

Teen Drug Use Fell in the Past Decade

But students are less likely to think some drug use poses a great risk to health.

Between 1999 and 2009, the percentage of high school students using a variety of illicit drugs declined. The largest drop was in the use of marijuana, the share of 10th graders who had smoked pot in the past 30 days falling from 19 to 16 percent, and the share ever having tried pot falling from 41 to 32 percent. Among high school seniors, any illicit drug use fell from 55 to 47 percent between 1999 and 2009. Declines occurred in the use of most illicit drugs, including marijuana, inhalants, hallucinogens, and amphetamines.

Among high school seniors, a growing majority disapproves of trying a range of drugs including marijuana, amphetamines, and steroids. The percentage that disapproves of trying marijuana climbed from 49 to 55 percent between 1999 and 2009. A growing percentage of high school seniors also think drug use poses a great physical risk. But the share that believes regular marijuana use is a great risk fell from 57 to 52 percent between 1999 and 2009.

■ The ambivalence of boomer parents about their own youthful drug use may be one reason for the more casual attitude toward marijuana use among today's teens.

Fewer 12th graders think regular marijuana use is risky

(percent of 12th graders who think smoking marijuana regularly poses a great physical risk, 1999 and 2009)

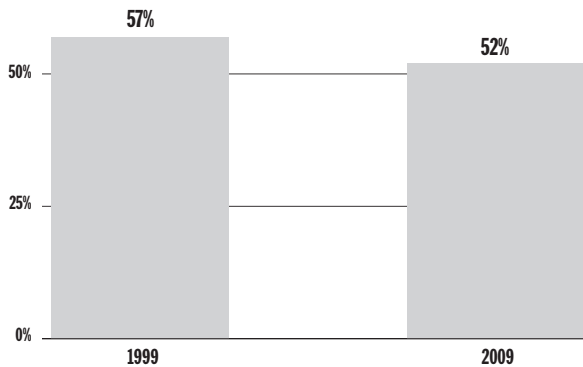


Table 1.25 Drug Use by 8th, 10th, and 12th Graders, 1999 and 2009

(percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders who have ever used illicit drugs and who have used illicit drugs in the past 30 days, by type of drug, 1999 and 2009; percentage point change, 1999–2009)

	ever used			used in past 30 days		
	2009	1999	percentage point change	2009	1999	percentage point change
8TH GRADERS						
Any illicit drug	19.9%	28.3%	-8.4	8.1%	12.2%	-4.1
Any illicit drug other than marijuana	10.4	16.3	-5.9	3.5	5.5	-2.0
Marijuana	15.7	22.0	-6.3	6.5	9.7	-3.2
Inhalants	14.9	19.7	-4.8	3.8	5.0	-1.2
Hallucinogens	3.0	4.8	-1.8	0.9	1.3	-0.4
Cocaine	2.6	4.7	-2.1	0.8	1.3	-0.5
Amphetamines	6.0	10.7	-4.7	1.9	3.4	-1.5
Tranquilizers	3.9	4.4	-0.5	1.2	1.1	0.1
Steroids	1.3	2.7	-1.4	0.4	0.7	-0.3
10TH GRADERS						
Any illicit drug	36.0	46.2	-10.2	17.8	22.1	-4.3
Any illicit drug other than marijuana	16.7	24.0	-7.3	5.7	8.6	-2.9
Marijuana	32.3	40.9	-8.6	15.9	19.4	-3.5
Inhalants	12.3	17.0	-4.7	2.2	2.6	-0.4
Hallucinogens	6.1	9.7	-3.6	1.4	2.9	-1.5
Cocaine	4.6	7.7	-3.1	0.9	1.8	-0.9
Amphetamines	10.3	15.7	-5.4	3.3	5.0	-1.7
Tranquilizers	7.0	7.9	-0.9	2.0	2.2	-0.2
Steroids	1.3	2.7	-1.4	0.5	0.9	-0.4
12TH GRADERS						
Any illicit drug	46.7	54.7	-8.0	23.3	25.9	-2.6
Any illicit drug other than marijuana	24.0	29.0	-5.0	8.6	10.4	-1.8
Marijuana	42.0	49.7	-7.7	20.6	23.1	-2.5
Inhalants	9.5	15.4	-5.9	1.2	2.0	-0.8
Hallucinogens	7.4	13.7	-6.3	1.6	3.5	-1.9
Cocaine	6.0	9.8	-3.8	1.3	2.6	-1.3
Amphetamines	9.9	16.3	-6.4	3.0	4.5	-1.5
Tranquilizers	9.3	9.3	0.0	2.7	2.5	0.2
Steroids	2.2	2.9	-0.7	1.0	0.9	0.1

