

11. Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Use

What It Is

Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use are measured by the percentage of students who self-report they have used these substances within the last thirty days (see Figure 11.1).

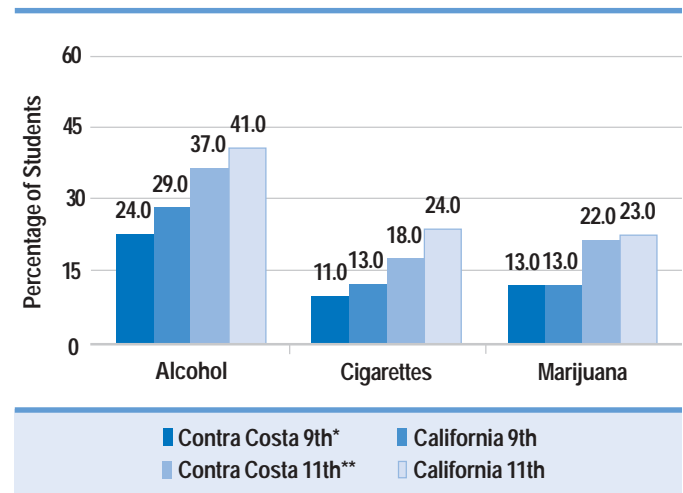
Why It Is Important

The use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco may contribute to poor health, and undesirable educational and social outcomes for teens. Drug, alcohol, and tobacco use sometimes correlates to low self-esteem, poor performance in school, and difficulties at home. Alcohol is the most commonly used drug among young people, often leading to serious consequences such as drunk driving accidents, fighting, high-risk sexual behavior, academic failure, and criminal behavior. Youth raised by parents or caretakers with a history of substance abuse, or whose peers use drugs, alcohol or tobacco, may be more likely to develop problems with substance abuse themselves.

How We Are Doing

Ninth graders are less likely than 11th graders to use alcohol and other drugs. Contra Costa County 9th and 11th graders are generally less likely to use these substances than their peers throughout California. Twenty-four percent of surveyed 9th graders and 37% of surveyed 11th graders report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Marijuana is less common, with 13% of surveyed 9th graders and 22% of surveyed 11th graders reporting having used marijuana in the previous 30 days. Cigarette smoking is even less popular, although 11% of surveyed 9th graders and 18% of surveyed 11th graders report having smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days.

Figure 11.1 — Percentage of 9th and 11th Graders Self-Reporting the Use of Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco, 2001-02 (any current use, past 30 days)



Source: WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey, Contra Costa County Office of Education, 2002, Contra Costa County Technical Report 2001-2002 School Year.

* Sample size: 3,674

** Sample size: 2,864

Note: The results listed in this countywide report must be interpreted with caution. They are not representative of Contra Costa County or its respective districts/schools, and only represent those students who responded to the survey on the day it was given.