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Three-quarters of New Jerseyans Familiar With Proper Guidelines to Store and Dispose of Medications, Opioids and Edibles

Three in 10 say they or a family member has been prescribed opioid as pain medication

A majority of New Jerseyans are at least “somewhat” familiar with storage and disposal of opioids and other medications, and less than 3 in 10 report that they or a loved one has been prescribed an opioid as pain medication in the past two years, according to the latest Rutgers-Eagleton Poll collaboration with the [Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey](#).

Forty-two percent of residents polled in December say they are very familiar with the proper guidelines to store and dispose of any form of medication, opioids and/or edibles in a household, 32 percent are somewhat familiar and 23 percent aren't familiar; 2 percent are unsure.

“Sizeable familiarity with storage and disposal is likely due to state laws that require doctors to inform patients of the potential dangers of such medications and available alternatives, as well as PSAs from organizations like the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey and the presence of drop boxes and other advertised disposable opportunities within communities,” said [Ashley Koning](#), an assistant research professor and director of the [Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling](#) (ECPIP) at [Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#).

Twenty-nine percent say they or a family member has been prescribed an opioid as a pain medication in the past two years, while 68 percent say they haven't. There is little variation among subgroups.

“The percentage of New Jerseyans who claim they or a family member has been prescribed an opioid has significantly declined since we [last polled](#) the issue in 2018,” said Koning. “New Jersey is now one of the states with the [lowest opioid dispensing rates](#) in the country.”

Women claim to be slightly more familiar with storage and disposal guidelines than men. White residents likewise claim to be more familiar to some extent (82 percent) than Black residents (73 percent), Hispanic and Latino residents (63 percent) and residents who are multiracial or from other backgrounds (63 percent). Familiarity increased by double digits among older people compared with those 18 to 34 years old (55 percent).

Among those who say they or a family member has been prescribed an opioid as medication in the past two years, nine in 10 (91 percent) say they are at least somewhat familiar with storage and disposal guidelines, compared with seven in 10 (69 percent) of those who haven't been or whose family hasn't been prescribed opioids.

"We are encouraged by the heightened awareness among New Jerseyans about the proper storage and disposal of medications, including opioids," said Angelo Valente, executive director of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey. "But the persistent misuse of opioids within our communities underscores the need to continue our education and prevention efforts. Every resident must be equipped with life-saving information on the addictive properties of their medications, proper disposal methods, and the availability of safer, non-addictive alternatives to manage pain."

Thirty-eight percent say they have a family member or close friend who is or has ever been addicted to drugs; 59 percent say they don't.

Reports of knowing someone who has or has had an addiction are less common among residents who are multiracial or of other backgrounds (24 percent) compared with white residents (42 percent), Black residents (42 percent) and Hispanic or Latino residents (39 percent). Nearly half (46 percent) of those in the lowest income bracket report someone close to them being currently or formerly addicted to drugs. More than half (54 percent) of those living in the southwestern area of the state report having a loved one who has or has had an addiction, more than residents any other region of New Jersey. Those with some college education or less are more likely to report someone they care about being addicted at some point than those with a college degree or more education.

Those who say they or a family member has been prescribed opioids are slightly more than one-and-a-half times more likely than those who haven't had this experience to say they have a loved one who is or has been addicted to drugs (52 percent versus 32 percent, respectively).

Results are from a statewide poll of 1,657 adults contacted through multiple modes, including by live interviewer on landline and cell phone, MMS text invitation to web and the probability-based [Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) from Dec. 13 to Dec. 23. The full sample has a margin of error of +/- 2.8 percentage points. The registered voter subsample contains 1,451 registered voters and has a margin of error of +/- 3.0 percentage points.

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Broadcast interviews: Rutgers University–New Brunswick has broadcast-quality television and radio studios available for remote live or taped interviews with Rutgers experts. For more information, contact Jessica Ronan-Frisch at jronan@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

ABOUT RUTGERS UNIVERSITY–NEW BRUNSWICK

Rutgers University–New Brunswick is where Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, began more than 250 years ago. Ranked among the world’s top 60 universities, Rutgers’s flagship university is a leading public research institution and a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities. It is home to internationally acclaimed faculty and has 12 degree-granting schools and a Division I Athletics program. It is the Big Ten Conference’s most diverse university. Through its community of teachers, scholars, artists, scientists and healers, Rutgers is equipped as never before to transform lives.