Source: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Monitoring the Future Survey, 2009, Internet site <http://monitoringthefuture.org/data/09data.html>; calculations by New Strategist

Most Low-Income Workers Do Not Have Access to Employer-Provided Health Insurance

Among high-wage workers, more than 90 percent have access to employer-provided health insurance.

Seventy-four percent of the nation's workers have access to medical benefits through their employer. Although more than three-quarters take advantage of this offering, about one in four does not—perhaps because they are covered through a spouse or cannot afford the expense. Seventy-two percent of workers have access to outpatient prescription drug coverage, 48 percent to dental coverage, and 29 percent to vision benefits.

Occupation influences the likelihood of having access to health insurance. Eighty-seven percent of managerial and professional workers have access to medical benefits through their employer. Among service workers, however, the figure is only 51 percent. Full-time workers are far more likely than part-time workers to have access to employer-provided health insurance (88 versus 24 percent), and union members are more likely than nonunion workers (92 versus 70 percent). The biggest difference is by wage level. Only 42 percent of workers with wages in the bottom quartile are offered employer-provided medical benefits versus 92 percent of those with wages in the top quartile.

■ Many lower-paid workers cannot afford the premiums for employer-provided health insurance.

Fewer than half of workers in the bottom wage quartile have access to employer-provided health insurance

(percent of workers with access to employer-provided medical benefits, by wage quartile, 2009)

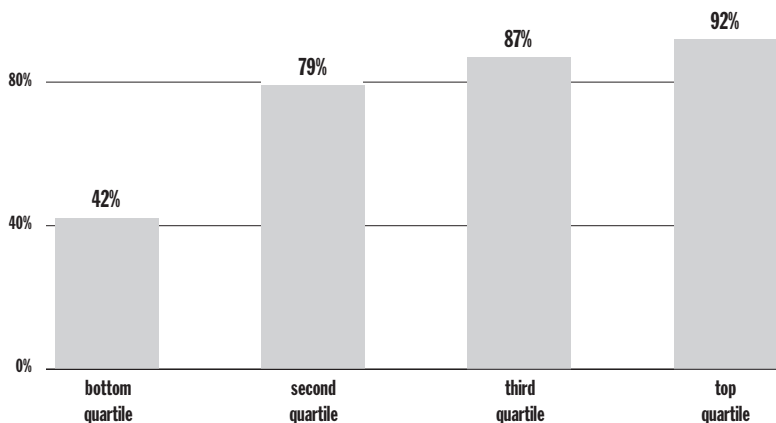


Table 6.19 Health Care Benefits, 2009: Medical Benefits

(percent of workers with access to and participating in medical care benefits by type of worker, 2009)

	medical care benefits		
	have access	participate	percent with access who participate
Total workers*	74%	56%	76%
Management and professional	87	69	80
Service	51	35	69
Sales and office	73	53	72
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	78	63	81
Production, transportation, and material moving	77	59	76
Full-time	88	68	77
Part-time	24	14	58
Union	92	78	84
Nonunion	70	51	73
Lowest quartile of wages	42	25	59
Second quartile of wages	79	58	74
Third quartile of wages	87	69	80
Highest quartile of wages	92	74	81

* Total includes civilian workers in the private nonfarm economy, except those in private households, and workers in the public sector, except the federal government.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2009, Internet site <http://www.bls.gov/ncs/ebc/home.htm>; calculations by New Strategist

More than One in Four Adults Has a Diagnosable Mental Disorder

These can range from phobias to serious mental illness.

