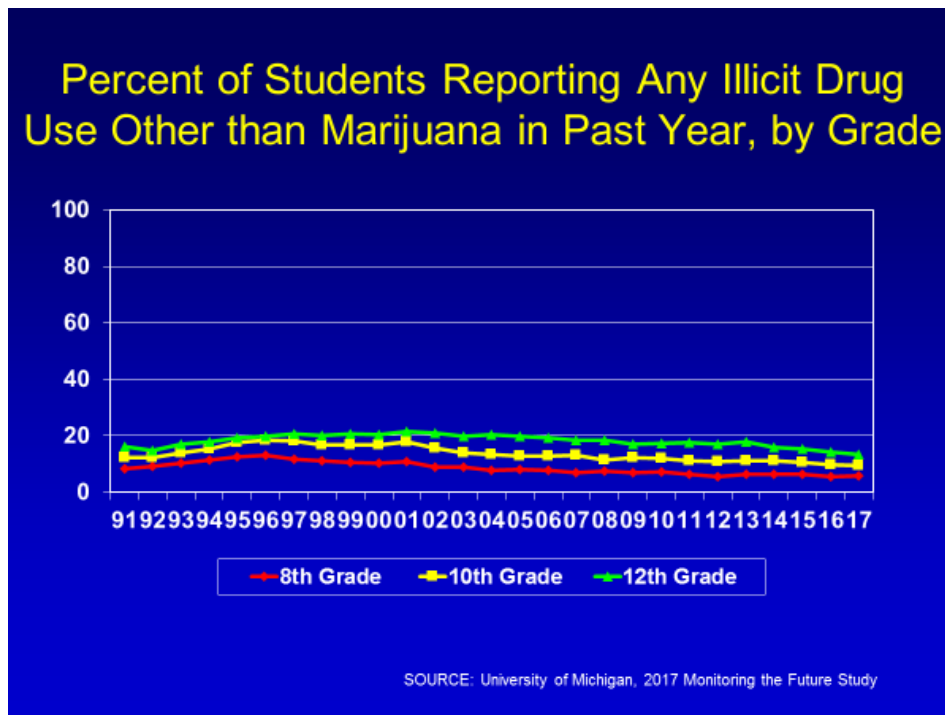


# DrugFacts

www.drugabuse.gov

## Monitoring the Future Survey: High School and Youth Trends

This year's Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey of drug use and attitudes among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in hundreds of schools across the country continues to report promising trends, with **past-year use of illicit drugs other than marijuana holding steady at the lowest levels in over two decades**—5.8 percent among 8th graders, 9.4 percent among 10th graders, and 13.3 percent among 12th graders. This is down from peak rates of 13.1 percent for 8th graders in 1996, 18.4 percent for 10th graders in 1996, and 21.6 percent for 12th graders in 2001.



