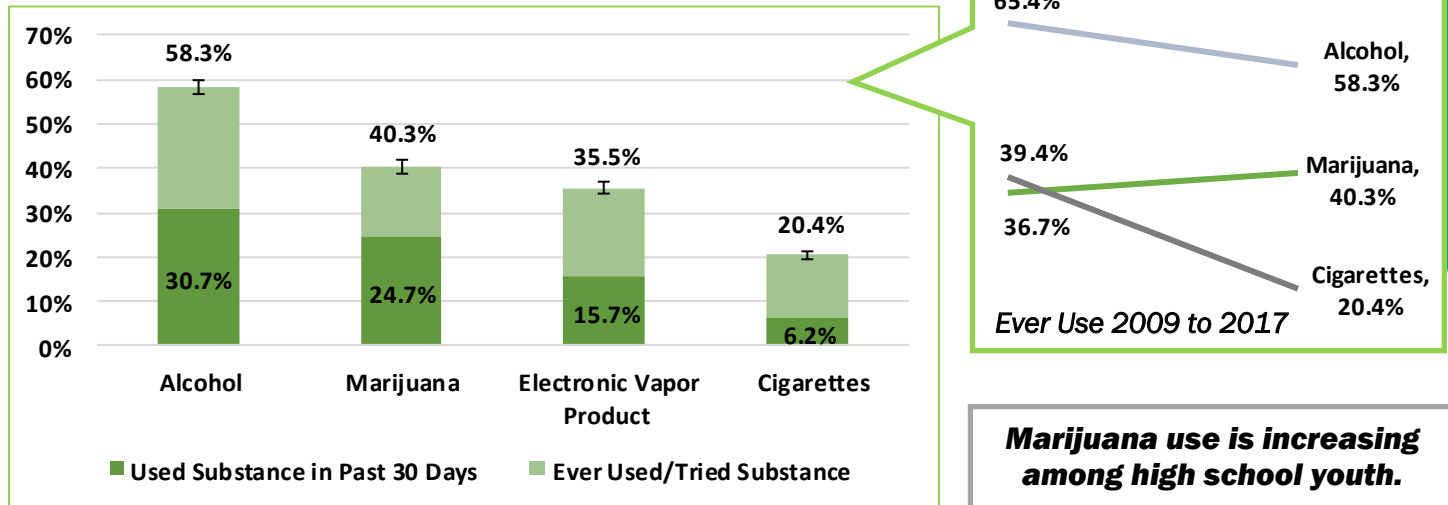


This data brief describes the extent and characteristics of marijuana use among middle and high school students in Cuyahoga County. In 2017, 40.3% of Cuyahoga County high school students had tried marijuana and 8.5% of students had tried it before the age of 13 years. Both of these prevalence rates have increased significantly since 2009 (36.7% vs 40.3%, 7.6% vs 8.5%, respectively).

**Marijuana is used by more students than any illegal substance other than alcohol.**

Figure 1. Ever and Current Use of Commonly Tried Substances 2017



**Marijuana use is increasing among high school youth.**

Alcohol, marijuana, electronic vapor products, and cigarettes were the most commonly tried substances reported on the Cuyahoga County high school YRBS in 2017 (58.3%, 40.3%, 35.5%, 20.4%, respectively). While there was an increase in having tried marijuana since 2009, rates of having used alcohol (65.4% vs 58.3%) or having smoked cigarettes (39.4% vs 20.4%) have decreased from 2009 to 2017 (see Fig. 1).

The prevalence of current marijuana use has also increased since 2009 (20.5% vs. 24.7%). Of those students who had tried marijuana, almost two thirds are current users (have used at least once in the past 30 days before completing the survey).