Twenty-six percent of adults have a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year, according to estimates by the National Institute of Mental Health. Among the most common are anxiety disorders such as panic attacks, which affect 18 percent.

The mental health of Americans appears to be getting worse. People aged 18 or older report 3.4 days of poor mental health during the past month, according to the 2008 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. This figure is higher than the 2.9 days reported in the 1995 survey. More than 10 percent say their mental health was not good on at least 14 of the past 30 days, up from 8.7 percent in 1995. The percentage of people with poor mental health for at least two weeks during the past month increased in almost every age group, with the sharpest spike among 55-to-64-year-olds. The only ones who did not report an increase were people aged 65 or older.

A recent Gallup survey asked Americans whether they had ever been told they had depression and found 17 percent with a history of the illness. By age, the figure peaked among 45-to-64-year-olds at 21 percent. More than one in four Internet users has gone online to look for information about mental health. People under age 50 are more likely to have done so than those aged 65 or older (26 to 33 percent versus 12 percent).

■ Economic insecurity can lead to poor mental health, which is why mental health problems are growing among the middle aged.

Mental health is getting worse among the middle aged

(percent of people aged 18 or older with 14 or more days of poor mental health in past month, by age, 1995 and 2008)

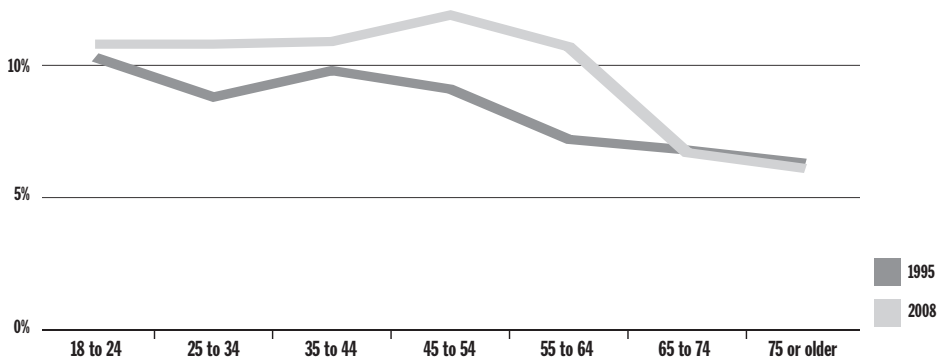


Table 12.1 Prevalence of Mental Disorders, 2008

(percentage or number of people with selected mental disorders, 2008)

	prevalence in a given year
Adults aged 18 or older with any diagnosable mental disorder	26.2%
Adults aged 18 or older with any mood disorder	9.5
With major depressive disorder	6.7
With dysthymic disorder	1.5
With bipolar disorder	2.6
Adults aged 18 or older with schizophrenia	1.1
Adults aged 18 or older with anxiety disorder	18.1
With panic disorder	2.7
With obsessive-compulsive disorder	1.0
With posttraumatic stress disorder	3.5
With generalized anxiety disorder	3.1
With social phobia	6.8
With agoraphobia	0.8
With specific phobia	8.7
Eating disorders	
Anorexia nervosa	0.5 to 3.7 percent of females during lifetime
Bulimia	1.1 to 4.2 percent of females during lifetime
Binge eating disorders	2 to 5 percent of population in 6-month period
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder	4.1 percent of adults aged 18 to 44 in a given year
Autism	3.4 cases per 1,000 children aged 3 to 10
Alzheimer's disease	10 percent of people aged 65 or older

Source: National Institute of Mental Health, The Numbers Count: Mental Disorders in America, 2008, Internet Site <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/numbers.cfm>

Shifts in Eating Habits Reflect Fads and Findings

Some positive changes are apparent, but Americans still crave soft drinks.

Between 2000 and 2007, Americans consumed less of some foods and more of others. During those years, the average person ate less beef but more chicken, fewer fresh fruits but more fresh vegetables, less regular soda but more diet soda.

Ongoing efforts by nutritionists and public health professionals to get Americans to eat a better diet have yet to result in big changes. But they may account for the greater consumption of yogurt, fresh vegetables, and nuts. The advice of nutritionists hasn't managed to lower consumption of potato chips, however.

