

Underage Drinking Fact Sheet

- Underage drinking remains a persistent problem among youth, though there are signs progress is being made. According to the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, about 10.8 million Americans between ages 12-20 report current alcohol consumption; this represents nearly 28% of this age group for whom alcohol use is illegal. Among 12-20 year olds, the rates of past month consumption and binge drinking reported in the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health are similar to estimates reported since 2002.
 - Among 12-20 year olds, approximately 7.2 million (19%) reported having engaged in binge drinking and 2.4 million (6%) in heavy drinking.
 - In 2006, more males than females 12- to 20-year olds reported current alcohol consumption (29% v. 27%, respectively), binge drinking (21% v. 17%) and heavy drinking (8% v. 4%). However, among 12- to 17-year olds, the percentage of females who report drinking in the past month (17%) remains slightly higher, although not significantly, than their male peers (16%).
 - Among older age groups, the prevalence of current alcohol consumption decreases with increasing age, however, among America's youth the rate of current alcohol consumption increases with increasing age according to the 2006 survey, from 2% at age 12 to 6% at age 13, 12% at age 14, 19% at age 15, 27% at age 16, 32% at age 17, 46% at age 18, 52% at age 19, and 57% at age 20. The rate reaches a peak at 71% among persons 22 years old.
- According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), first use of alcohol is typically reported to begin around age 12.
- According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), children who begin drinking before the age of 15 have a four times greater chance of becoming alcoholic as an adult than those who begin at 21, the legal drinking age.
- Progress continues to be made in the fight against underage drinking according to the 2005-06 Pride Survey. The National Summary of the Pride Survey, again recorded an all time low level, and a statistically significant decrease, in the number of students who reported they drank alcohol in the past year.
- According to the 19th Annual Pride Survey, among all students in grades 6 to 12, reported annual and monthly consumption of any alcohol product decreased significantly from the previous school year. Annual consumption rates decreased from 47.2 percent in the 2004-05 school year to 45.4 in 2005-06 – a statistically significant decrease and record low level. Monthly consumption decreased from 22.5 percent in 2004-05 to 21.4 in the current survey school year – a statistically significant one year decrease.

- The 2007 Monitoring the Future study also showed declining alcohol consumption among American youth. All three grade levels surveyed showed small declines in alcohol consumption this year, however none were statistically significant. The declines noted in 2007, while not always statistically significant, are notable because they reflect a longer-term gradual decline in underage drinking.
- Nearly four out of ten students have consumed alcohol at least once by the end of eighth grade and slightly more than seven out of ten students have done so by the end of high school. That is, 39% of eighth grade students, 62% of tenth graders, and 72% of twelfth graders report they have tried alcohol. The figures represent a lifetime alcohol consumption decline of nearly two percentage point among 8th graders, and a slight decline among 12th graders, while lifetime consumption among 10th graders remained relatively unchanged from 2006.
- The 2007 Monitoring the Future survey revealed a decline in the annual rate of alcohol consumption among 8th and 12th graders from 2006 to 2007, with both grade levels reaching new record low levels. Annual consumption among 10th graders increased slightly from 55.8% in 2006 to 56.3% in 2007. Annual consumption rates among 8th and 12th graders for 2007 were 32% and 66%, respectively.
- In 2007, reported monthly consumption rates declined among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders. So did the percentage of students in each grade saying they had been drunk in the month prior to the survey. Ten-year trends show significant reductions in both measures.
 - Specifically, 16% of 8th graders report consuming alcohol in the past month – a new record low – down 39% proportionally, from a record high of 26% in 1996. Tenth graders reported monthly consumption rate is down 17% to 33%, and 12th graders 30-day consumption rate – also setting a new record low – is down 15% proportionally over the past decade.
 - Setting a historic low, all three grades reported an estimated one-percentage point decrease in self-reported *been drunk* in the past 30-days from 2006 to 2007 – 6% of 8th graders, 33% of 10th graders, and 44% of 12th graders.
- According to the 2007 Monitoring the Future Study, reported incidents of binge drinking, that is having five or more drinks in a row in the last two weeks, declined among 8th graders, were unchanged among 10th graders, and increased slightly among high school seniors.
- The greater declines in alcohol consumption among 8th graders may be a reflection of the decline in their reported availability of alcohol. Reported availability of alcohol among 8th graders has declined 18% from a record high of 75% in 1996 to a new record low of 62% in 2007. Tenth and twelfth graders also noted a decline in the availability of alcohol over the past year.
- A qualitative research study conducted by Amica Insurance confirmed that teenagers whose parents *talk with them* versus *talk at them* might be less at risk to engage in harmful behavior involving alcohol. What's more, teens said they would be more apt not

to drink and drive if they had heard directly from their parents how important they are to them.

- Only one in four teens in America (27 percent, about 6.5 million) lives with "hands-on" parents – parents who have established a household culture of rules and expectations for their teen's behavior and monitor what their teens do: such as the TV shows they watch, the CD's they buy, what they access on the Internet, and where they are spending evenings and weekends. These teens are at one quarter the risk of smoking, drinking and using drugs when compared with teens who have "hands-off" parents, according to a new survey of 1,000 American teens ages 12-17 conducted by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA).
- According to the Fall 2008 TRU Study from Teenage Research Unlimited, drinking and driving continues to be an issue of great importance to teens. Four out of ten teens (42%) cite drinking and driving as an issue they care about, making it one of teens' top life-and-death issues and ranking it second overall, following child abuse and ahead of such issues as AIDS, abortion, racism, education, sexual assault, drug abuse, war, and terrorism. Thirty-four percent of twenty-somethings cite drinking and driving as one of their top five social concerns; females are significantly more concerned about the issue than their male peers.
- In 2006, an estimated 30.5 million people aged 12 and older drove under the influence of alcohol at least once during the past year. These data reflect a significant decrease of nearly five percent from the 31.7 million in 2005. Similar to current month consumption rates, driving under the influence increases with age among youth – 8% among 16- to 17-year olds, 20% among 18- to 20-year olds, and 27% among 21- to 25 years at which age the rates show a general decline with increasing age.
 - Males aged 12 and older are nearly twice as likely as females to report they driving under the influence of alcohol in the past year (16% and 9%, respectively.)
- Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for 16- to 20-year olds. In 2006, 1,648 youths between the ages of 16 and 20 were fatally injured in a crash that involved at least one driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level of .08 or higher, and increase of nearly 4% from 2005. Among 16-20 year old drivers, 7,286 were involved in a fatal crash, and 11% of these drivers had a BAC level of .08 or higher.

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