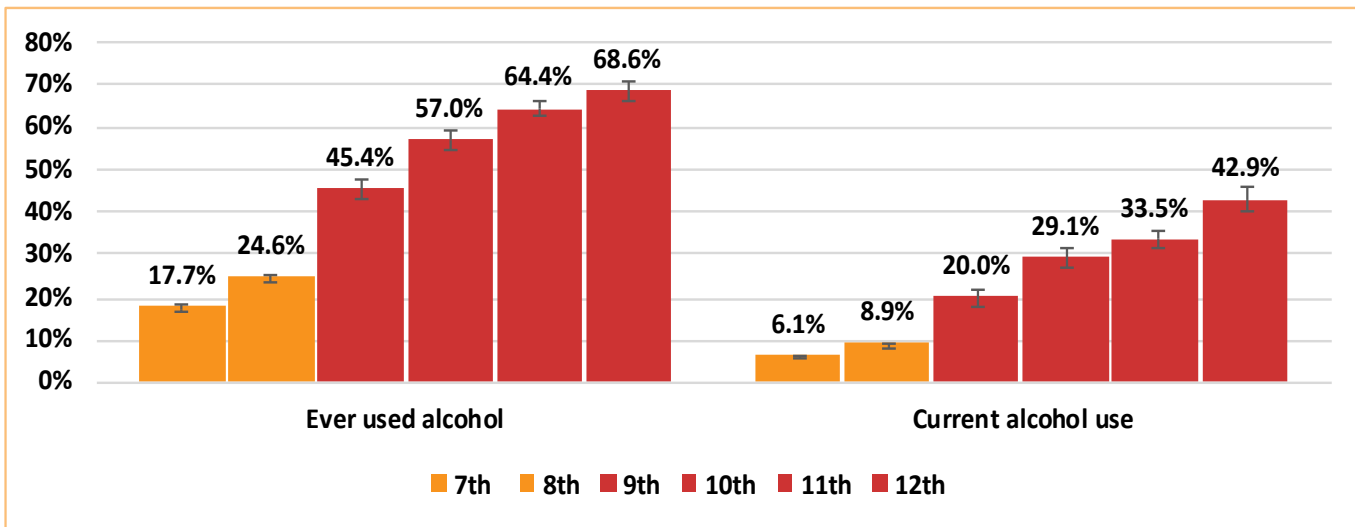


This data brief describes the extent and characteristics of alcohol use among middle and high school students in Cuyahoga County. In 2016 and 2017, the prevalence of having ever used alcohol and used alcohol in the past 30 days increased from 7th grade through 12th grade. While less than a quarter of 7th graders had ever drunk alcohol, more than two thirds of 12th graders had drunk. This increase was equally striking when compared to use within the past 30 days. Less than 10% of 7th and 8th graders were current alcohol users in contrast to 20% in 9th grade and more than 40% in 12th grade (see Fig. 1).

Alcohol use increases dramatically from middle to high school.

Figure 1. Alcohol Use at Grade Level



The prevalence of alcohol use has decreased since 2009 for 7th and 8th graders in Cuyahoga County (see Fig. 2). By 2016, the percentage who reported having ever used alcohol, used in the past 30 days, or having drunk alcohol before 11 years of age had significantly declined for middle school students.

