

HANDS-ON Health

Health Wave Newsletter

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Current Trends in Drug Use/Abuse: 2016 MONITORING THE FUTURE SURVEY RESULTS



The Monitoring the Future** (MTF) survey has studied annually the extent of drug use among 12th-graders since 1975 and, since 1991, it was expanded to include 8th- and 10th-graders. It is funded by The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. The researchers' goal is to collect data on *past month*, *past year*, and *lifetime* drug use among students in these grade levels.

MTF, now in its 42nd year, tracks smoking, drinking, and illicit drug use among the nation's secondary school students. Overall, 45,473 students from 372 public and private schools in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades participated in this year's survey.

"Clearly our public health prevention efforts, as well as policy changes to reduce availability, are working to

Areas of Concern:

- Teens who live in states where medical marijuana is legal report a higher use of marijuana edibles. For example, among 12th graders reporting marijuana use in the past year, 40.2 percent consumed marijuana in food in states with medical marijuana laws compared to 28.1 percent in states without such laws.
- Non-medical use of the prescription amphetamine Adderall, typically given for ADHD, remains high at 7.5 percent among 12th graders.
- The majority of teens continue to say they get most of their opioid pain relievers (for non-medical use) from friends or relatives, either taken, bought or given. The only prescription drugs seen as easier to get in 2016 than last year are tranquilizers, with 11.4 percent of eighth graders reporting they would be "fairly easy" or "very easy" to get, up from 9.8 percent in 2015.
- As e-cigarettes are currently unregulated, there is limited data on what chemicals teens are actually smoking. However, when asked what they inhaled the last time they used an e-cigarette, only about 20 percent said they were using nicotine. Most say they inhaled flavoring alone and many admitted they were unsure what they inhaled. In fact, about 13 percent of eighth graders who use e-cigarettes said they did not know what was in the device they used. Furthermore, some products labeled nicotine-free may actually contain nicotine.

reduce teen drug use, especially among eighth graders," said Nora D. Volkow, M.D., director of NIDA. "However, when 6 percent of high school seniors are using marijuana daily, and new synthetics are continually flooding the illegal marketplace, we cannot be complacent. We also need to learn more about how teens interact with each other in this social media era, and how those behaviors affect substance use rates."

** Miech, R. A., Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (December 13, 2016). "Most youth use e-cigarettes for novelty, flavors - not to quit smoking." University of Michigan News Service: Ann Arbor, MI. Retrieved 1/7/2017 from <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org>

Tobacco Use

Teen smoking in all three grades continued to decline in 2016. "Since the peak year in 1997, the proportion of students currently smoking has dropped by two thirds — an extremely important development for the health and longevity of this generation of Americans," said Lloyd Johnston, the principal investigator of the study.

Between 2012 and 2016 the percentage of students reporting any ciga-

Positive Trends:

- Findings from the survey indicate that past year use of any illicit drug was the lowest in the survey's history for eighth graders, while past year use of illicit drugs other than marijuana is down from recent peaks in all three grades.
- From 1996 to 2016, there was a steady decline in past-month cigarette use among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders. In 2016, past-month use for each grade was:
12th grade: 10.5%
10th grade: 4.9%
8th grade: 2.6%
- Although non-medical use of prescription opioids remains a serious issue in the adult population, teen use of prescription opioid pain relievers is trending downwards among 12th graders with a 45 percent drop in past year use compared to five years ago. For example, only 2.9 percent of high school seniors reported past year misuse of the pain reliever Vicodin in 2016, compared to nearly 10 percent a decade ago.
- Across all grades, past-year use of inhalants, heroin, methamphetamine, alcohol, cigarettes, and synthetic cannabinoids are at their lowest by many measures.
- Use of MDMA (also known as Ecstasy or Molly); Past year use is down among eighth graders to 1 percent, from last year's 1.4 percent. MDMA use is at its lowest point for all three grades in the history of the MTF survey.

rette smoking in the prior 30 days has decreased among 8th graders from 4.9 percent to 2.6 percent, among 10th graders from 10.8 percent to 4.9 percent, and