ABOUT THE EAGLETON CENTER FOR PUBLIC INTEREST POLLING

Home of the Rutgers-Eagleton Poll, the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPIP) was established in 1971 and is the oldest and one of the most respected university-based statewide polling operations in the United States. Now in its 52nd year and with the publication of over 200 polls, ECPIP’s mission is to provide scientifically sound, nonpartisan information about public opinion. To read more about ECPIP and view all of our press releases, published research and data archive, please visit our website: eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. You can also visit our [Facebook](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#).

ABOUT THE EAGLETON INSTITUTE OF POLITICS

The Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling is a unit of the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers University–New Brunswick. The Eagleton Institute studies how American politics and government work and change, analyzes how the democracy might improve and promotes political participation and civic engagement. The Institute explores state and national politics through research, education and public service, linking the study of politics with its day-to-day practice. To learn more about Eagleton programs and expertise, visit eagleton.rutgers.edu.

ABOUT THE RUTGERS-EAGLETON/SSRS GARDEN STATE PANEL

[The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel](#) is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults age 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. The ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98 percent-99 percent range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. This data is stored securely and used to determine eligibility for specific studies (if needed). The Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. Internet households participate via web while all non-internet households (including those who have internet but are unwilling to take surveys online) participate via phone. Panelists also have the option of taking surveys in their preferred language (English or Spanish).

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A DRUG-FREE NEW JERSEY

Best known for its statewide substance use prevention advertising campaign, the [Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey](#) is a private not-for-profit coalition of professionals from the communications, corporate and government communities whose collective mission is to reduce demand for illicit drugs in New Jersey through media communication. To date, more than \$200 million in broadcast time and print space has been donated to the partnership's New Jersey campaign, making it the largest public service advertising campaign in New Jersey's history. Since its inception, the partnership has garnered 226 advertising and public relations awards from national, regional and statewide media organizations.

QUESTIONS AND TABLES START ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

Questions and Tables

The questions covered in this release are listed below. Column percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. Respondents are New Jersey adults; all percentages are of weighted results. Interpret groups with samples sizes under 100 with extreme caution.

Q1 Have you or a family member been prescribed an opioid as a pain medication over the past two years, or not? An opioid painkiller is a narcotic pain medication that is typically prescribed when pain is severe, such as OxyContin, Percocet, or Vicodin.

Yes	29%
No	68%
Don't know	3%
Unweighted N=	1652

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Yes	27%	30%	31%	28%	29%	32%	24%	32%	17%	26%	31%	30%	28%
No	70%	65%	69%	68%	67%	66%	69%	63%	80%	66%	67%	68%	71%
DK	4%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%	7%	5%	2%	8%	3%	1%	1%
Unwt N=	604	655	380	853	788	1072	159	213	180	438	359	454	399

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Yes	31%	27%	33%	30%	26%	25%	30%	33%	36%	26%	34%	28%	30%
No	62%	70%	66%	69%	70%	72%	68%	65%	59%	69%	62%	72%	69%
DK	7%	3%	1%	1%	4%	3%	3%	2%	4%	6%	4%	1%	1%
Unwt N=	332	455	297	424	225	616	256	283	272	380	391	410	468

O2 How familiar are you with the proper guidelines to store and dispose of any form of medication, opioids, and/or edibles in a household?