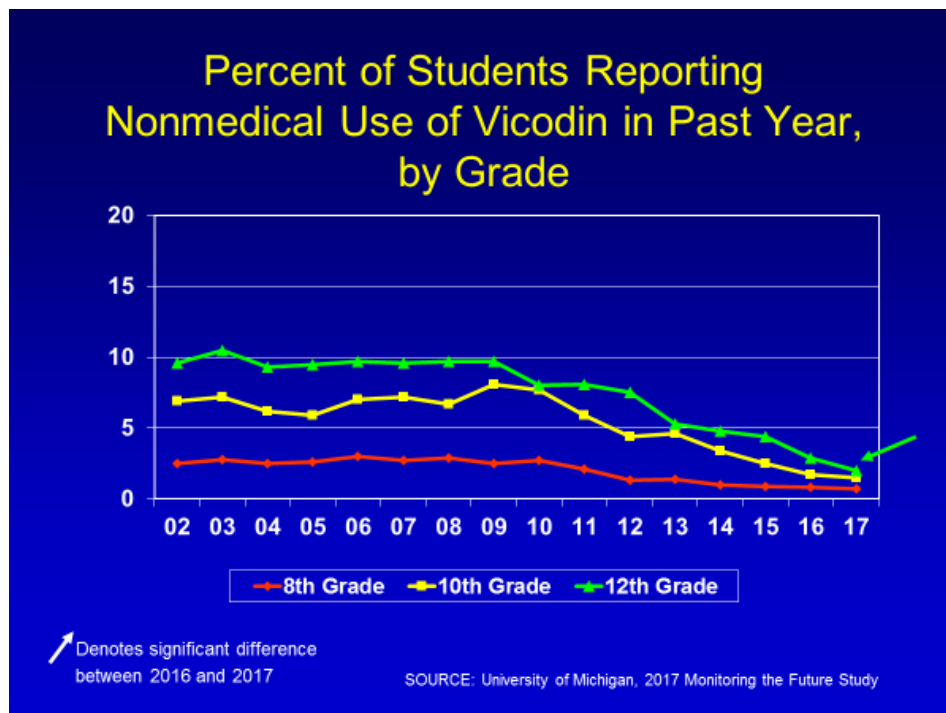
Last year, use of many substances reached the lowest levels since the survey's inception (or since the survey began asking about them) and held steady in 2017, or in some cases, dropped even more. Substances at historic low levels of use include alcohol and cigarettes, heroin, prescription opioids, MDMA (Ecstasy or Molly), methamphetamine, amphetamines, and sedatives. Other illicit drugs showed five-year declines, such as synthetic marijuana, hallucinogens other than LSD, and

over-the-counter cough and cold medications. Five-year trends, however, did reveal an increase in LSD use among high school seniors, although use still remains lower compared to its peak in 1996.

The survey also found a general decline in perceived risk of harm from using a number of substances and declining disapproval of people who use them. For example, the percentage of 8th graders who think that occasional use of synthetic marijuana or over-the-counter cough and cold medications is less than it was last year and in prior years. Among 10th graders, there was a decrease in the proportion of students who perceive a risk of harm when trying inhalants, powder cocaine, or over-the-counter cough and cold medications once or twice. High school seniors reported reduced perception of harm in occasional cocaine, heroin, and steroid use, and reduced disapproval of trying LSD.

## Opioids

Despite the continued rise in opioid and overdose deaths and high levels of opioid misuse among adults, lifetime, past-year, and past-month misuse of prescription opioids (narcotics other than heroin) dropped significantly over the last five years in 12th graders (the only grade surveyed in this category). Vicodin use notably dropped by 51 percent in 8th graders, 67 percent in 10th graders and 74 percent in 12th graders. Interestingly, teens also think these drugs are not as easy to get as they used to be. Only 35.8 percent of 12th graders said they were easily available in the 2017 survey, compared to more than 54 percent in 2010.

