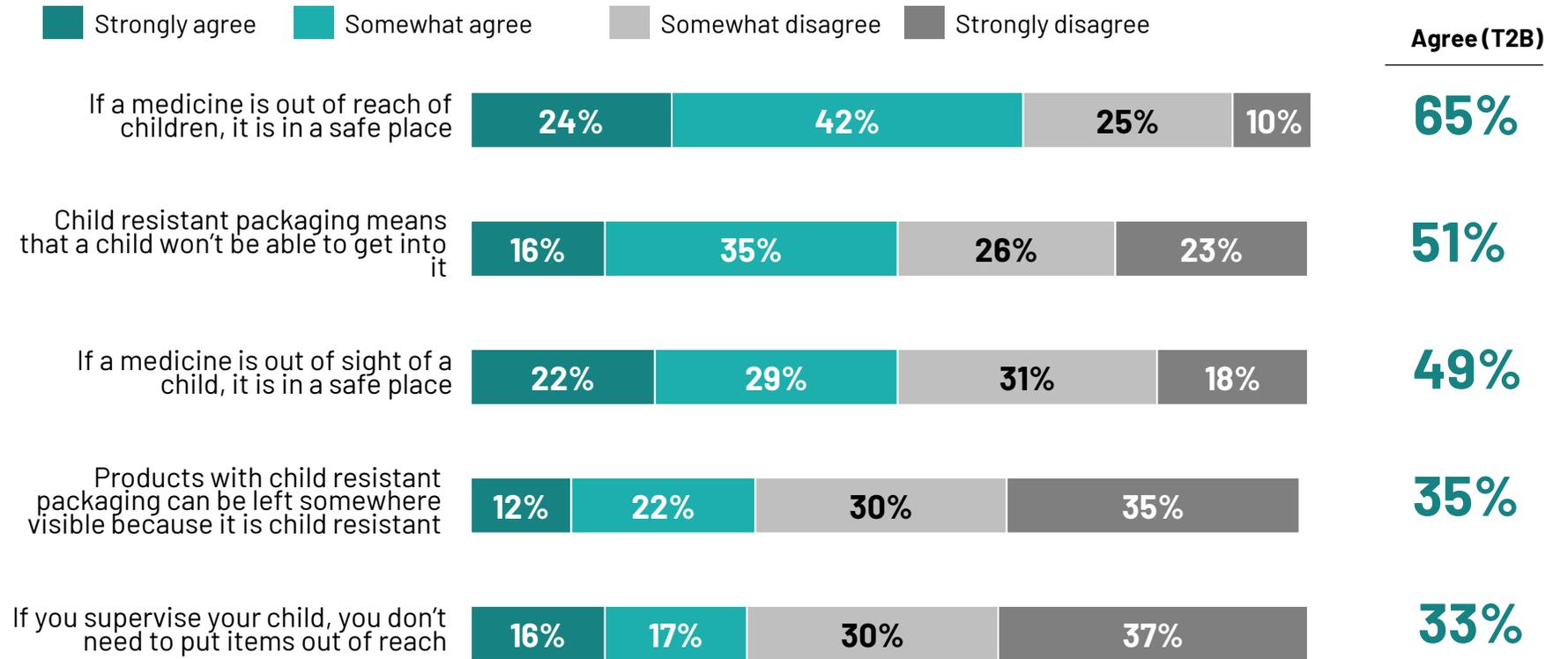
Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.11 How much do you agree or disagree with the following:

Conflicting views exist regarding the effectiveness and safety of child-resistant packaging and measures to protect children from harmful products.

Younger parents (aged 18-34) are more likely to agree with all the statements compared to older parents.

Similarly, cannabis users show significantly higher agreement levels than non-cannabis users.