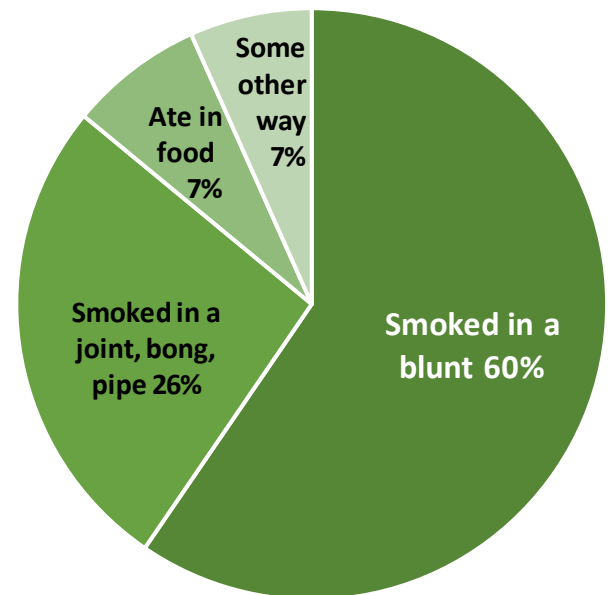
**Two thirds of students who have tried marijuana have also used it within the past 30 days.**

Nearly 60% of students who had used marijuana in the 30 days before completing the 2017 survey indicated that they usually smoked it in a blunt (see Fig. 2). A blunt is a cigar that has been hollowed out and filled with marijuana. This prevalence has increased significantly since 2015 (51%).

Female students were more likely than male students to usually use marijuana by smoking it in a blunt (63.5% vs. 55.2%, respectively), while male students were almost twice as likely as females (18.1% vs. 10.3%, respectively) to usually use marijuana in ways other than smoking it (e.g., ate, drank, vaped).

The majority of Black (77.3%) and the majority of Hispanic/Latino (64.8%) marijuana users usually smoked it in a blunt while White students were most likely (46.4%) to usually smoke it in a joint, bong or pipe.

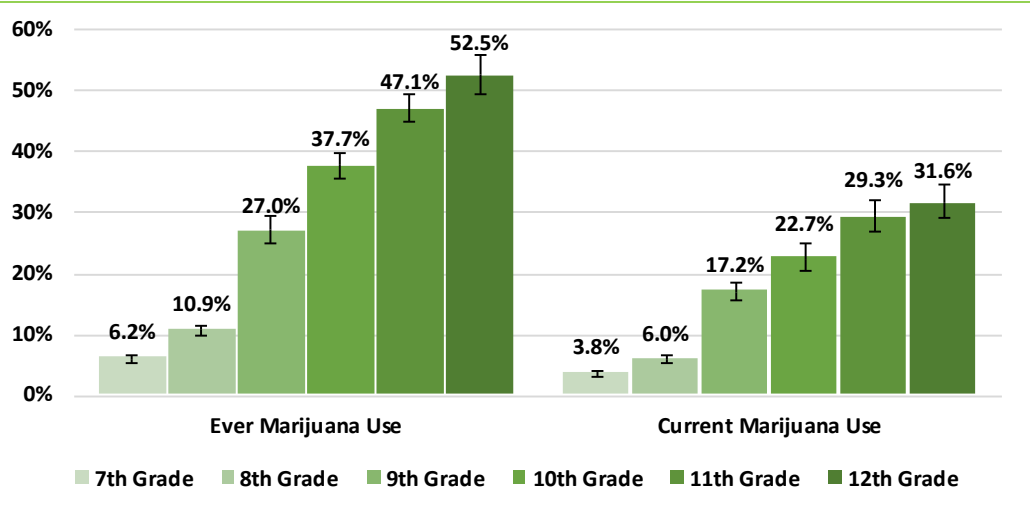
Figure 2. "During the past 30 days, how did you usually use marijuana?"



**Figure 3. Marijuana Use by Grade Level**

The prevalence of having used marijuana and using in the past 30 days increased significantly with each grade level from 7th to 11th grade and continued to increase into 12th grade, but not significantly.