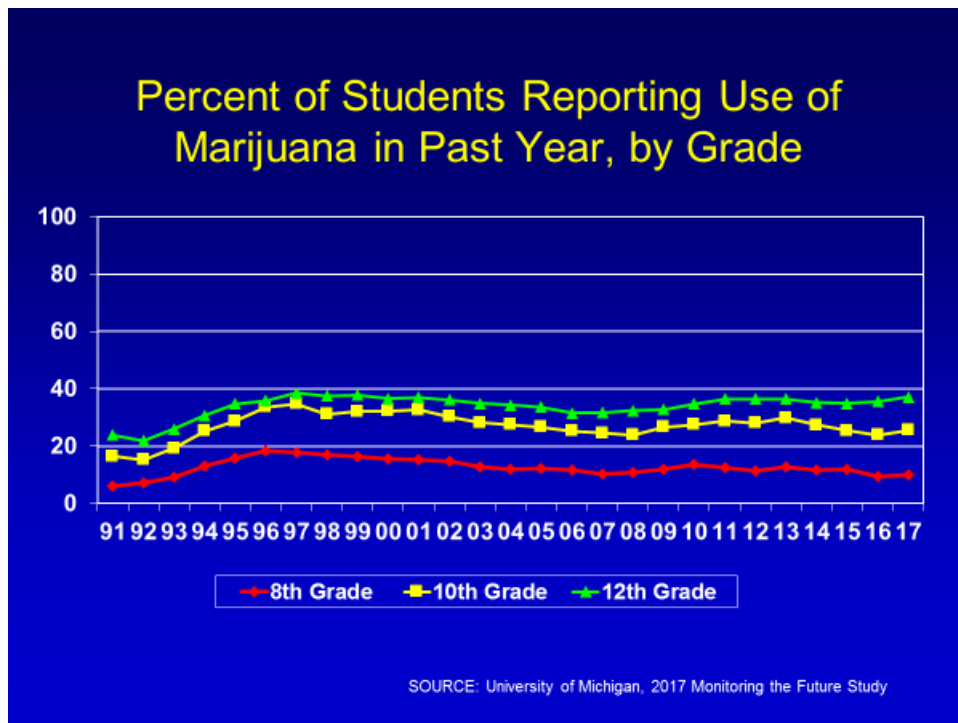


## Marijuana

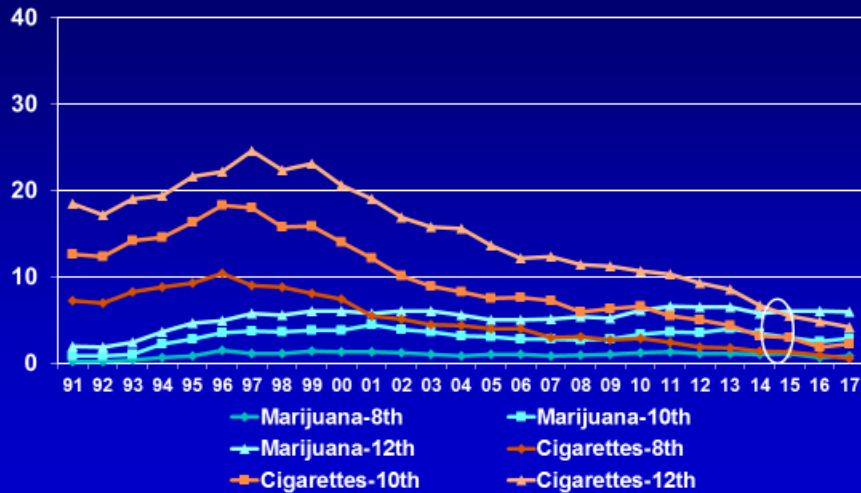
### **Past-year marijuana use declined among 10th graders and remains unchanged among 8th and 12th graders compared to five years ago, despite the changing state marijuana laws.**

Past-year use of marijuana reached its lowest levels in more than two decades among 8th and 10th graders in 2016; the one slight increase in 2017 was past-month use among 10th graders, which returned to 2014-2015 levels after a decrease in 2016. Daily use of marijuana has declined among 8th graders over the past five years to 0.7 percent. Among 12th graders, 6 percent continue to report daily use, which corresponds to about 1 in 16 high school seniors. Among all grades, perceptions of harm and disapproval around marijuana use continue to decrease, with a smaller percentage 8th and 10th graders thinking that regular marijuana use is harmful, and fewer 10th and 12th graders disapproving of regular marijuana use. While only 29.0 percent of 12th graders report that regular marijuana use poses a great risk (half of what it was 20 years ago), disapproval among 12th graders remains somewhat high, with 64.7 percent reporting they disapprove of adults smoking marijuana regularly.

**This year, daily marijuana use exceeds daily cigarette use among 8th (0.8 vs. 0.6 percent), 10th (2.9 vs. 2.2 percent) and 12th (5.9 vs. 4.2 percent) graders.** This is the first year in which daily marijuana use appeared to outpace daily cigarette use among 8th graders—this flip occurred in 10th graders in 2014 and in 12th graders in 2015, reflecting a steep decline in daily cigarette use and fairly stable daily marijuana use.



