

Alcohol Use Among Youth in Minnesota

Alcohol is the most commonly used substance among youth in the U.S.¹ Substance use before the age of 21 is associated with physical and mental health conditions and other consequences such as delinquency and academic underachievement.² Additionally, youth who start drinking alcohol before the age of 15 are more likely to develop alcohol use disorder later in life compared to those who begin drinking at or after age 21.³

In 2022, about 1 in 10 Minnesota youth in grades 8, 9 and 11 reported drinking alcohol in the past month, and about 4% reported binge drinking (i.e., more than four drinks on an occasion for females, and more than five drinks for males). Alcohol use increases by grade, and 7% of 9th grade students and 17% of 11th grade students reported current alcohol use during the past 30 days in Minnesota. These rates are lower than those reported nationally, in 2021 about 15% of 9th graders and almost 26% of 11th grade students reported current alcohol use.^{4,5}

Trends of alcohol use among youth

Overall, alcohol use among Minnesota youth has been declining for the past 10 years (Figure 1). For example, in 2013, almost 17% of youth reported any 30-day alcohol use compared to about 9% of youth in 2022.

Figure 1: Alcohol use is declining among students in all grades.

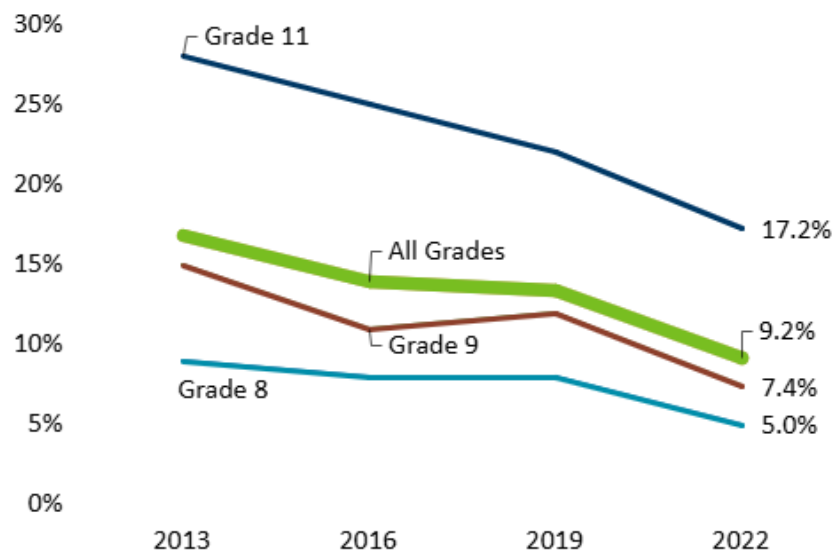


Figure 1: Percent of students who reported alcohol use at least once in the last 30 days by grade (8, 9, 11, and all grades combined) from 2013 – 2022. Data obtained from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey.

However, while alcohol use among youth has declined, some groups of youth reported higher levels of alcohol use and experience alcohol-related harms at disproportionate rates (Figure 2). American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, White students and students who reported multiple races reported the highest rates of alcohol use among all students; this trend was observed through all grade levels. For example, 8.3% of 8th grade students who reported multiple races reported alcohol use compared to about 2% of Middle Eastern or North African students in the 8th grade. Additionally, 20.6% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students in the 11th grade reported alcohol use whereas 6.3% of Black, African, or African American 11th grade students reported alcohol use.

By understanding disparities among youth who use alcohol and experience alcohol-related harms, more effective policies and programs can be developed to prevent adverse outcomes.

Figure 2: Alcohol use increases from grade 8 to grade 11 for all racial/ethnic groups.

