

THE CENTURY COUNCIL

Distillers fighting drunk driving and underage drinking

Over a decade of progress
in the fight against drunk driving
and underage drinking

http://www.centurycouncil.org/underage/65_data.html

Underage Drinking Fact Sheet

Underage drinking remains a persistent problem among youth, though there are signs progress is being made. According to the 2005 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. Although there have been some declines in underage drinking from 2004 to 2005, since 2002, past month alcohol consumption has remained relatively unchanged among 12-20 year olds.

Of these youth, nearly 7.2 million (19%) reported having engaged in binge drinking and 2.3 million (6%) in heavy drinking. More males than females aged 12 to 20 reported current alcohol consumption (29% v. 28%), binge drinking (21% v. 16%) and heavy drinking (8% v. 4%) in 2005.

These rates of consumption reported in the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health are similar to estimates reported in the 2002, 2003 and 2004. However, there were slight declines in past month consumption and binge drinking among 12- to 17-year olds between 2004 and 2005.

Among older age groups, the prevalence of current alcohol consumption decreased with increasing age, however, among America's youth the rate of current alcohol consumption increases with increasing age according to the 2005 survey, from 3% at age 12 to 6% at age 13, 11% at age 14, 20% at age 15, 27% at age 16, 33% at age 17, 44% at age 18, 52% at age 19, and 58% at age 20. The rate reaches a peak at 69% among persons 21 years old.

In 2005, more male than female 12- to 20-year olds reported current alcohol consumption (29% v. 28%, respectively), binge drinking (21% v. 16%), and heavy drinking (8% v. 4%). Unfortunately, among youths 12- to 17- years old, the percentage of females who report drinking in the past 30 days remains slightly, although not significantly, higher compared to their male peers (17% for females compared with 16% for males). However, the 2005 rate of current alcohol consumption among 12- to 17-year old males and females represents a decline from the 2004 rates — the one year decline among males was significant.

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 2004-05 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 2006 Monitoring the Future study also showed declining alcohol consumption among American youth, although, alcohol consumption continues to be widespread among today's youth. The prevalence measures

(lifetime and annual) for alcohol consumption showed significant decline among 12th graders.

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, 41% of eighth grade students, 62% of tenth graders, and 73% of twelfth graders report they have tried alcohol. The figures represent a lifetime alcohol consumption decline of nearly one percentage point among 8th graders, declines of nearly two percent among 10th graders and two percentage points among 12th graders, a statistically significant one-year decline over the past year for high school seniors.

Additionally, the 2006 Monitoring the Future survey revealed a statistically significant decline in the annual rate of alcohol consumption 12th graders from 2005 to 2006, with all three grade levels reaching record low levels over the past decade. Annual consumption among 8th grade and 10th grade students declined only slight from 2005 to 2006, while 12th grade students' annual prevalence declined two percentage points from 68.6 to 66.5. Annual consumption rates among 8th and 10th graders for 2006 were 34% and 56%, respectively.

Thirty-day alcohol consumption remained relatively unchanged among 8th and 10th graders with prevalence rates of 17% and 34%, respectively. Although not statistically significant, past 30-day alcohol consumption rates declined nearly two percent among high school seniors from 47% in 2005 to 45.3% in 2006, a new record low. Additionally, binge drinking (having five or more drinks in a row) decreased nearly two percent among 12th graders in 2006, marking another historical low level at 27%.

The one-year one percentage point declines noted in the 2006 Monitoring the Future Study, while not always statistically significant, are notable because they reflect a longer-term gradual decline in underage drinking.

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.

According to the most recent wave of The TRU Study (Fall 2005) from Teenage Research Unlimited, drinking and driving continues to be an issue of great importance to teens. Three-fourths of teens (75%) cite drunk driving as an issue they care about, making it one of teens' top life-and-death issues and ranking it third overall, following education and child abuse and ahead of such issues as war, terrorism, economy, environment, drug abuse, cigarette smoking, racism, and abortion.

Young drivers are over represented in both alcohol- and non-alcohol-related fatality rates. Alcohol-related fatality rates are nearly twice as high for 18-, 19- and 20-year-olds as for the population over 21. More than 40 percent of 18-, 19-, and 20- year-old crash fatalities are alcohol-related.

In 2005 approximately 31.7 million people aged 12 and older drove under the influence of alcohol at least once during the past year. These data reflect a decrease of more than five percent from the 33.5 million persons reporting drinking in driving in the 2002 National Survey of Drug Use and Health. Driving under the influence of alcohol continues to be associated with age, with a peak among 21- to 25-year olds (28%).

Eight percent of 16- and 17-year olds reported driving under the influence, and 20% of 18- to 20-year olds reported engaging in this behavior at least once in the past year.

In 2004, among 15- to 20-year-old drivers, 29 percent of the drivers who were killed in motor vehicle crashes had been drinking. Additionally, for the same year and age group, 24 percent of these young drivers had BAC levels of .08 or higher.

For young drivers age 15 to 20, alcohol involvement is higher among males than females. In 2004, 26 percent of young male drivers involved in fatal crashes had been drinking at the time of the crash, compared with 12 percent of young female drivers involved in fatal crashes.