

High School and Youth Trends

Since 1975, the Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey has been administered annually to study the extent of and beliefs about drug use among 12th-graders. The survey was expanded in 1991 to include 8th- and 10th-graders. It is funded by NIDA and is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. The goal of the survey is to collect data on past month, past year, and lifetime⁽¹⁾ drug use among students in these grade levels. The 33rd annual study was conducted during 2007.⁽²⁾

Decreases or stability in abuse patterns were noted for most drugs from 2006 to 2007. Below are the key findings, based on data from the 2007 MTF survey. For individual drugs, a decrease or increase is noted only if statistically significant; other trends are considered stable and are not highlighted below.

Positive Trends ———

Any illicit drug—From 2006 to 2007, 8th-graders reporting lifetime use of any illicit drug declined from 20.9 percent to 19.0 percent and past year use declined from 14.8 percent to 13.2 percent. Since 2001, annual prevalence has fallen by 32 percent among 8th-graders, nearly 25 percent among 10th-graders, and 13 percent among 12th-graders. Since the peak year in 1996, past year prevalence has fallen by 44 percent among 8th-graders. The peak year for past year abuse among 10th- and 12th-graders was

1997; since then, past year prevalence has fallen by 27 percent among 10th-graders and by 15 percent among 12th-graders.

Marijuana—Past year use of marijuana among 8th graders significantly declined from 11.7 percent in 2006 to 10.3 percent in 2007, and is down from its 1996 peak of 18.3 percent. Annual prevalence of marijuana use has fallen by 33 percent among 8th-graders, 25 percent among 10th-graders, and 14 percent among 12th-graders since 2001. Disapproval of trying marijuana "once or twice," smoking marijuana "occasionally," or smoking marijuana "regularly"⁽³⁾ increased significantly among 8th-graders from 2006 to 2007, and remained stable for 10th- and 12th-graders for the same period.

Methamphetamine—Lifetime and past year methamphetamine use decreased among 8th- and 12th-graders between 2006 and 2007; lifetime use among 8th-graders declined from 2.7 percent to 1.8 percent, and lifetime use among 12th-graders declined from 4.4 percent to 3.0 percent. Past year methamphetamine use was reported by 1.1 percent of 8th-graders in 2007 (a decline from 1.8 percent in 2006), 1.6 percent of 10th-graders, and 1.7 percent of 12th-graders (a decline from 2.5 percent in 2006).

Sedatives/Barbiturates—There has been a decline in the lifetime use of sedatives from a peak of 10.5 percent in 2005 to 9.3 percent in 2007. Past year use of sedatives/

barbituates declined from a peak of 7.2 percent in 2005 to 6.2 percent in 2007. (This question is asked only of 12th-graders.)

Inhalants—After some increases in recent years, there were no significant changes from 2006 to 2007 in the proportion of students in the 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-grades reporting lifetime, past year, or past month abuse of inhalants.

Cigarettes/Nicotine—Among 8th-graders, cigarette use declined between 2006 and 2007 in most categories; lifetime use dropped from 24.6 percent to 22.1 percent and past month use fell from 8.7 percent to 7.1 percent. Daily cigarette smoking among 8th-graders dropped from 4.0 percent to 3.0 percent, down from its 10.4 percent peak in 1996. Lifetime cigarette use was reported by 34.6 percent of 10th graders, and 46.2 percent of 12th graders, and smoking half a pack or more a day was reported by 1.1 percent of 8th-graders, 2.7 percent of 10th-graders, and 5.7 percent of 12th-graders in 2007.

Crack/Cocaine—Past month abuse of crack among 10th-graders declined from 0.7 percent in 2006 to 0.5 percent in 2007. From 2001 to 2007, students in 8th and 10th grades showed declines of crack use of 29.6 percent and 58.0 percent, respectively. Past month abuse of cocaine (powder) among 12th-graders declined from 2.4 percent in 2006 to 1.7 percent in 2007. Disapproval of trying cocaine “once or twice” increased among 8th-graders from 86.5 percent in 2006 to 88.2 percent in 2007, and disapproval of trying crack “once or twice” increased from 87.2 percent to 88.6 percent.

Disapproval did not change among 10th- or 12th-graders for the same period.

Anabolic Steroids—Perceived availability of steroids dropped among 10th-graders, from 30.2 percent in 2006 to 27.7 percent in 2007, but remained stable among 8th- and 12th-graders. Steroid use in all three grade levels remained unchanged from 2006 to 2007.