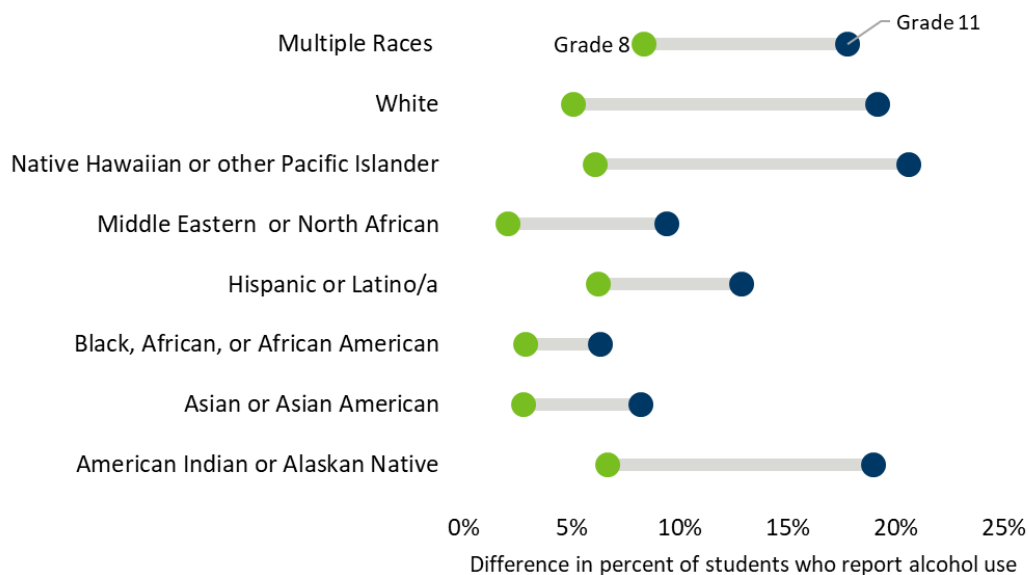


Figure 2: Difference in percent of students in racial/ethnic groups who report alcohol use at least once in the last 30 days from grade 8 to grade 11. Data obtained from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey.

Binge drinking

Youth who binge drink, especially those who binge drink more frequently and with higher intensity, are at higher risks for negative outcomes. Binge drinking increases the risk of alcohol overdose, sexually transmitted infections, unintentional pregnancy, and other alcohol-related harms and injuries.⁹ Although youth drink less often than adults, when they do drink, they drink more. In fact, about 90% of alcohol consumed by youth is consumed by youth who binge drink.⁶

In Minnesota, binge drinking was reported by 1.5% of 8th grade students, 2.4% of 9th grade students, and 7.6% of 11th grade students in 2022. Males historically reported higher rates of alcohol use, but this has changed in recent years with females reporting more alcohol use (10.6% vs. 7.7%) and higher

rates of binge drinking (4% vs. 2.9%) than males (Figure 3). In 2022, female students were 1.2 times more likely to report binge drinking compared to their male peers.

Figure 3: Binge drinking declined more among males than females in grades 8, 9, and 11.