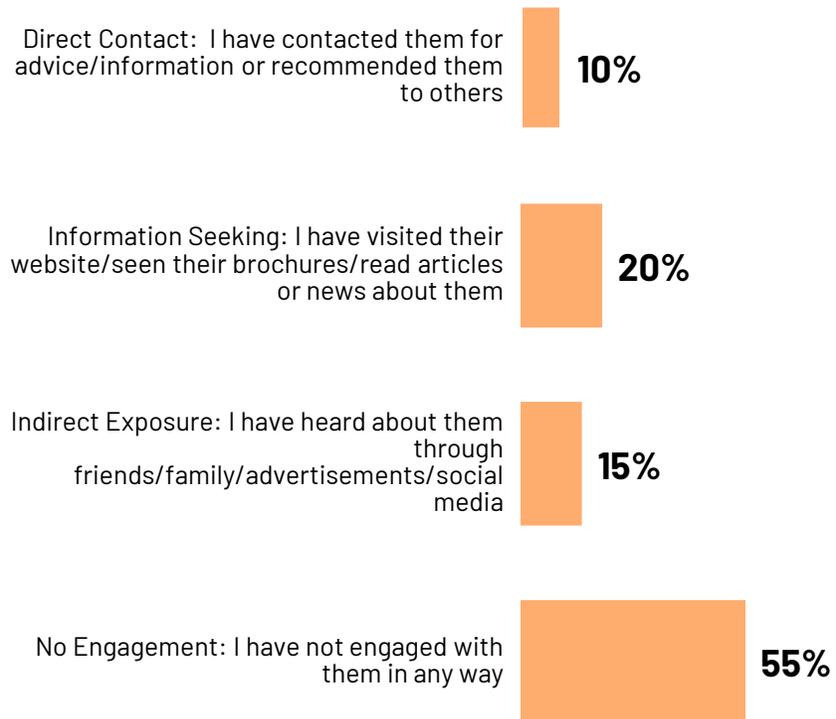
Additionally, parents familiar with CSL and ACPC are more likely to agree with the statements at large.



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.11 How much do you agree or disagree with the following:

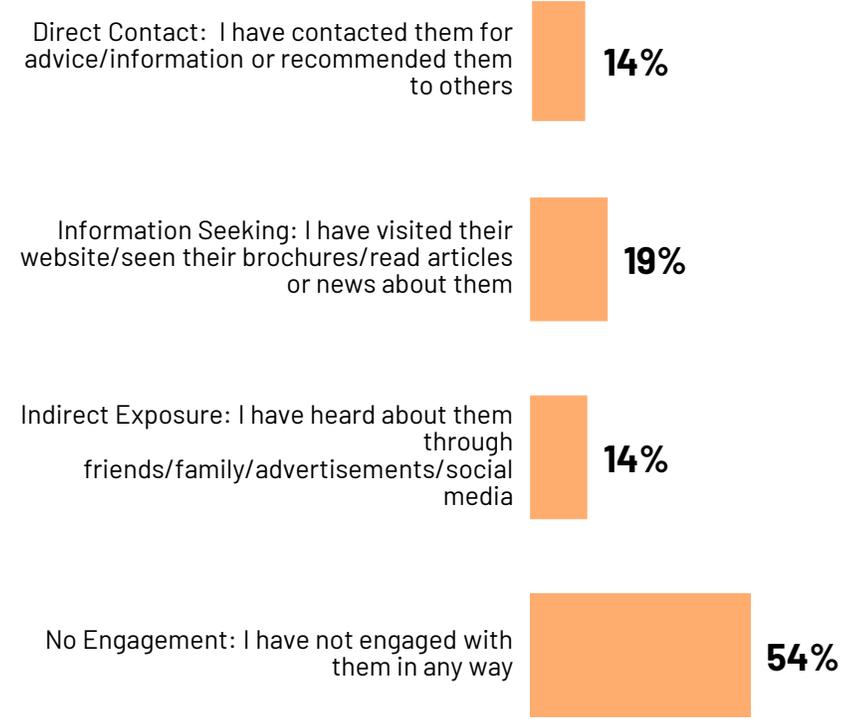
Over half of Nova Scotian parents have not interacted with CSL or ACPC, while 20% have visited their sites or heard news about these organizations.