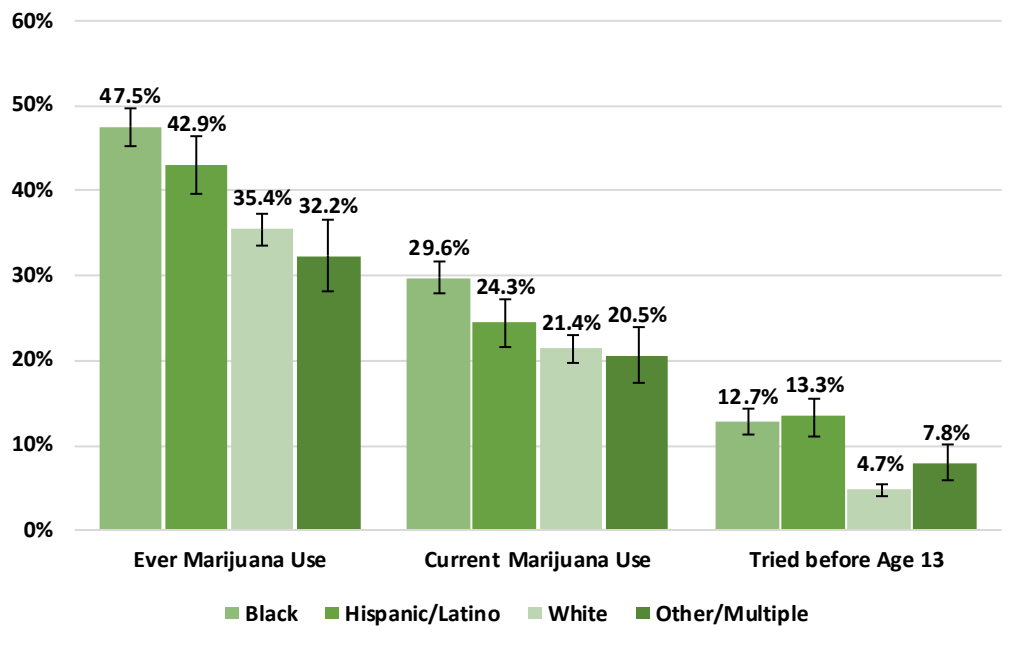
In 7th and 8th grade, current use was roughly 4% and 6% respectively. Marijuana use nearly tripled from 8th to 9th grade. In 10th grade, the rates of use climbed to nearly a quarter of students. Among 12th graders, nearly a third of students had used marijuana in the past 30 days.



**Figure 4. Marijuana Use by Race/Ethnicity**

Among 9th to 12th graders in 2017, Black and Hispanic/Latino students reported higher rates of having used marijuana and having tried it before the age of 13 as compared to White students or students of multiple/other races.

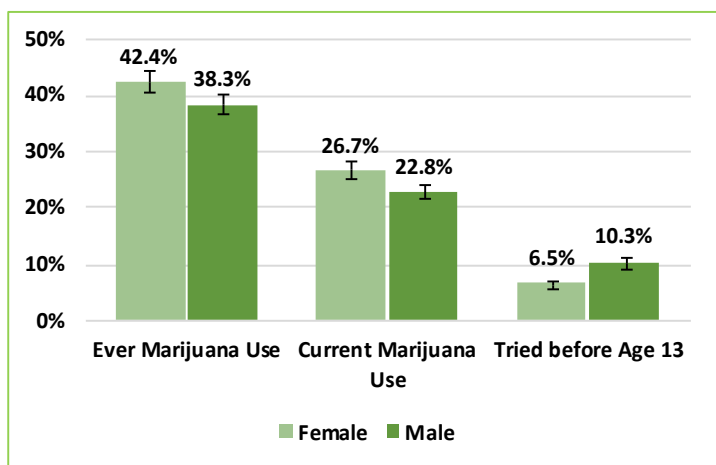
When reporting current marijuana use, Black students had significantly higher rates of use than other racial and ethnic groups.



**Figure 5. Marijuana Use by Gender**

In 2017, the prevalence rates of ever and current marijuana use were higher among females than among males.

However, males were more likely to report that they smoked marijuana for the first time before the age of 13 years.



**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:** The information in this report was obtained from the 2016 and 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey project. This survey was modeled after the CDC state-based system of health surveys administered at the high school level every other year by each state department of health. This data brief was prepared by the PRCHN and authored by Jean Frank, MPH; Marisa Hollinshead; Audrey Kinsella, MPH; Sarah Koopman Gonzalez, Ph.D; Briana McIntosh, MPH; Sruthi Meka, MA; Susan Petrone, MA; and Erika Trapl, Ph.D. For more information : Contact Jean Frank (jean.frank@case.edu).

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

Full data modules from the YRBS are available online at: <http://www.prchn.org/YRBSResults.aspx>

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