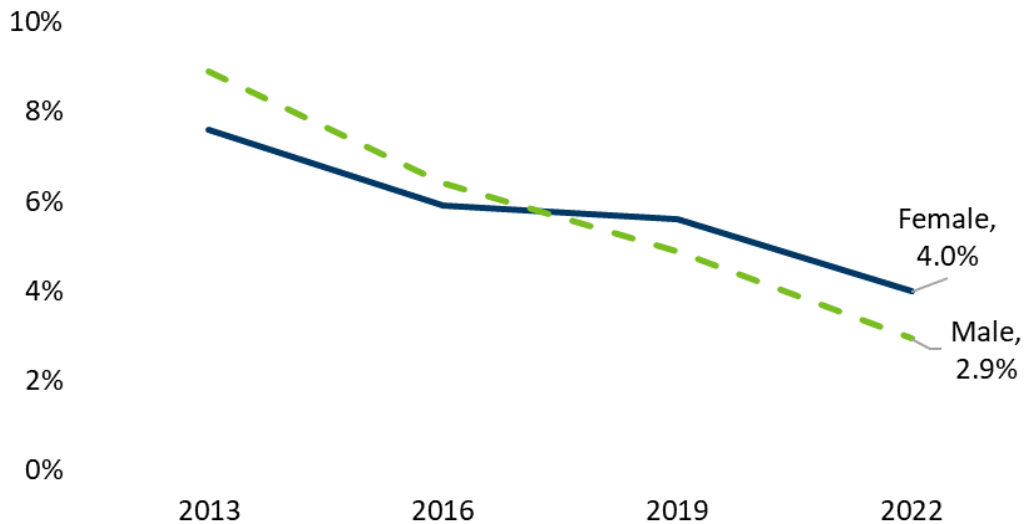
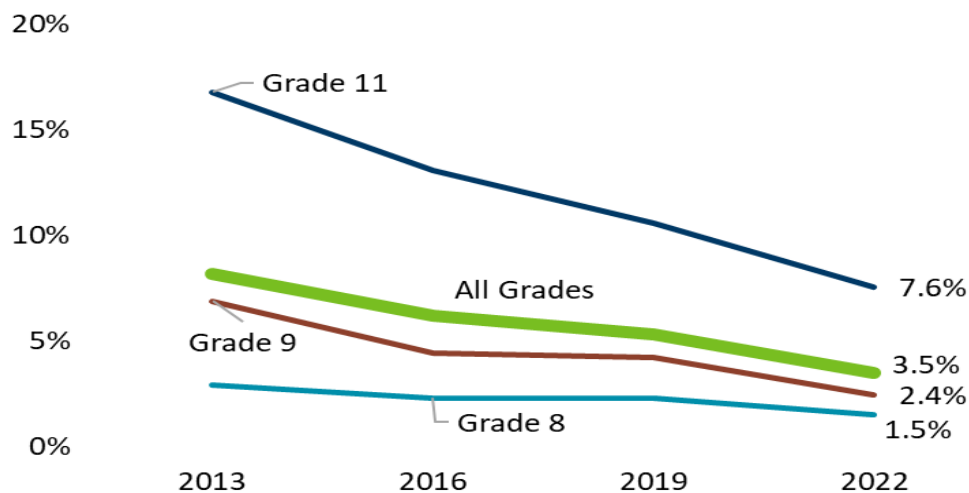


Figure 3: Percent of students who report binge drinking in grades 8, 9 and 11 by sex (female and male). Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more alcoholic drinks during one occasion for males, and four or more drinks for female as of 2019. In 2013 and 2016, binge drinking was defined as having five or more drinks of alcohol on a single occasion regardless of sex. Data obtained from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey.

Figure 4 demonstrates that while binge drinking is decreasing overall, it is increasing with grade. In 2022, 1.5% of students in grade 8 reported binge drinking whereas 7.6% of students in grade 11 reported binge drinking.

Figure 4: Binge drinking among youth is declining overall but increases with grade.



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Figure 4: Percent of students who reported binge drinking in grades 8, 9, 11 and all by year. Data obtained from the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey.

Sources of alcohol

Reducing social access to alcohol is one of the most effective strategies to prevent underage drinking.¹³ Figure 5 shows where youth in Minnesota who reported current alcohol use are getting their alcohol. Youth who reported current alcohol use are most likely to reported getting alcohol from friends (35%) or parents (27.5%).

Other top sources of alcohol include taking it from their homes (26%) or getting it at parties (19%). Less than 2% of youth who reported alcohol use bought alcohol at a store or gas station and, 1.7% obtained alcohol at a restaurant or bar.

Figure 5: Youth most commonly access alcohol from friends, parents, or by taking it from home.