## Percent of Students Reporting Daily Marijuana, Daily Cigarette Use in Past Month, by Grade

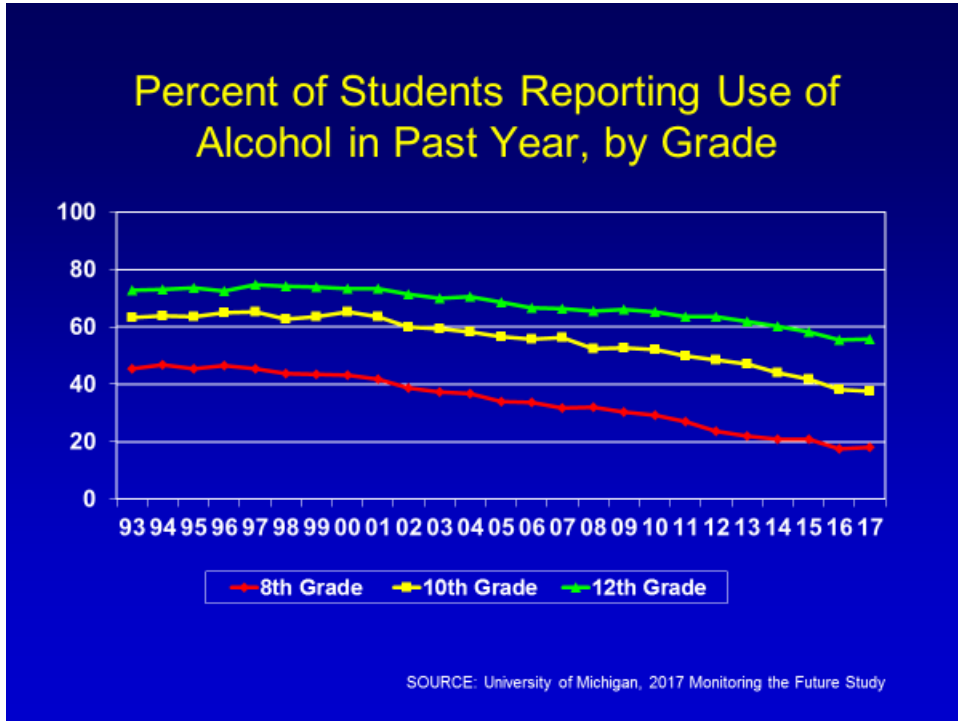


SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2017 Monitoring the Future Study

## Alcohol

**Alcohol use and binge drinking continued to show a significant five-year decline among all grades.** Past month use of alcohol was reported by 8.0 percent, 19.7 percent, and 33.2 percent of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders, respectively, compared to 11.0 percent, 27.6 percent, and 41.5 percent in 2012. Daily alcohol use and binge drinking (defined as consuming five or more drinks sometime in the past two weeks) also decreased significantly among all grades between 2012 and 2017. Unlike previous years, however, there were not significant declines in alcohol use between 2016 and 2017. Also, the perception of risk of binge drinking significantly decreased in 10th graders in 2017.