Figure 2. Decline in Alcohol Use in Middle School since 2009

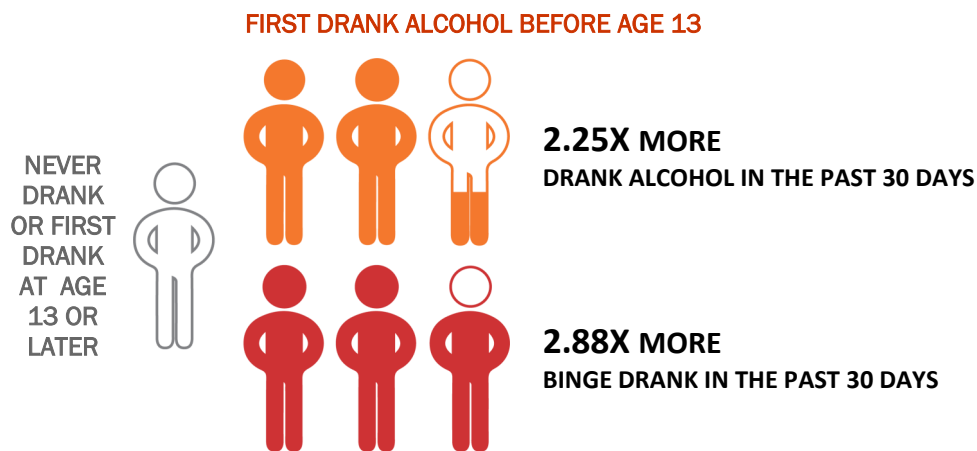


For high school students, although the prevalence of having tried alcohol had also decreased since 2009 (from 65.4% to 58.3%); rates of current use (within the past 30 days), binge drinking, and drinking before age 13 had not significantly changed. In 2017, 30.7% of Cuyahoga County high school students were current users, 15.3% drank alcohol before the age of 13 years, and 16.4% had engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days.

The consumption of alcohol while engaging in other behaviors such as driving or sexual activity poses additional risk to youth. Of high school students who had driven in the past 30 days, 7.9% had driven after consuming alcohol. Of sexually active high school students, 18.3% had drunk alcohol or used drugs the last time they had sexual intercourse. These students were significantly less likely to use a condom.

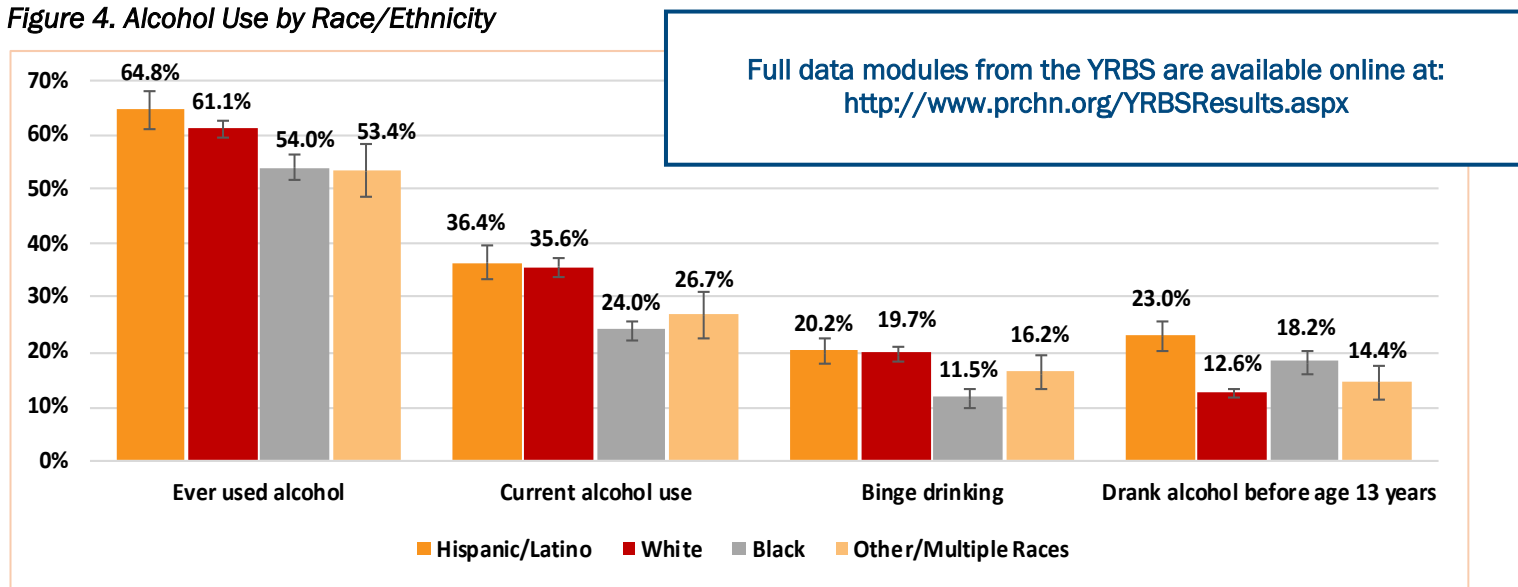
The importance of continuing to lower the prevalence of middle school alcohol use is highlighted when looking at use by high school students who first drank alcohol before age 13. High school students who drank alcohol before the age 13 were much more likely to be current drinkers or binge drinkers than those who had their first drink at a later age or never drank alcohol at all. Current alcohol use was reported by 63.7% of students who first drank before age 13, while only 28.2% of other students were current drinkers. Binge drinking in the past 30 days was reported by 40.3% of students who first drank before age 13 compared to 14.0% of other students (see Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Current Alcohol Use and Age of Initiation



