

## Youth Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use in California

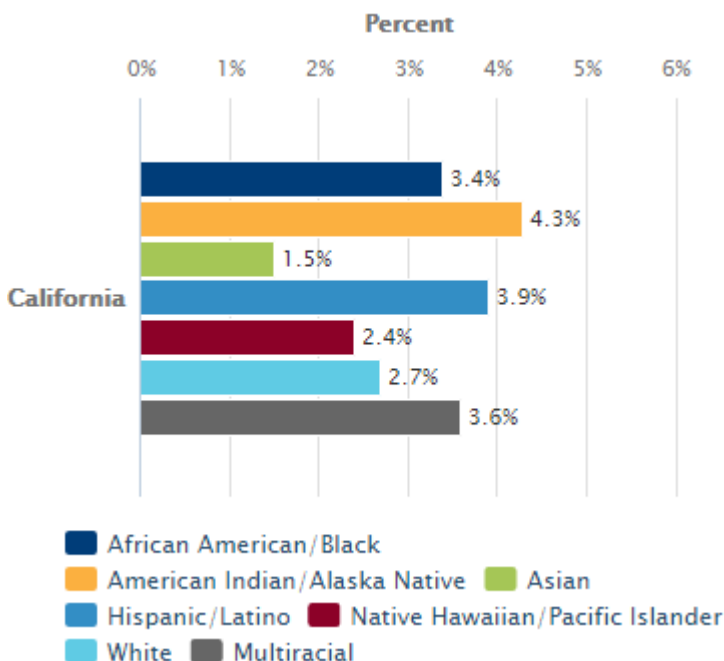
### Students Who Used Alcohol or Other Drugs in the Previous Month, by Gender and Grade Level: 2013-2015

California	Percent	
	Female	Male
Grade Level	Some	Some
7th Grade	11.6%	9.1%
9th Grade	25.5%	20.7%
11th Grade	34.4%	32.2%
Non-Traditional	63.2%	58.3%

**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who have used alcohol or drugs (excluding tobacco) in the previous 30 days, by gender and grade level (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 25.5% of female 9th graders in California had used alcohol or drugs in the previous month).

**Data Source:** WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students Who Have Driven When They Had Been Drinking, or Ridden with a Driver Who Had Been Drinking, on Seven or More Occasions in Their Lifetimes, by Race/Ethnicity: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who have ever driven a car when they had been drinking alcohol, or ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol, by race/ethnicity and number of occasions (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 3.9% of Hispanic/Latino students in grades 9, 11, and non-traditional programs in California had either driven when they had been drinking, or ridden with a driver who had been drinking, on seven or more occasions in their lifetimes).

**Data Source:** WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators of youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use come from:

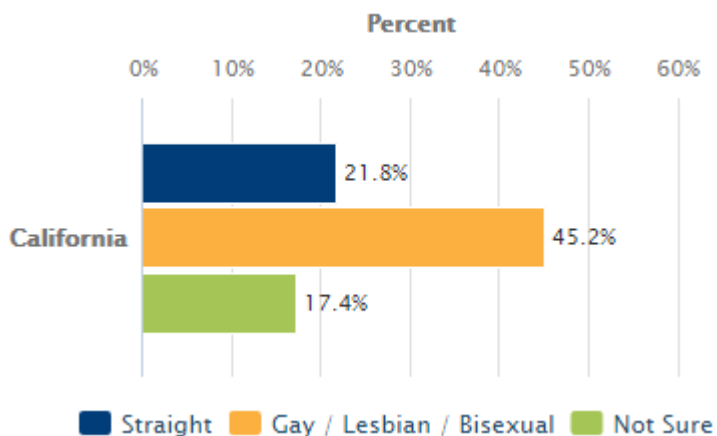
- Student reports of alcohol or other drug use (excluding tobacco) in the previous month overall and on school property
- Student reports of the number of days they used alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and marijuana in the previous month
- Student reports of the number of days they binge drank in the previous month
- Student reports of the number times they have used alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and marijuana in their lifetimes
- Student reports of the number times they have driven when they had been drinking, or ridden with a driver who had been drinking, in their lifetimes
- Staff reports of the extent to which, at their school, student alcohol and drug use is a problem, substance abuse prevention is an important goal, and substance use prevention education is provided