Very familiar	42%
Somewhat familiar	32%
Not familiar	23%
Don't know	2%
Unweighted N=	1651

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Very	41%	38%	50%	38%	46%	47%	49%	36%	27%	26%	44%	52%	48%
Somewhat	34%	33%	30%	33%	31%	35%	24%	27%	36%	29%	29%	33%	38%
Not	24%	25%	18%	26%	21%	16%	25%	33%	35%	41%	24%	13%	14%
DK	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%	2%	1%
Unwt N=	602	654	382	853	787	1073	159	212	179	437	358	454	400

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Very	45%	39%	45%	43%	39%	37%	46%	51%	45%	41%	46%	36%	44%
Somewhat	29%	36%	29%	35%	30%	31%	31%	33%	37%	29%	33%	34%	35%
Not	23%	24%	24%	22%	28%	30%	22%	13%	16%	25%	19%	28%	20%
DK	4%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	4%	2%	1%	1%
Unwt N=	333	454	297	424	224	617	255	284	271	381	389	410	468

	Self or Family Prescribed Opioid(s) in Last Two Years (per O1)	
	Yes	No
Very	64%	34%
Somewhat	27%	35%
Not	9%	29%
DK	1%	2%
Unwt N=	484	1116

Q4 Do you have a family member or close friend who is or has ever been addicted to drugs, or not?

Yes	38%
No	59%
Don't know	3%
Unweighted N=	1654

	Party ID			Gender		Race or Ethnicity				Age			
	Dem	Ind	Rep	Man	Woman	Wht	Blk	Hisp	Other	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Yes	37%	39%	38%	38%	38%	42%	42%	39%	24%	36%	45%	39%	32%
No	60%	57%	61%	59%	59%	57%	51%	57%	73%	59%	53%	59%	65%
DK	3%	4%	1%	3%	3%	2%	7%	4%	3%	5%	2%	2%	3%
Unwt N=	603	656	382	854	789	1074	159	213	180	438	359	455	400

	Income				Region					Education			
	<\$50K	\$50K- <\$100K	\$100K- <\$150K	\$150K+	Urban	Suburb	Exurban	Phil/ South	Shore	HS or less	Some college	College grad	Grad work
Yes	46%	37%	36%	35%	30%	33%	40%	54%	40%	40%	46%	34%	33%
No	50%	61%	60%	63%	65%	64%	56%	43%	60%	57%	52%	64%	63%
DK	4%	2%	4%	2%	5%	4%	3%	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	4%
Unwt N=	333	455	297	424	225	617	255	285	272	382	391	410	468

	Self or Family Prescribed Opioid(s) in Last Two Years (per O1)	
	Yes	No
Yes	52%	32%
No	46%	65%
DK	2%	2%
Unwt N=	484	1117

Methodology

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was conducted from December 13 to 23, 2023 with a scientifically selected random sample of 1,657 New Jersey adults, 18 or older. Three samples were used for this study – a dual-frame RDD landline and cell samples, a separate cell RDD sample, and sample from the [Rutgers-Eagleton/Garden State Panel](#).

The Rutgers-Eagleton/Garden State Panel is a probability-based panel of New Jersey adults age 18 or older. Members are recruited randomly based on statewide representative ABS (Address Based Sample) design. ABS sample is drawn from the Delivery Sequence File (DSF) maintained by the U.S. Postal Service. Population coverage of the DSF is in the 98%-99% range. During the recruitment process, full demographic information on panelists is collected. The Rutgers/SSRS Garden State Panel is a multi-mode panel. For this poll, only Internet households were invited to participate via web; non-internet households were not included.

This study employed three recruitment methods: calling with live interviewers (n=521), one-to-one push-to-web texting (n=532), and web recruitment (n=604). Distribution of recruitment method in this sample is:

Call	31%
Text-to-Web	22%
Web	37%

Each of the three samples was base weighted and calibrated separately. The three samples were also combined and calibrated together, overall and by form.

The data were weighted to be representative of the residential adult population of New Jersey. The weighting balances sample demographics to target population parameters. The sample is balanced, by form and overall, to match parameters for sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, region and phone use. The sex, age, education, race/ethnicity, and region parameters were derived from 2022 American Community Survey PUMS data. The phone use parameter was derived from estimates provided by the National Health Interview Survey Early Release Program.¹

The base weight for the dual-frame RDD sample corrects for different probabilities of selection across the telephone samples associated with the number of adults in each household and each respondent's telephone usage patterns. This adjustment also accounts for the overlapping landline and cell sample frames and the relative sizes of each frame and each sample.²

Base weights for the Garden State Panel were the base weights associated with the initial recruitment sampling and the sampling from the panel for this particular data collection. The base weights for the RDD cell sample were set to 1.0.