Engagement with Child Safety Link (CSL)



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.12 Have you ever engaged with any of the following organizations in your area?
Child Safety Link (CSL)

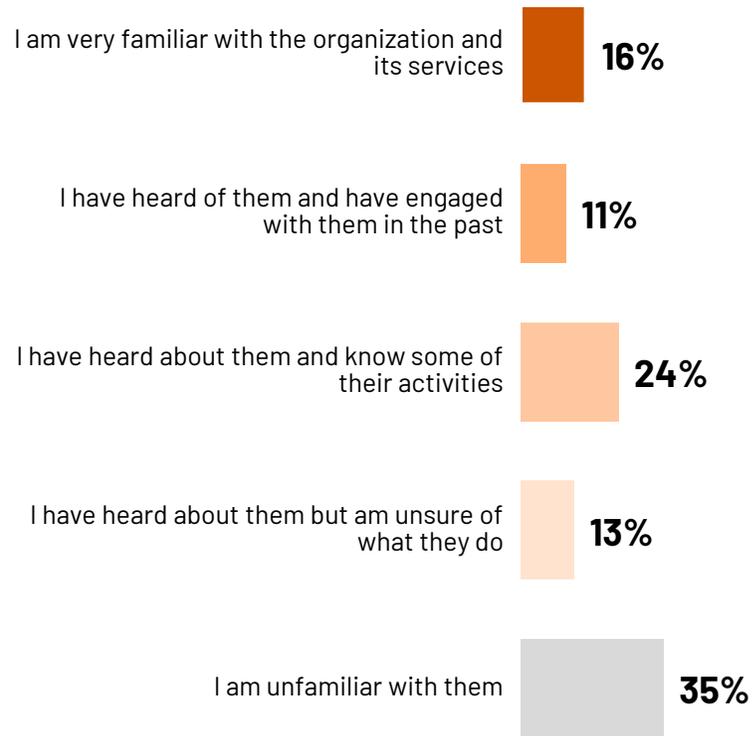
Engagement with Atlantic Canada Poison Centre (ACPC)



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.12 Have you ever engaged with any of the following organizations in your area?
Atlantic Canada Poison Centre (ACPC)

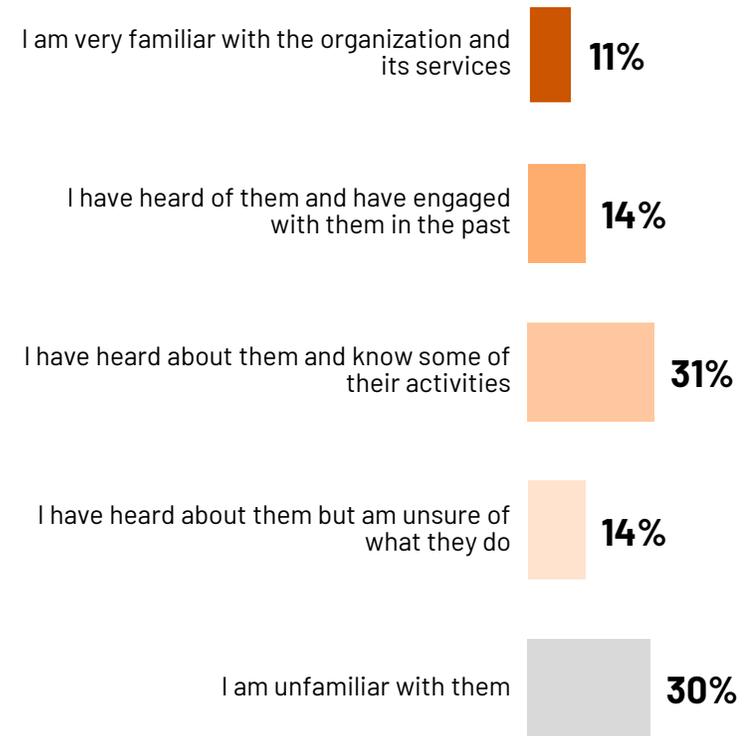
About a quarter of Nova Scotian parents are familiar and have prior engagement with CSL and ACPC in the past. About a third are unfamiliar to both organizations.