### Why This Topic Is Important

Youth alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use is a significant public health concern and is associated with a wide range of academic, social, and health problems (1, 2). Alcohol is the most widely used substance among the nation's young people and binge drinking, in particular, has been linked to risky health behaviors (e.g., unprotected sex, smoking), injuries, motor vehicle accidents, impaired cognitive functioning, poor academic performance, physical violence, and suicide attempts (1, 2). Drinking during adolescence increases the likelihood of alcohol dependence in adulthood, and excessive alcohol consumption can have long-term health consequences, including liver disease, cancer, and cardiovascular disease (1, 2).

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable and premature death in the U.S., resulting in more than 480,000 deaths annually (3). Smoking has cumulative, irreversible negative health effects, and most long-term

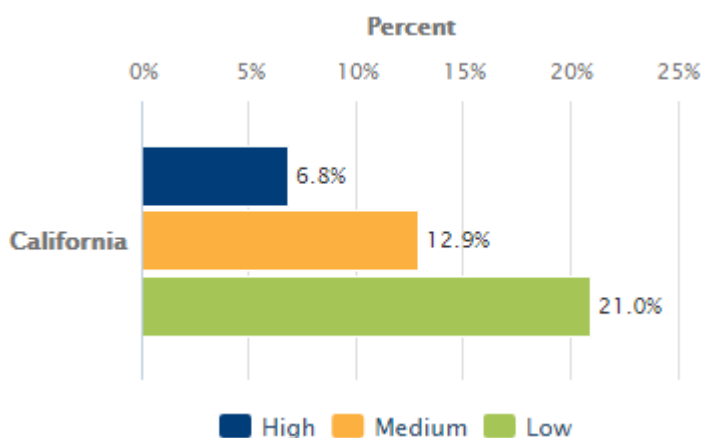
### Students Who Used Alcohol or Other Drugs in the Previous Month, by Sexual Orientation: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who have used alcohol or drugs (excluding tobacco) in the previous 30 days, by sexual orientation (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 45.2% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs in California had used alcohol or drugs in the previous month).

**Data Source:** WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

### Students Who Have Used Marijuana on Seven or More Occasions in Their Lifetimes, by Level of School Connectedness: 2013-2015



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who have ever used marijuana, by level of school connectedness and number of occasions (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 21% of California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs with low levels of school connectedness had used marijuana on seven or more occasions in their lifetimes).

**Data Source:** WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

smokers start when they are teens or young adults (3, 4). Tobacco use or smoking in any form—including electronic cigarettes—is unsafe (3, 4). Marijuana use, too, is linked to adverse effects such as respiratory problems, anxiety attacks, cognitive difficulties, and coordination loss, as well as aggressive behavior and poor academic performance among youth (5).

### How Children Are Faring

According to 2013-15 estimates, 10% of 7th graders, 23% of 9th graders, and 33% of 11th graders in California public schools used alcohol or drugs in the previous 30 days. Among students in non-traditional programs (community day schools and continuation education), alcohol or drug use in the past month was higher than 60%—almost double the estimate for 11th graders. Statewide, 16% of 11th graders binge drank at least once in the previous month, and 18% had either driven when they had been drinking, or had ridden with a driver who had been drinking, at least once in their lifetimes. E-cigarette use typically was more common than cigarette smoking: 31% of 11th graders had used e-cigarettes at least once, compared to 17% who had smoked cigarettes. Lifetime marijuana use among California 11th graders was 64% overall, and ranged from 45% to 74% across counties with data.

Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students more frequently report substance use, as do students with low levels of school connectedness and those whose parents did not finish high school. Across all grade levels in 2013-15, estimates of alcohol or drug use in the previous month were higher for girls than for boys.

High school staff reports from the same period show that 44% considered student alcohol and drug use a moderate to severe problem. At the same time more than six out of ten agreed that substance abuse prevention was an important goal at their school, and seven out of 10 reported that their school provided at least some substance use prevention education.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/28/youth-alcohol-tobacco-and-other-drug-use/summary>



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