Carbonated soft drinks continue to be the most popular beverage, although consumption fell between 2000 and 2007. Coffee consumption rose slightly. The average person drank much more bottled water in 2007 (29 gallons) than in 2000 (18 gallons). He or she also drank more alcoholic beverages, with wine consumption growing by a significant 23 percent.

■ The amount of food the average person consumes has grown during the past three decades, which explains Americans' growing girth.

Carbonated beverages are more popular than any other

(number of gallons of beverages consumed per person, 2007)

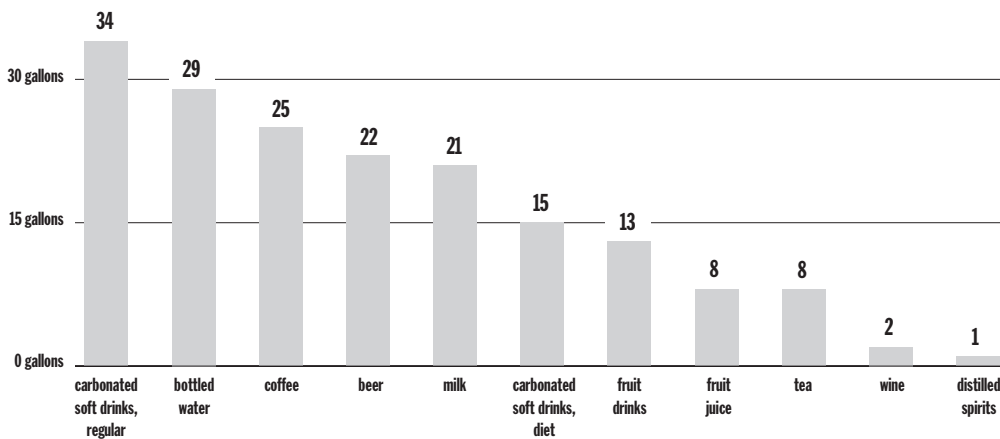


Table 14.1 Food and Beverage Consumption, 2000 and 2007

(number of pounds of food and gallons of beverages consumed per person, 2000 and 2007; percent change in consumption, 2000–07)

	2007	2000	percent change, 2000–07
Food (pounds)			
Red meat (boneless)	110.6	113.7	-2.7%
Beef	62.2	64.5	-3.7
Veal	0.3	0.5	-40.1
Lamb and mutton	0.8	0.8	1.5
Pork	47.3	47.8	-1.0
Poultry (boneless)	73.7	67.9	8.5
Chicken	59.9	54.2	10.4
Turkey	13.8	13.7	1.1
Fish and shellfish (boneless)	16.3	15.2	7.1
Eggs (number)	249	251	-0.9
Shell	170	178	-4.6
Processed	79	73	8.1
Yogurt, except frozen (½ pints)	21.3	12.0	77.3
Cream (½ pints)	15.7	11.6	35.4
Sour cream and dips (½ pints)	8.2	6.1	34.7
Cheese	32.7	29.8	9.7
American	12.8	12.7	0.8
Cheddar	10.0	9.7	3.4
Italian	14.1	12.1	16.3
Mozzarella	10.9	9.3	17.7
Other	5.8	4.8	20.8
Swiss	1.3	1.0	28.2
Cream, Neufchatel	2.6	2.3	11.4
Cottage cheese, total	2.6	2.6	-0.4
Lowfat	1.4	1.3	7.3
Frozen dairy products	25.2	28.0	-10.1
Ice cream	14.0	16.7	-16.0
Low-fat ice cream	7.0	7.3	-4.5
Sherbet	1.3	1.2	4.6
Frozen yogurt	1.2	2.0	-39.6
Butter	4.7	4.5	5.7
Margarine	4.5	8.2	-44.9
Shortening	21.0	31.5	-33.5
Salad and cooking oils	50.2	33.7	49.0
Flour and cereal products	196.9	199.2	-1.1
Wheat flour products	138.1	146.3	-5.6
Rice products	20.5	18.9	8.9
Corn products	32.4	28.4	14.1
Oat products	4.7	4.4	7.9

(continued)