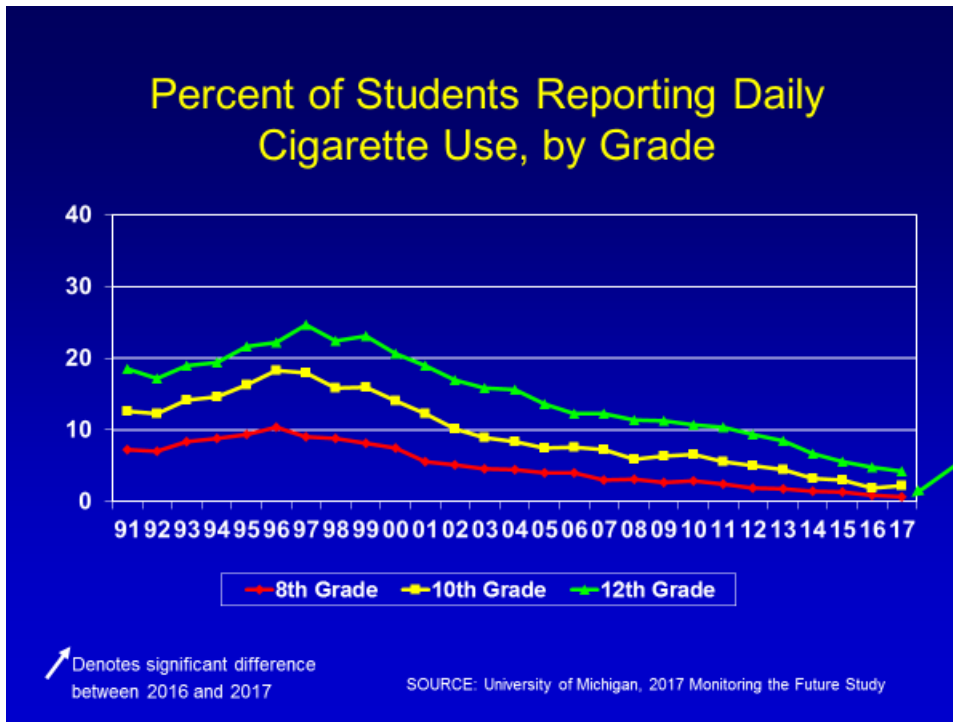
**The percentage of high school teens who reported ever using alcohol dropped by as much as 60 percent compared to peak years.** This year's survey found that 23.1 percent of 8th graders reported ever trying alcohol, which is a 60 percent drop from the peak of 55.8 percent in 1994. Among 10th graders, lifetime use fell by 40 percent from 72.0 percent in 1997 to 42.2 percent in 2017. Among 12th graders, there was a significant 25 percent drop in lifetime alcohol use from 81.7 percent in 1997 to the current 61.5 percent.



## Nicotine and Tobacco

**Use of traditional cigarettes has continued to decline to the lowest levels in the survey’s history.** Significant five-year declines—by more than half for daily use and for use of one half pack or more per day—were reported by all grades. Daily cigarette use was reported by 0.6 percent of 8th graders, 2.2 percent of 10th graders, and 4.2 percent of 12th graders in 2017. This was down from peaks of 10.4 percent and 18.3 percent among 8th and 10th graders in 1996 and a peak of 24.6 percent of 12th graders in 1997.

**Use of other tobacco products including hookah and smokeless tobacco declined among high school seniors.** Among 12th graders, tobacco use with a hookah fell from 13.0 percent to 10.1 percent in the last year; past-year hookah rates have declined by 45 percent in the past five years. Lifetime and past-month use of smokeless tobacco declined in 12th graders from 2016 to 2017 and showed a five-year decline in all grades.

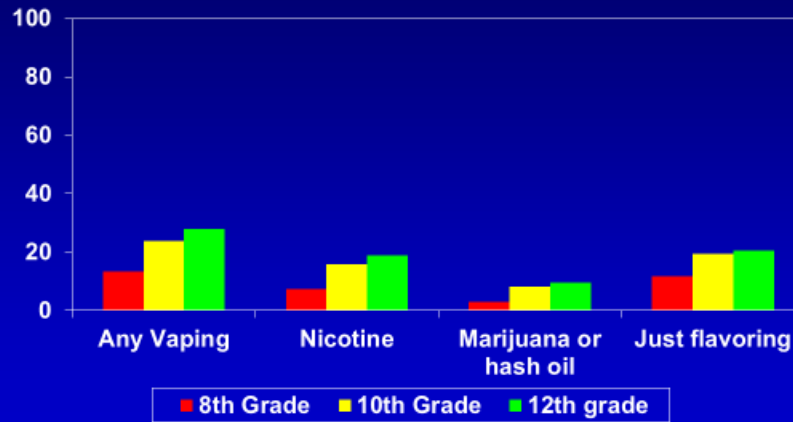


**For the first time in 2017, the MTF survey asked high school students about vaping specific substances ever, in the past year, and in the past month.** Past-year vaping was reported by 13.3 percent of 8th graders, 23.9 percent of 10th graders, and 27.8 percent of 12th graders. Vaping was the third most common form of substance use in high school seniors and 10th graders (after alcohol and marijuana) and the second most common among 8th graders (after alcohol).