Familiarity with Child Safety Link (CSL)



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.13 How familiar are you with the following organizations in your area?
Child Safety Link (CSL)

Familiarity with Atlantic Canada Poison Centre (ACPC)



Base: All respondents (n=153)
Q.13 How familiar are you with the following organizations in your area?
Atlantic Canada Poison Centre (ACPC)

DEMOGRAPHICS



Demographics (1/2)



Gender



44%
Man

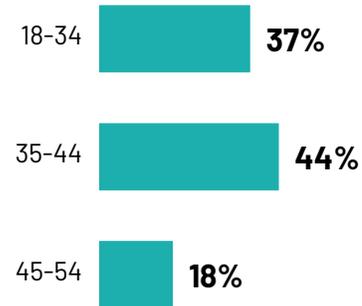


56%
Woman

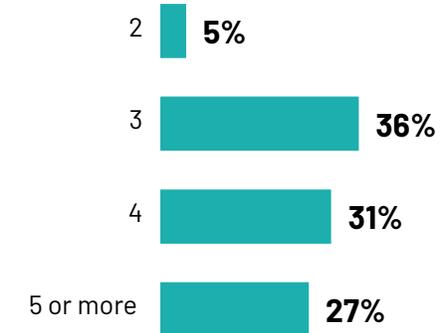
Another gender	0%
Prefer not to answer	0%