CIGARETTE USE

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Lifetime																			
8th Grade	45.7	44.1	40.5	36.6	31.4	28.4	27.9	25.9	24.6	22.1	20.5	20.1	20.0	18.4	15.5	14.8	13.5	13.3	9.8
10th Grade	57.7	57.6	55.1	52.8	47.4	43.0	40.7	38.9	36.1	34.6	31.7	32.7	33.0	30.4	27.7	25.7	22.6	19.9	17.5
12th Grade	65.3	64.6	62.5	61.0	57.2	53.7	52.8	50.0	47.1	46.2	44.7	43.6	42.2	40.0	39.5	38.1	34.4	31.1	28.3
30-day use																			
8th Grade	19.1	17.5	14.6	12.2	10.7	10.2	9.2	9.3	8.7	7.1	6.8	6.5	7.1	6.1	4.9	4.5	4.0	3.6	2.6
10th Grade	27.6	25.7	23.9	21.3	17.7	16.7	16.0	14.9	14.5	14.0	12.3	13.1	13.6	11.8	10.8	9.1	7.2	6.3	4.9
12th Grade	35.1	34.6	31.4	29.5	26.7	24.4	25.0	23.2	21.6	21.6	20.4	20.1	19.2	18.7	17.1	16.3	13.6	11.4	10.5
Daily use																			
8th Grade	8.8	8.1	7.4	5.5	5.1	4.5	4.4	4.0	4.0	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.9	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.4	1.3	0.9
10th Grade	15.8	15.9	14.0	12.2	10.1	8.9	8.3	7.5	7.6	7.2	5.9	6.3	6.6	5.5	5.0	4.4	3.2	3.0	1.9
12th Grade	22.4	23.1	20.6	19.0	16.9	15.8	15.6	13.6	12.2	12.3	11.4	11.2	10.7	10.3	9.3	8.5	6.7	5.5	4.8

among 12th graders from 17.1 percent to 10.5 percent.

One important cause of these declines in current smoking is that many fewer young people today have ever started to smoke. In 1996, 49 percent of 8th graders said they had tried cigarettes, but by 2016 only 9.8 percent said they had done so. Further, the initiation of smoking continues to fall significantly among students.

In 2016, a substantially higher percentage of adolescents used e-cigarettes than had smoked regular cigarettes. Specifically, in 8th grade the respective percentages are 17.5% vs. 9.8%, in 10th grade they are 29.0% vs. 17.5%, and in 12th grade they are 33.8% vs. 28.3%

Part of the reason for the popularity of vaporizers such as e-cigarettes is the perception that they do not harm health, said Richard Miech, a senior investigator of the study.

Alcohol Use

Teen use of alcohol has dropped dramatically over the past two decades — particularly among the youngest teens — and continued to drop in 2016. The past 30-day use of alcohol

declined in all three grades in 2016, dropping 2.4, 1.5, and 2.1 percentage points in grades 8, 10 and 12. All three grades are now at the lowest point that they have been at least since the mid-1990s, and likely longer. Among 8th graders, most of whom are 13 or 14 years old, the proportion who have ever taken "more than just a few sips" of alcohol by 8th grade has fallen by half since the 1990s.

Of perhaps greater importance, the proportion of teens who report "binge drinking" — that is, consuming five or more drinks in a row at least once in the two weeks preceding the survey — fell significantly again this year to 28.6 percent for the three grades combined. "The recent peak rate in annual prevalence of alcohol use was in 1997, at 66.7% for the 3 grades combined. Since then, there has been a fairly steady downward march in alcohol use among adolescents," said Professor Lloyd Johnston, the study's principal investigator.

Some 12th-graders drink even more heavily, reporting having 10 or more, or 15 or more, drinks in a row on at least one occasion in the prior two weeks. In 2016, 4.4 percent of 12th graders reported drinking at the level of 10 or more drinks in a row, down by about two thirds from 13 percent in 2006.

ALCOHOL USE																			
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Lifetime use																			
8th Grade	52.5	52.1	51.7	50.5	47.0	45.6	43.9	41.0	40.5	38.9	38.9	36.6	35.8	33.1	29.5	27.8	26.8	26.1	22.8
10th Grade	69.8	70.6	71.4	70.1	66.9	66.0	64.2	63.2	61.5	61.7	58.3	59.1	58.2	56.0	54.0	52.1	49.3	47.1	43.4
12th Grade	81.4	80.0	80.3	79.7	78.4	76.6	76.8	75.1	72.7	72.2	71.9	72.3	71.0	70.0	69.4	68.2	66.0	64.0	61.2
30-day use																			
8th Grade	23.0	24.0	22.4	21.5	19.6	19.7	18.6	17.1	17.2	15.9	15.9	14.9	13.8	12.7	11.0	10.2	9.0	9.7	7.3
10th Grade	38.8	40.0	41.0	39.0	35.4	35.4	35.2	33.2	33.8	33.4	28.8	30.4	28.9	27.2	27.6	25.7	23.5	21.5	19.9
12th Grade	52.0	51.0	50.0	49.8	48.6	47.5	48.0	47.0	45.3	44.4	43.1	43.5	41.2	40.0	41.5	39.2	37.4	35.3	33.2
Been Drunk in last 30 days																			
8th Grade	8.4	9.4	8.3	7.7	6.7	6.7	6.2	6.0	6.2	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.0	4.4	3.6	3.5	2.7	3.1	1.8
10th Grade	21.1	22.5	23.5	21.9	18.3	18.2	18.5	17.6	18.8	18.1	14.4	15.5	14.7	13.7	14.5	12.8	11.2	10.3	9.0
12th Grade	32.9	32.9	32.3	32.7	30.3	30.9	32.5	30.2	30.0	28.7	27.6	27.4	26.8	25.0	28.1	26.0	23.5	20.6	20.4

