

# Youth Alcohol and Substance Use Factsheet for Providers

There is no safe amount of alcohol or other substance use. Alcohol, marijuana, and other substance use can affect physical and mental health, safety, and other aspects of life such as school and relationships.

## Alcohol



### Alcohol Use (past month)<sup>i</sup>

- 9% of adolescents (91% did NOT)
- 54% of young adults (46% did NOT)

### Binge Drinking (past month)<sup>i</sup>

- 5% of adolescents (95% did NOT)
- 34% of young adults (66% did NOT)

Binge Drinking is defined as:

	Years	Drinks in a sitting
Females	9-17	3
	9-13	3
Males	14-15	4
	16-17	5

\*One drink = 12 fl oz beer, 5 fl oz table wine, 1.5 fl oz liquor

### Risks Associated with Underage Drinking<sup>iii</sup>

- School problems (higher rates of absences, lower grades, poor athletic performance)
- Social and relationship problems
- Physical problems (hangovers or illnesses)
- Motor vehicle crashes and other unintentional injuries (burns, falls, or drowning)
- Legal problems (DUI)
- Unintended, unplanned, and/or unprotected sexual activity
- Disruption of normal growth or sexual development
- Physical and sexual violence
- Memory problems
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects
- Alcohol poisoning
- Increased risk of suicide and homicide
- Misuse of other substances
- Early initiation is associated with alcohol use disorder later in life

## Marijuana



### Marijuana Use (past month)<sup>i</sup>

- 13% of adolescents (87% did NOT)
- 35% of young adults (65% did NOT)

### Vaping of Marijuana - THC (past month)<sup>ii</sup>

- 4% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders (96% did NOT)
- 13% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders (87% did NOT)
- 14% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (86% did NOT)

### Risk Associated with Marijuana Use<sup>iv</sup>

- Brain development – Marijuana use might have permanent effects on the developing brain when use begins in adolescence, especially with regular or heavy use.
- Negative effects include difficulty thinking/problem solving, problems with memory/learning, reduced coordination, difficulty paying attention.
- Problems with school and social life
- Increased risk of mental health issues (e.g., depression and social anxiety).
- Impaired driving – Marijuana negatively affects several skills required for safe driving, such as reaction time, coordination, and concentration.
- Sleep – Marijuana use can affect sleep quality. Heavy use at a young age could negatively affect sleep later in life.
- Compared with teens who do not use marijuana, teens who use marijuana are more likely to quit high school or not get a college degree.
- Potential for developing a marijuana use disorder

## Vaping



### Nicotine Vaping (past month)<sup>ii</sup>

- 7% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders (93% did NOT)
- 20% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders (80% did NOT)
- 26% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders (74% did NOT)

### Risks Associated with Vaping E-Cigarettes<sup>v</sup>

- Long-term brain risks – Nicotine addiction, mood disorders, and permanent lowering of impulse control.
- Respiratory health – Aerosol from e-cigarettes can contain: harmful and potentially harmful chemicals, including nicotine; ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs; flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease; volatile organic compounds such as benzene, which is found in car exhaust; and heavy metals, such as nickel, tin, and lead.<sup>5</sup>
- Behavior risk – E-cigarette use is strongly linked to the use of other tobacco products, such as regular cigarettes, cigars, hookah, and smokeless tobacco.
- Accidents – Defective e-cigarette batteries have been known to cause fires and explosions, some of which have resulted in serious injuries (most explosions happened when the e-cigarette batteries were being charged).
- Nicotine in e-cigarettes and other tobacco products can prime the adolescent brain for addiction to other drugs such as cocaine.

## Tips for Providing Feedback to Young People

The younger one is when they initiate substance use, the more likely they are to develop a substance use disorder (SUD) in their lifetime. Alcohol and other substance use lead to a range of personal, social, legal, physical, and mental health concerns, and other negative outcomes:

- Brain development – The adolescent brain is actively developing and continues to develop until age 25. The part of the brain that's responsible for decision making and impulse control is not yet fully developed during adolescence.
- Sleep
- Memory and decision making
- Risk of motor vehicle and other accidents (e.g., bike, scooter, skiing)
- Injuries (e.g., burns, falls, or drowning)
- Finances
- Getting in trouble (e.g., legal issues)
- School (e.g., higher absenteeism, poor academic and/or athletic performance)
- Work
- Relationships
- Likelihood of risky sexual behavior

## Alcohol and other substances should be avoided if the young person:

- Is under 21
- Has a physical or mental health condition
- Takes medications that interact with alcohol or other substances
- Plans to drive a vehicle, ride a bike or scooter, or participate in recreational activities such as skiing/snowboarding
- Is pregnant or trying to get pregnant

<sup>1</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2020). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP20-07-01-001, NSDUH Series H-55). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

<sup>2</sup> Johnston, L. D., Miech, R. A., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., Schulenberg, J. E., & Patrick, M. E. (2020). Monitoring the Future national survey results on drug use 1975-2019: Overview, key findings on adolescent drug use. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2022. Underage Drinking. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm#:~:text=Disruption%20of%20normal%20growth%20or,burns%2C%20falls%2C%20or%20drowning.>

<sup>4</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). 2022. What You Need to Know about Marijuana Use and Teens. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/marijuana/health-effects/teens.html#:~:text=Marijuana%20and%20the%20teen%20brain&text=Difficulty%20thinking%20and%20problem%20solving,Difficulty%20maintaining%20attention>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2022). Know the Risks: E-Cigarettes and Young People. Retrieved from <https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/knowtherisks.html#risks>