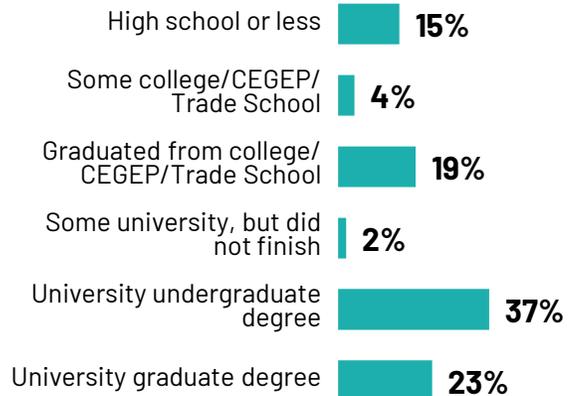
Age



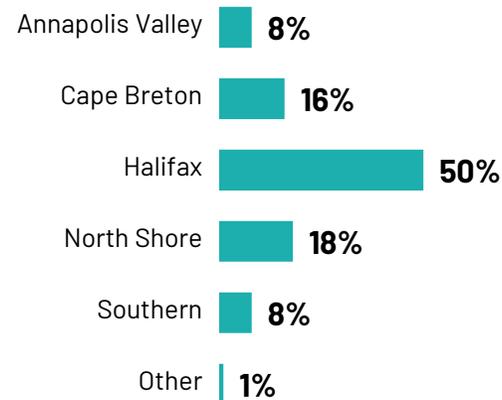
Household composition



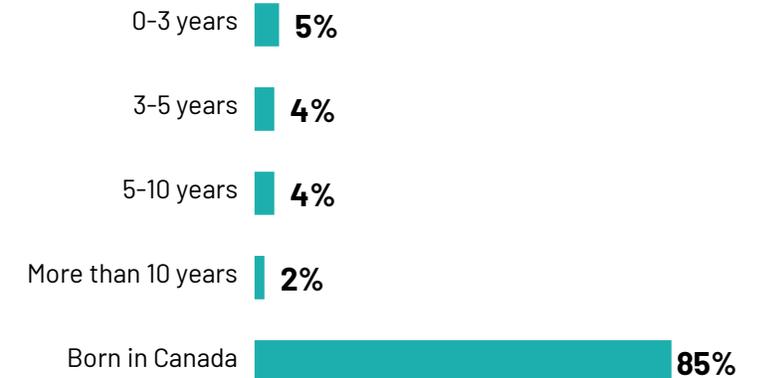
Education



Region



Length of time in Canada

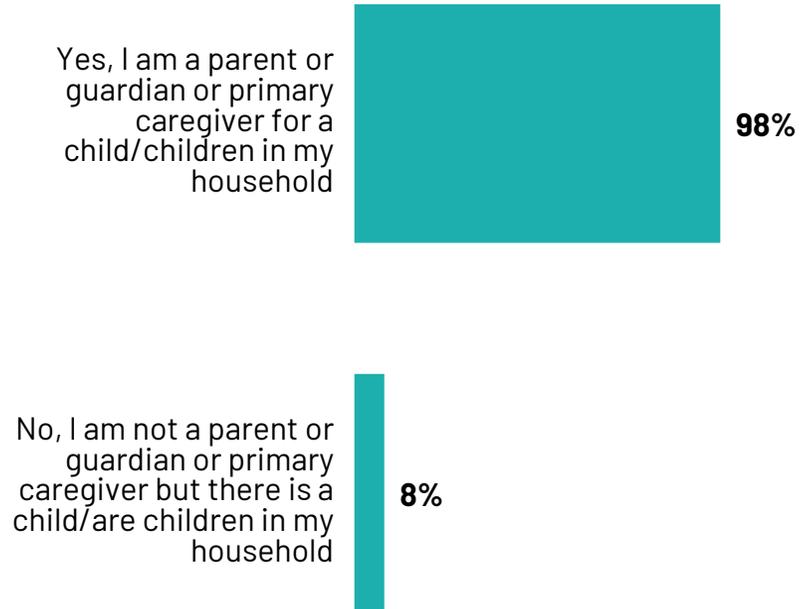


Base: All respondents (n=153)

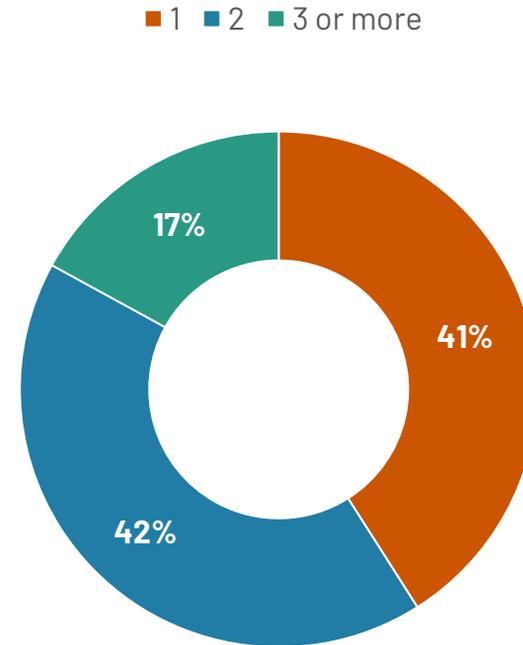
Demographics (2/2)



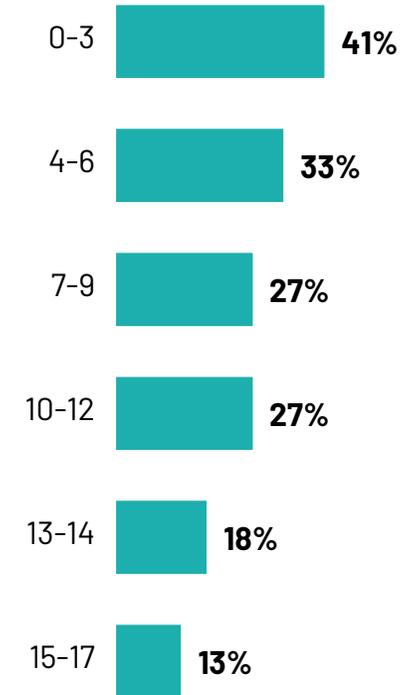
Parent / Guardian / Caregiver status



of children under 18



Children's age composition



Base: All respondents (n=153)

THANK YOU

NAME:

Hyejin Park
Account Manager

DETAILS:

Hyejin.Park@Ipsos.com