

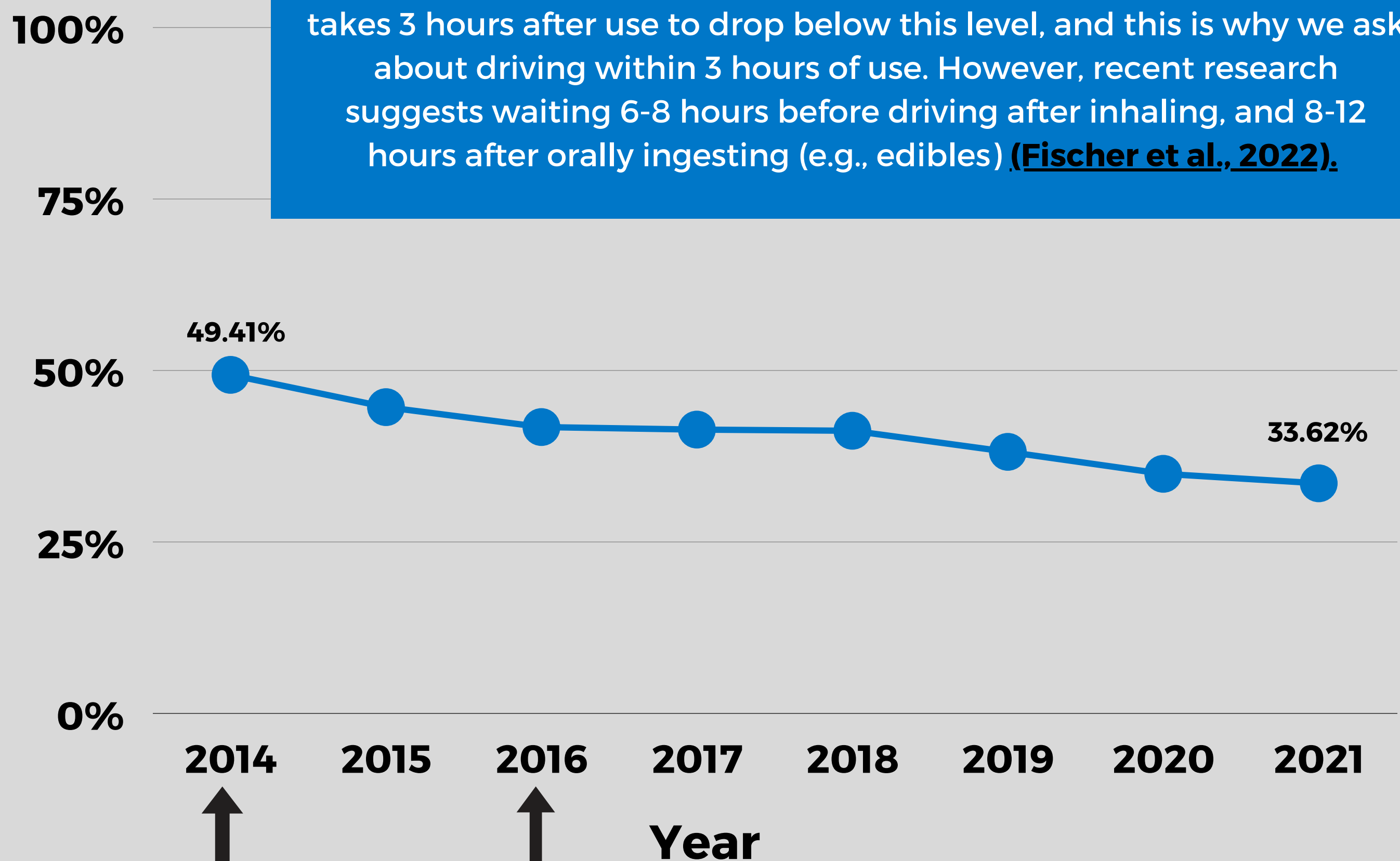
# Are Washington young adults driving impaired by cannabis?

## BACKGROUND

Washington state legalized non-medical use of cannabis for those over the age of 21 in 2012, and the first non-medical/retail store opened in Summer of 2014. **With the opening of non-medical/retail stores, researchers were interested how this would impact impaired driving by cannabis.** This is important because [cannabis impairs someone's ability to drive](#) similar to how alcohol impairs driving. In the Washington Young Adult Health Survey, **we asked 18-25 year olds in Washington if they've driven within 3 hours of using cannabis in the past 30 days** (more info [here](#)). Here are their answers.

## RESULTS

% of Washington young adults driving within 3 hours of using cannabis in the past 30 days



Washington's per se limit for DUI is 5 nanograms of THC per milliliter of blood. [Grotenhermen and colleagues \(2007\)](#) suggested it takes 3 hours after use to drop below this level, and this is why we ask about driving within 3 hours of use. However, recent research suggests waiting 6-8 hours before driving after inhaling, and 8-12 hours after orally ingesting (e.g., edibles) ([Fischer et al., 2022](#)).

First Retail Cannabis Store

Medical Outlets Closed

## MAIN POINTS

Driving after using cannabis is a form of impaired driving and should be avoided, just like driving after using alcohol.

Though rates are still high, driving impaired by cannabis has decreased since the opening of the first non-medical/retail cannabis store.

## HOW CAN I USE THIS INFORMATION?

### YOUNG ADULTS

Just as someone might act with another person who has been drinking alcohol, young adults should intervene and not allow someone to drive who is high from using cannabis. Young adults should plan alternative transportation when using cannabis and be cautious when using cannabis.

### PARENTS

### EDUCATORS

Parents and educators should take steps to prevent young adults from driving under the influence of cannabis, just as they would with driving under the influence of alcohol.

To ensure data were as representative as possible, post-stratification weights were applied to data, and unweighted findings were similar to weighted findings. The **Washington Young Adult Health Survey** is funded by the **Division of Behavioral Health & Recovery** in **Washington's Health Care Authority**.

Grotenhermen, F., Leson, G., Berghaus, G., Drummer, O. H., Krüger, H. P., Longo, M., Moskowitz, H., Perrine, B., Ramaekers, J. G., Smiley, A., & Tunbridge, R. (2007). Developing limits for driving under cannabis. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1360-0443.2007.02009.x>

Fischer, B., Robinson, T., Bullen, C., Curran, V., Jutras-Aswad, D., Medina-Mora, M. E., Pacula, R. L., Rehm, J., Room, R., Brink, W. V. D., & Hall, W. (2022). Lower-Risk Cannabis Use Guidelines (LRCUG) for reducing health harms from non-medical cannabis use: A comprehensive evidence and recommendations update. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2021.103381>

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