Students were also asked what substances they had consumed via vaping—nicotine, marijuana, or “just flavoring.” Past-year vaping of flavoring alone was most common (reported by 11.8 percent of 8th graders, 19.3 percent of 10th graders, and 20.6 percent of 12th graders), followed by vaping nicotine (7.5 percent, 15.8 percent, and 18.8 percent) and marijuana (3.0 percent, 8.1 percent, and 9.5 percent).

The new survey data regarding vaping also reveal a difference in perception of harm when nicotine is specifically mentioned. While 20.3 percent of 8th graders reported thinking it is harmful to regularly use e-cigarettes, 38.2 percent reported thinking it is harmful to regularly vape an e-liquid containing nicotine. Similar differences were also seen in 10th graders (19.4 reported thinking it is harmful to use e-cigarettes regularly vs. 33.3 perceiving harm in regularly vaping a liquid that contains nicotine) and 12th graders (16.1 vs. 27.0 percent).

## Percent of Students Reporting Vaping in Past Year, by Type and Grade

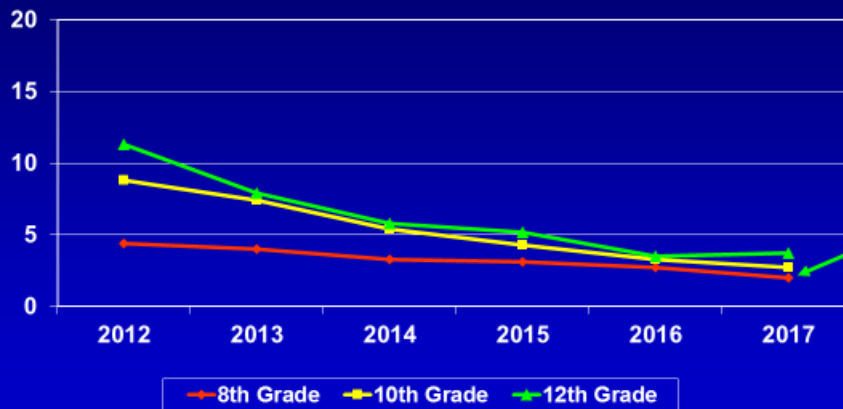


SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2017 Monitoring the Future Study

### Synthetic Drugs

Past-year use of synthetic cannabinoids (K2/herbal incense, sometimes called “fake weed” or “synthetic marijuana”) has dropped significantly in the six years since the survey began tracking use of these substances. Since 2011, reported use among 12th graders has dropped from 11.4 percent to 3.7 percent. Use has also fallen from 4.4 percent to 2.0 percent among 8th graders and from 8.8 percent to 2.7 percent among 10th graders since 2012. In recent years, use of another synthetic drug called “bath salts” (technically, synthetic cathinones) among youth has become a concern. The MTF survey began tracking past-year synthetic cathinone use in 2012, and since then, there has been a decrease among 12th graders from 1.3 percent to 0.6 percent in 2017. Use among 10th graders has declined to 0.4 percent from a peak of 0.9 percent in 2013.

## Percent of Students Reporting Use of Synthetic Cannabinoids in Past Year, by Grade



↑ Denotes significant difference between 2016 and 2017

SOURCE: University of Michigan, 2017 Monitoring the Future Study

### Learn More

For more information about the Monitoring the Future survey and results, please visit:

- the [Monitoring the Future website](#)
- the NIDA's [Monitoring the Future webpage](#)

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