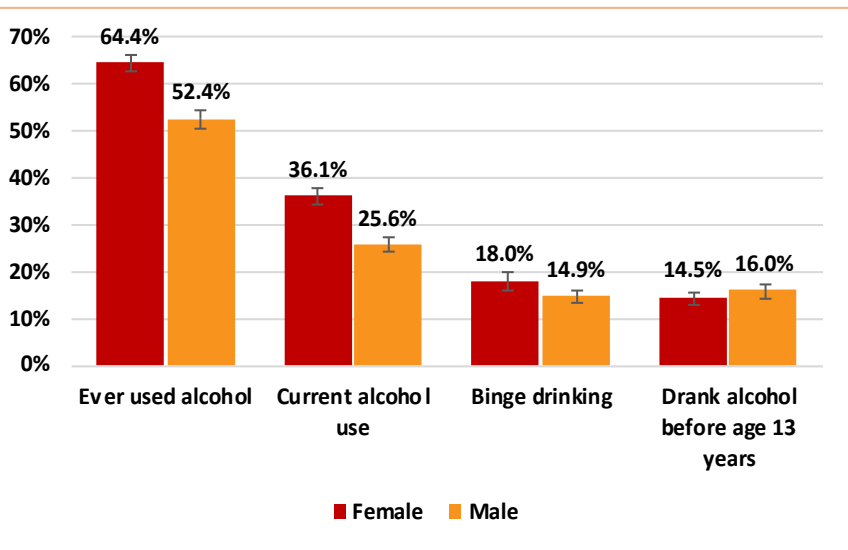
Among 9th to 12th graders in 2017, Hispanic/Latino students and White students reported the highest rates of alcohol use (ever, current) compared to Black students or students of multiple/other race. Despite this, Black students, as well as Hispanic/Latino students, were more likely to drink alcohol before 13 years of age than White students (see Fig. 4).

Figure 4. Alcohol Use by Race/Ethnicity



Female high school students were significantly more likely to use alcohol (ever, current, and binge drinking), while males were more likely to have drank alcohol before the age of 13 (see Fig. 5).

Figure 5. Alcohol Use by Gender



Methods: The Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) regularly uses a two-stage cluster sample design that mimics the sampling method of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and its national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). In 2017, 45 of 58 high schools (77.6%) and 13,907 of 18,098 students (76.8%) participated in the survey. An overall response rate of 60% (77.6 x 76.8) allowed the data to be weighted to the entire population of 9th-12th grade students in Cuyahoga County. In 2016, 95 of 104 schools that enrolled 7th and/or 8th grade students (91.3%), and 13,261 of 14,809 eligible students participated in the survey. An overall response rate of 82% (91.3 x 89.6) allowed the data to be weighted to the entire population of 7th-8th grade students in Cuyahoga County. Analyses were conducted using SPSS statistical software survey procedures to account for the sampling design. Unless otherwise noted, all differences in behavior are significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Contributors: This data brief was prepared by the PRCHN and authored by Audrey Kinsella, MPH; Jean Frank, MPH; Briana McIntosh, MPH; Marisa Hollinshead; Sarah Koopman Gonzalez, Ph.D.; Susan Petrone, MA; and Erika Trapl, Ph.D. For more information contact Jean Frank (jean.frank@case.edu).

Suggested Citation: Kinsella A, Frank J, Hollinshead M, Koopman-Gonzalez S, McIntosh B, Petrone S, and Trapl ES. (June 2018). Youth Data Brief: Alcohol Use in Cuyahoga County. Cleveland, OH: Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University.

This data brief is a product of a Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Research Center supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 1U48DP005030 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and funded either in whole or in part by Cooperative Agreement #U87PS004165-02 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent School Health (CDC-DASH). The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CWRU IRB Protocol #2012-274