Alcohol—Tenth-graders reported a modest decline in past year use of flavored alcoholic beverages, from 48.8 percent in 2006 to 45.9 percent in 2007. Eighth-graders reporting disapproval of trying “one or two drinks of an alcoholic beverage” increased from 51.3 percent in 2006 to 54.0 percent in 2007. Disapproval of having “five or more drinks once or twice each weekend” increased from 82.0 percent in 2006 to 83.8 percent in 2007.⁽⁴⁾

Negative Trends

Prescription Drugs—Prescription drug use remains unacceptably high with virtually no drop in nonmedical use of most individual prescription drugs. This year, for the first time, researchers pulled together data for all prescription drugs as a measurable group (including amphetamines, sedatives/barbituates, tranquilizers, and opiates other than heroin such as Vicodin and OxyContin) and found that 15.4 percent of high school seniors reported nonmedical use of at least one prescription medication within the past year.⁽⁵⁾

MDMA (Ecstasy)—The 2007 results represent the third year in a row showing a weakening of attitudes among the youngest students regarding MDMA. Among 8th-graders, the perceived harmfulness of taking MDMA “occasionally” decreased from 52.0 percent to 48.6 percent from 2006 to 2007. Among 10th-graders, the perceived harmfulness decreased from 71.3 percent to 68.2 percent. Perceived risk of MDMA use remained unchanged for 12th-graders from 2006 to 2007. Concurrently, between 2004 and 2007 past year use of MDMA increased in 10th-graders from 2.4 to 3.5 percent, and between 2005 and 2007 past year use of MDMA increased among 12th-graders going from 3.0 to 4.5 percent.

Hallucinogens—Among 10th-graders, the perceived harmfulness of taking LSD “once or twice” decreased from 38.8 percent in 2006 to 35.4 percent in 2007. The perceived

harm of taking LSD “regularly” decreased from 60.7 percent in 2006 to 56.8 percent in 2007. Disapproval of using LSD “once or twice” significantly decreased for 10th-graders from 71.2 percent in 2006 to 67.7 percent in 2007; disapproval of taking LSD “regularly” dropped from 74.9 percent in 2006 to 71.5 percent in 2007.

Heroin/Opiates—Among 8th-graders, past month use of injecting heroin increased from 0.2 percent in 2006 to 0.3 percent in 2007. Past year heroin use without a needle increased among 12th-graders from 0.6 percent in 2006 to 1.0 percent in 2007. OxyContin use in the past year was reported by 1.8 percent of 8th-graders, 3.9 percent of 10th-graders, and 5.2 percent of 12th-graders. Vicodin use in the past year was reported by 2.7 percent of 8th-graders, 7.2 percent of 10th-graders, and 9.6 percent of 12th-graders, remaining stable at relatively high levels for each grade.

(1) “Lifetime” refers to use at least once during a respondent’s lifetime. “Past year” refers to use at least once during the year preceding an individual’s response to the survey. “past month” refers to use at least once during the 30 days preceding an individual’s response to the survey. “Daily” refers to an individual’s drug use 20 or more times in the 30 days prior to the survey, except for cigarettes, where the definition is one or more cigarettes per day in the 30 days prior to the survey.

(2) For the 2007 MTF, 48,025 students in a nationally representative sample of 403 public and private schools were surveyed about lifetime, past year, past month, and daily use of drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. The latest data are online at www.drugabuse.gov.

(3) In addition to studying drug use among 8th-, 10th-, and 12th-graders, MTF collects information on three attitudinal indicators related to their drug use. These indicators are perceived risk of harm in taking a drug, disapproval of others who take drugs, and perceived availability of drugs.

(4) For information on the health effects of alcohol, visit the Web site of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism at www.niaaa.nih.gov.

(5) For more information on the misuse or nonmedical use of pain medications or other prescription drugs, please visit www.drugabuse.gov and click on Prescription Medications under Drugs of Abuse.

Monitoring the Future Study: Trends in Prevalence of Various Drugs for 8th-Graders, 10th-Graders, and 12th-Graders, 2004-2007

