

## Texas Drug Facts

- Alcohol, the most commonly used drug among young people kills 6½ times more youth than all other illicit drugs combined.
- 65% of the youth who drink alcohol report that they get the alcohol from family and friends.
- Underage drinking costs the Texas economy more than \$5.5 billion a year – enough to buy every public school student a state-of-the-art computer.

The Texas School Survey of Substance Use examines alcohol and drug usage among in-school students, as well as student attitudes, extracurricular involvement, and other behaviors. The Dept. of State Health Services through the former Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse conducts this survey every two years in conjunction with the Texas A&M University Public Policy Research Institute.

This year's survey showed extensive decreases in the use of tobacco, alcohol, and a number of illicit drugs.

## Elementary School Survey

In the spring of 2004, the Department of State Health Services, through the former Texas Commission on Alcohol & Drug Abuse, surveyed 79,454 students in grades 4–6 from 69 Texas school districts. Among the findings:

- In 2004, 16% of students reported they had used alcohol in the past year. While alcohol use among this age group remained relatively steady since 2002, it has shown a continual decline throughout the past fourteen years.
- The 2004, 1.7% of students said they had used marijuana in the past year, the same as in 2002. Marijuana use among this age group has fallen 37% since its peak rate in 1996.
- The percentage of students who said they had used inhalants in the past year rose 17% from 2002 to 2004. Lifetime use of inhalants showed a 13% increase from 2002.

## Secondary Students

In the spring of 2004, the Department of State Health Services surveyed 135,662 students in grades 7–12 from 78 Texas school districts. Among the findings:

### ALCOHOL USE

- Alcohol continues to be the most widely used substance among Texas students with 68% of students reporting they had used alcohol at some point in their lives. This percentage has dropped 4% since 2002, and the past month use has dropped 6%.

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## Texas Drug Facts (cont.)

### ALCOHOL FACTS

- In 2004, girls (69%) reported a higher rate of lifetime alcohol use than boys (67%).
- About 10% of students said they had attended class while drunk at least once during the past school year.
- Binge drinking, having five or more drinks on one occasion, was reported by 23% of students.
- 24% of seniors said they had driven a car after having a good bit to drink at least once during the past year. This represents 80,000 impaired drivers on Texas roads each year.
- Among seventh graders, 73% reported that their parents strongly disapproved of underage drinking; however, the rate fell to 51% among seniors.
- Only 19% of students who said their parents disapproved of teen alcohol use reported past month drinking, compared to 50% of their peers who reported their parents approved of teen alcohol use.
- The percentage of past-month alcohol users who reported they always or most of the time got alcohol from stores has decreased 45% since 1994.

### MARIJUANA USE

- Marijuana remained the most commonly used illicit drug among students. 30% of all 7–12 graders in 2004 reported having smoked marijuana at some point in their lives, down from 32% in 2002. Past-month use of marijuana was 12.6% in 2004, compared to 14.4% in 2002.
- 50.4% of students in 2004 reported that at least a few of their close friends used marijuana, down from 53.5% in 2002.
- More young people perceived marijuana as a very dangerous drug, which may be partially attributed to the decrease in prevalence use of marijuana. In 2004, 61% of students thought marijuana was very dangerous to use, compared to 58% in 2002.
- The trends in perceived availability of marijuana decreased during the past two years. 44% of secondary students in 2004 thought that marijuana was very or somewhat easy to obtain, compared to 47% in 2002.

### TOBACCO USE

- The percentage of students reporting they had used tobacco in the month before the survey fell again, from 18.2% in 2002 to 17% in 2004. Seventh graders reported a 21% decline, and ninth graders reported an 18% drop.

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## Texas Drug Facts (cont.)

### TOBACCO USE

- Lifetime use of tobacco fell 12% between 2002 and 2004 to 39.4%. The biggest decline was seen among ninth graders who reported they had tried tobacco at some point in their lives fell 20% from 2002 to 2004.

### ECSTASY USE

- Students at all grade levels have shown a sharp decrease in Ecstasy use in the past two years.
- The percentage of students reporting use of Ecstasy in the month before the survey dropped from 3.1% in 2002 to 1.8% in 2004. The broad decrease of this club drug was more radical among younger students. Among ninth graders, the past-month use of Ecstasy fell 58%; and among seventh graders, it decreased 50%.
- Lifetime use of Ecstasy decreased sharply from 8.6% in 2002 to 5.5% in 2004. Again, the greatest decreases were seen among younger students. Seventh graders reported a half usage of Ecstasy from 3.6% in 2002 to 1.8% in 2004.
- There is a dramatic decrease in the perceived availability of Ecstasy. 21% of students in 2004 said that Ecstasy was very or somewhat easy to obtain, compared to 26% of students in 2002.
- The increased trend in students' perceived danger of using Ecstasy may partly contribute to the significant decrease in their Ecstasy use. In 2004, 83% of students thought Ecstasy was very dangerous to use, compared to 79% in 2002.

### OTHER TRENDS

- The percentage of 7–12 graders reporting they had ever used any illicit drug decreased from 34% in 2002 to 32% in 2004.
- Inhalant abuse declined for lifetime use but remained stable for past-month use. The overall rate for lifetime use in 2004 was 17% and the past month use was 7%. Like elementary students, both seventh and eighth graders showed an increase in inhalant use during the past two years.
- Cocaine and crack use remained a problem among Texas students. In 2004, 7.9% of secondary students reported they had tried cocaine or crack, and 3.2% reported using these substances in the month before the survey. While younger students reported a decrease in past-month use of cocaine and crack since 2002, eleventh and twelfth graders reported an increased rate.
- Use of prescription-type drugs was added to the 2004 school survey. 4.3% of secondary students said that they had ever taken DXM, Triple C's, Skittles, or Coricidin to get high, and 1.5% reported using these drugs in the month before the survey. Also, 8.3% reported using codeine cough syrup to get high at some point in their lives, and 3.3% did so in the past month.
- Lifetime use of uppers or downers fell 17 to 18% between 2002 and 2004, and past-month use fell 24%. The greatest decreases were seen among ninth graders.