



2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey

Data Brief: Alcohol

In fall 2016, over 230,000 students participated in the Healthy Youth Survey. Over 1,000 schools administered the survey, representing all 39 Washington counties and 236 school districts.

Nationwide, alcohol use plays a substantial role in all three leading causes of death among youth: injuries, suicides, and homicides (CAMY). Youth who begin drinking before age 15 are six times more likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse later in life than those who start after age 21 (NSDUH).

- The percentage of students reporting alcohol use and binge drinking declined over the past decade and was stable between 2014 and 2016. Past 30-day alcohol use change from 2006 to 2016:
 - 8th grade – down from 15% to 8%
 - 10th grade – down from 33% to 20%
 - 12th grade – down from 42% to 32%

Although we have seen positive change, too many teens are still using alcohol.

- One in five 10th graders used alcohol in the past month; one in ten binge drank in the past two weeks.
- Heavy use remains a concern. About one-third of those reporting current alcohol use are heavy users.
- Health disparities continue to be evident. Among 10th graders in 2016, the percentage reporting binge drinking in the past two weeks was highest among American Indian or Alaskan Native (16%), Black or African American (15%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (15%) students.

Driving under the influence of alcohol has also declined since 2006 and remained stable between 2014 and 2016.

- 5% of 10th graders and 9% of 12th graders reporting driving after drinking alcohol in 2016.
- About one in seven 8th graders and about one in six 10th and 12th graders reported riding in a car in the past month with a driver who had been drinking.

Keep talking to teens; they're listening.

- A majority of teens reported their parents talked to them in the last year about the risks of drinking.
- Over the past decade, the percentage of students perceiving little or no risk to using alcohol regularly has dropped to about one in four across grades.
- However, there was a recent decline in 8th graders perceiving great risk of harm in binge drinking (57% in 2014 to 53% in 2016), which should be monitored closely. Declines in perceived risk are often followed by increases in use.

State, local, and community prevention efforts are crucial for reducing youth alcohol use and driving under the influence.

- Reducing underage drinking is a statewide priority. For information about Washington's underage drinking prevention program strategies, visit www.TheAthenaForum.org/SPEplan
- For information on what you can do, visit www.StartTalkingNow.org.

For more Healthy Youth Survey fact sheets and reports, visit www.AskHYS.net.