The final stage of weighting calibrates sample demographics, overall and by form, to match target population benchmark distributions. This weighting was accomplished using SPSSINC RAKE, an SPSS

¹ NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2018–2020; U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017–2019.

² Buskirk, T. D., & Best, J. (2012). Venn Diagrams, Probability 101 and Sampling Weights Computed for Dual Frame Telephone RDD Designs. *Journal of Statistics and Mathematics*, 15, 3696-3710.

extension module that simultaneously balances the distributions of all variables using the GENLOG procedure. Weights were trimmed to prevent individual interviews from having too much influence on survey estimates. The use of these weights in statistical analysis ensures that the demographic characteristics of the sample closely approximate the demographic characteristics of the target population.

Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response. The total sample design effect for this survey is 1.39.

All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. Sampling error should be adjusted to recognize the effect of weighting the data to better match the population. In this poll, the simple sampling error for 1,657 New Jersey adults is +/-2.4 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence interval. The design effect³ is 1.39, making the adjusted margin of error +/- 2.8 percentage points. Thus, if 50 percent of New Jersey adults in this sample favor a particular position, we would be 95 percent sure that the true figure is between 47.2 and 52.8 percent (50 +/- 2.8) if all New Jersey adults had been interviewed, rather than just a sample.

Sampling error is only one possible source of error in a survey estimate. Sampling error does not consider other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as selection bias, non-response bias, question wording, context effects, or reporting accuracy, which may contribute additional error.

This Rutgers-Eagleton Poll was fielded by SSRS through the Rutgers-Eagleton/SSRS Garden State Panel, Braun Research, Inc., using live interviewers, and Response Now using one-to-one push-to-web texting. Sample was provided by Dynata. The questionnaire was developed and all data analyses were completed in house by the Eagleton Center for Public Interest Polling (ECPiP). Jessica Roman assisted with analysis and preparation of this report. The Rutgers-Eagleton Poll is paid for and sponsored by the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, a non-partisan academic center for the study of politics and the political process. Full questionnaires are available on request and can also be accessed through our archives at eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu. For more information, please contact poll@eagleton.rutgers.edu.

³ Post-data collection statistical adjustments require analysis procedures that reflect departures from simple random sampling. We calculate the effects of these design features so that an appropriate adjustment can be incorporated into tests of statistical significance when using these data. The so-called "design effect" or *deff* represents the loss in statistical efficiency that results from a disproportionate sample design and systematic non-response.

Weighted Demographics
1,657 New Jersey Adults 18+
Overall Margin of Error = +/- 2.8 percentage points

Please note: Totals may equal slightly more or less than 100% due to rounding.

		deff	MOE			deff	MOE
Man	49%	1.38	+/- 3.9%	White	55%	1.34	+/- 3.5%
Woman	51%	1.39	+/- 4.1%	Black	12%	1.32	+/- 8.9%
				Hispanic	20%	1.28	+/- 7.6%
18-34	27%	1.45	+/- 5.6%	Other	14%	1.28	+/- 8.3%
35-49	24%	1.32	+/- 5.9%				
50-64	27%	1.39	+/- 5.4%	<50K	25%	1.38	+/- 6.3%
65+	22%	1.36	+/- 5.7%	50K-<100K	31%	1.42	+/- 5.5%
				100K-<150K	19%	1.37	+/- 6.7%
Democrat	36%	1.41	+/- 4.7%	150K+	25%	1.35	+/- 5.5%
Independent	42%	1.37	+/- 4.5%				
Republican	22%	1.38	+/- 5.9%	Urban	16%	1.36	+/- 7.6%
				Suburb	35%	1.38	+/- 4.6%
HS or Less	32%	1.27	+/- 5.7%	Exurban	14%	1.39	+/- 7.2%
Some College	26%	1.36	+/- 5.8%	Phil/South	18%	1.38	+/- 6.8%
College Grad	20%	1.35	+/- 5.6%	Shore	17%	1.39	+/- 7.0%
Grad Work	22%	1.32	+/- 5.2%				