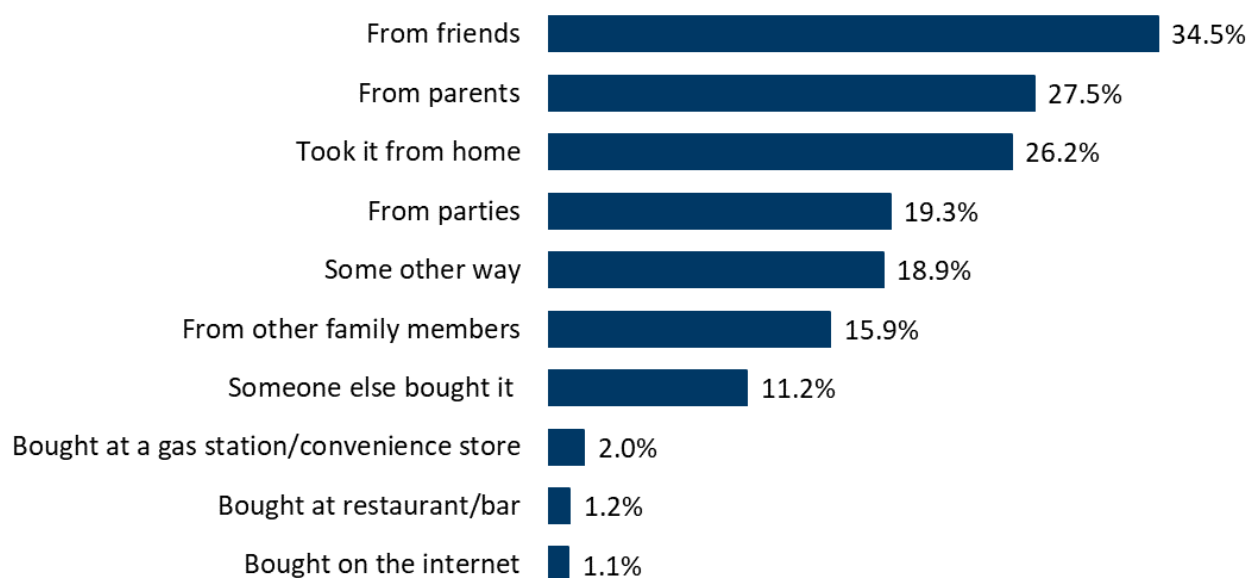


Figure 5: Top sources of alcohol reported by students in grades 8, 9, and 11 (in Minnesota), who reported current alcohol use. Current alcohol use is defined as consuming alcohol at least once in the last 30 days. Data obtained through the 2022 Minnesota Student Survey.

Burdens of alcohol use among youth

Alcohol use by youth can create changes in brain development that may lead to dependency, memory problems and other long-term effects that can cause difficulty in school and beyond. Consequences related to alcohol use may be greater in youth because the brain is not fully developed.¹¹ Youth who consume alcohol are at increased risk for acute alcohol-related injuries such as alcohol poisoning, alcohol-related motor vehicle accidents, and other unintentional injuries.

- In 2019, underage drinking cost the state of Minnesota more than \$747 million dollars in health care costs, productivity losses, and other societal costs such as crime.¹²

- During 2020 – 2021, there were on average 41 alcohol-attributable deaths among young people aged 19 and younger in Minnesota; 12 of these deaths were due to excessive alcohol use in motor vehicle crashes.⁹
- From 2016 to 2023, there were 18,291 Hospital (ED and Inpatient) visits 100% attributable to alcohol involving youth ages 10 to 19 (51% of these visits were females). Youth accounted for 2.8% of all 100% alcohol attributable hospital visits (Total visits = 652,021).⁸
- From 2014 to 2020, youth under age 18 accounted for approximately 10% of admissions to Minnesota treatment facilities for alcohol each year.⁸

Social harms and harms to others

- Youth who drink are at higher risk for suicide and homicide, as well as physical and sexual assault.¹⁰
- About 5% of high school students who had driven in the past month said they drove after drinking alcohol, and more than 1 in 10 high school students reported riding with a driver who had been drinking alcohol in the past month.⁵
- During the 2023 - 2024 school year, 3.8% percent of substance use related school disciplinary incidences involved alcohol.¹⁴

For more information

- The Minnesota Department of Health [Alcohol and Other Drugs](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/alcohol/) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/alcohol/>) page provides reliable information and data to help inform policy and guide change to help reduce the use of alcohol and other drugs.
- [The Role of Peers in Alcohol Use Among Youth in MN](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/alcohol/documents/alcoholpeers.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/alcohol/documents/alcoholpeers.pdf>) data brief summarizes data around perceptions and use of alcohol among peers and how these perceptions may influence alcohol use.
- [The association between ACEs, protective factors, and alcohol use among youth in Minnesota](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/alcohol/documents/alcacesprotect.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/alcohol/documents/alcacesprotect.pdf>) data brief reports on ACEs, protective factors, and alcohol use among youth.

Methods

This data brief reports on alcohol use among youth as measured by the [2022 Minnesota Student Survey](https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/mchs/surveys/mss/index.html) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/data/mchs/surveys/mss/index.html>) (MSS). The MSS is a survey of 5th, 8th, 9th, and 11th grade students in all participating school districts in the state. Participation was voluntary and surveys were anonymous. School district participation rates was 70% in 2022.

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