	8th-Graders				10th-Graders				12th-Graders			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Any Illicit Drug Use												
lifetime	21.5	21.4	20.9	[19.0]	39.8	38.2	36.1	35.6	51.1	50.4	48.2	46.8
past year	15.2	15.5	14.8	[13.2]	31.1	29.8	28.7	28.1	38.8	38.4	36.5	35.9
past month	8.4	8.5	8.1	7.4	18.3	17.3	16.8	16.9	23.4	23.1	21.5	21.9
Marijuana/Hashish												
lifetime	16.3	16.5	15.7	14.2	35.1	34.1	31.8	31.0	45.7	44.8	42.3	41.8
past year	11.8	12.2	11.7	[10.3]	27.5	26.6	25.2	24.6	34.3	33.6	31.5	31.7
past month	6.4	6.6	6.5	5.7	15.9	15.2	14.2	14.2	19.9	19.8	18.3	18.8
daily	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.8	3.2	3.1	2.8	2.8	5.6	5.0	5.0	5.1
Inhalants												
lifetime	17.3	17.1	16.1	15.6	12.4	13.1	13.3	13.6	10.9	11.4	11.1	10.5
past year	9.6	9.5	9.1	8.3	5.9	6.0	6.5	6.6	4.2	5.0	4.5	3.7
past month	4.5	4.2	4.1	3.9	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.5	1.5	2.0	1.5	1.2
Hallucinogens												
lifetime	3.5	3.8	3.4	3.1	6.4	5.8	6.1	6.4	9.7	8.8	8.3	8.4
past year	2.2	2.4	2.1	1.9	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.4	6.2	5.5	4.9	5.4
past month	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.5	1.7
LSD												
lifetime	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.6	2.8	2.5	2.7	3.0	4.6	3.5	3.3	3.4
past year	1.1	1.2	0.9	1.1	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.2	1.8	1.7	2.1
past month	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6
Cocaine												
lifetime	3.4	3.7	3.4	3.1	5.4	5.2	4.8	5.3	8.1	8.0	8.5	7.8
past year	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.4	5.3	5.1	5.7	5.2
past month	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.3	2.3	2.3	2.5	[2.0]
Crack Cocaine												
lifetime	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.6	2.5	2.2	2.3	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.2
past year	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.3	1.3	2.3	1.9	2.1	1.9
past month	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.7	0.7	[0.5]	1.0	1.0	0.9	0.9
Heroin												
lifetime	1.6	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5
past year	1.0	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.9
past month	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.4
Tranquilizers												
lifetime	4.0	4.1	4.3	3.9	7.3	7.1	7.2	7.4	10.6	9.9	10.3	9.5
past year	2.5	2.8	2.6	2.4	5.1	4.8	5.2	5.3	7.3	6.8	6.6	6.2
past month	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.1	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.6	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.6
Alcohol												
lifetime	43.9	41.0	40.5	38.9	64.2	63.2	61.5	61.7	76.8	75.1	72.7	72.2
past year	36.7	33.9	33.6	31.8	58.2	56.7	55.8	56.3	70.6	68.6	66.5	66.4
past month	18.6	17.1	17.2	15.9	35.2	33.2	33.8	33.4	48.0	47.0	45.3	44.4
daily	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.6	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.1

(Cont'd)

	8th-Graders				10th-Graders				12th-Graders			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Cigarettes (any use)												
lifetime	27.9	25.9	24.6	[22.1]	40.7	38.9	36.1	34.6	52.8	50.0	47.1	46.2
past month	9.2	9.3	8.7	[7.1]	16.0	14.9	14.5	14.0	25.0	23.2	21.6	21.6
daily	4.4	4.0	4.0	[3.0]	8.3	7.5	7.6	7.2	15.6	13.6	12.2	12.3
1/2 pack+/day	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.1	3.3	3.1	3.3	2.7	8.0	6.9	5.9	5.7
Smokeless Tobacco												
lifetime	11.0	10.1	10.2	9.1	13.8	14.5	15.0	15.1	16.7	17.5	15.2	15.1
past month	4.1	3.3	3.7	3.2	4.9	5.6	5.7	6.1	6.7	7.6	6.1	6.6
daily	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.6	1.9	1.7	1.6	2.8	2.5	2.2	2.8
Steroids												
lifetime	1.9	1.7	1.6	1.5	2.4	2.0	1.8	1.8	3.4	2.6	2.7	2.2
past year	1.1	1.1	0.9	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.2	1.1	2.5	1.5	1.8	1.4
past month	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.5	1.6	0.9	1.1	1.0
MDMA												
lifetime	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.3	4.3	4.0	4.5	5.2	7.5	5.4	6.5	6.5
past year	1.7	1.7	1.4	1.5	2.4	2.6	2.8	3.5	4.0	3.0	4.1	4.5
past month	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.3	1.6
Methamphetamine												
lifetime	2.5	3.1	2.7	[1.8]	5.3	4.1	3.2	2.8	6.2	4.5	4.4	[3.0]
past year	1.5	1.8	1.8	[1.1]	3.0	2.9	1.8	1.6	3.4	2.5	2.5	[1.7]
past month	0.6	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.3	1.1	0.7	0.4	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.6
Vicodin												
past year	2.5	2.6	3.0	2.7	6.2	5.9	7.0	7.2	9.3	9.5	9.7	9.6
OxyContin												
past year	1.7	1.8	2.6	1.8	3.5	3.2	3.8	3.9	5.0	5.5	4.3	5.2
Cough Medicine (non-prescription)*												
past year	-	-	4.2	4.0	-	-	5.3	5.4	-	-	6.9	5.8

* A question on the past year abuse of non-prescription cough medicine was added in 2006.