MARIJUANA USE

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Lifetime																			
8th Grade	22.2	22.0	20.3	20.4	19.2	17.5	16.3	16.5	15.7	14.2	14.6	15.7	17.3	16.4	15.2	16.5	15.6	15.5	12.8
10th Grade	39.6	40.9	40.3	40.1	38.7	36.4	35.1	34.1	31.8	31.0	29.9	32.3	33.4	34.5	33.8	35.8	33.7	31.1	29.7
12th Grade	49.1	49.7	48.8	49.0	47.8	46.1	45.7	44.8	42.3	41.8	42.6	42.0	43.8	45.5	45.2	45.5	44.4	44.7	44.5
Annual																			
8th Grade	16.9	16.5	15.6	15.4	14.6	12.8	11.8	12.2	11.7	10.3	10.9	11.8	13.7	12.5	11.4	12.7	11.7	11.8	9.4
10th Grade	31.1	32.1	32.2	32.7	30.3	28.2	27.5	26.6	25.2	24.6	23.9	26.7	27.5	28.8	28.0	29.8	27.3	25.4	23.9
12th Grade	37.5	37.8	36.5	37.0	36.2	34.9	34.3	33.6	31.5	31.7	32.4	32.8	34.8	36.4	36.4	36.4	35.1	34.9	35.6
30-day use																			
8th Grade	9.7	9.7	9.1	9.2	8.3	7.5	6.4	6.6	6.5	5.7	5.8	6.5	8.0	7.2	6.5	7.0	6.5	6.5	5.4
10th Grade	18.7	19.4	19.7	19.8	17.8	17.0	15.9	15.2	14.2	14.2	13.8	15.9	16.7	17.6	17.0	18.0	16.6	14.8	14.0
12th Grade	22.8	23.1	21.6	22.4	21.5	21.2	19.9	19.8	18.3	18.8	19.4	20.6	21.4	22.6	22.9	22.7	21.1	21.3	22.5

VICODIN USE

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Annual																			
8th Grade					2.5	2.8	2.5	2.6	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.5	2.7	2.1	1.3	1.4	1.0	0.9	0.8
10th Grade					6.9	7.2	6.2	5.9	7.0	7.2	6.7	8.1	7.7	5.9	4.4	4.6	3.4	2.5	1.7
12th Grade					9.6	10.5	9.3	9.5	9.7	9.6	9.7	9.7	8.0	8.1	7.5	5.3	4.8	4.4	2.9

OXYCONTIN USE

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Annual																			
8th Grade					1.3	1.7	1.7	1.8	2.6	1.8	2.1	2.0	2.1	1.8	1.6	2.0	1.0	0.8	0.9
10th Grade					3.0	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.8	3.9	3.6	5.1	4.6	3.9	3.0	3.4	3.0	2.6	2.1
12th Grade					0.94.0	4.5	5.0	5.5	4.3	5.2	4.7	4.9	5.1	4.9	4.3	3.6	3.3	3.7	3.4

Marijuana Use

Marijuana, the most widely used of the illicit drugs, did not show any significant change in annual prevalence this year in any of the three grades, nor in the three grades combined.

After rising for several years, the annual prevalence of marijuana use has more or less leveled out since about 2010.

Narcotic Drugs

After showing a considerable rise in use from 1992 to 2000, annual prevalence for this general class of drugs leveled off through 2009, and has since been in decline.

Two of the most commonly used narcotic drugs are OxyContin and Vicodin. Use of these narcotics continue to fall, as students report they are also more difficult to obtain. Use of OxyContin has decreased significantly among 8th graders from 2.0 percent in 2013 to 0.9 in 2016.

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