



Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
at Case Western Reserve University

# 2019 Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Alcohol Use

## Introduction

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The Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods (PRCHN) at Case Western Reserve University has administered the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in school districts throughout Cuyahoga County since 2000. The YRBS is a cross-sectional tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to track adolescent risk behavior over time. In fall of 2019, the PRCHN conducted the YRBS among 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students in Cuyahoga County high schools. A more detailed description of the methodology is available at our website, [www.prchn.org/YRBSDataCollectionAnalysis.aspx](http://www.prchn.org/YRBSDataCollectionAnalysis.aspx).

This brief report presents results from the 2019 Cuyahoga County High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with a particular focus on Alcohol Use. This includes questions pertaining to alcohol use behavior as well as perceptions of alcohol use. In this brief report, we present:

- [Overall Prevalence](#)
- [Demographic Prevalence](#)
- [Trend Report](#)

Data for similar behaviors can be found at our website, [www.prchn.org/yrbs\\_home.aspx](http://www.prchn.org/yrbs_home.aspx).

## Alcohol Use

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More young people use alcohol than tobacco or any illicit drugs in the United States.<sup>i</sup> Alcohol use among youth has been linked to unintentional injuries, physical fights, academic problems, job problems and illegal behavior.<sup>ii</sup> Alcohol use has also been identified as a major contributing factor in approximately one-third of all unintentional injury deaths, homicides and suicides, which are the leading causes of death and disability among young people.<sup>iii</sup> Research also shows that teens who begin drinking before age 15 are five times more likely to develop alcohol dependence than those who begin drinking at age 21.<sup>iv</sup>

## Overall Prevalence

The following table summarizes alcohol use among the 15,350 high school students who completed the 2019 Cuyahoga County YRBS. Prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals were computed for all dichotomous variables. The 2019 Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey prevalence for shared variables is also shown. A statistically significant difference exists between groups if the 95% confidence intervals do not overlap.

Risk Behavior	Cuyahoga County % (95% Confidence Interval)	Ohio % (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>Ever used alcohol</b> (Had at least 1 drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during their life.)	49.2 (47.5 - 50.8)	n/a
<b>Drank alcohol before age 13 years</b> (Other than a few sips.)	12.2 (11.4 - 13.0)	16.2 (13.2 - 19.8)
<b>Current alcohol use</b> (Had at least 1 drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey.)	28.4 (26.9 - 29.8)	25.9 (21.8 - 30.5)
<b>Had 4 or more drinks in a row (if female) or 5 or more drinks in a row (if male) within a couple of hours</b> (During the 30 days before the survey.)	15.2 (14.1 - 16.5)	13.4 (11.4 - 15.7)
<b>Attended a party or gathering in a home where parents permitted underage alcohol use</b> (During the 30 days before the survey.)	21.7 (20.5 - 23.0)	n/a
<b>Students perceive great risk of harm from drinking alcohol</b> (Physically or in other ways, if drink one or two alcoholic beverages nearly every day.)	34.1 (32.7 - 35.7)	n/a

## Demographic Prevalence

The tables below allow for further comparisons of alcohol use between demographic groups. Data are presented by gender, race/ethnicity, grade level, and sexual identity. In following tables, LGB stands for lesbian, gay, or bisexual. A statistically significant difference exists between groups if the 95% confidence intervals do not overlap.

Ever used alcohol			
Category	%	CI	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	52.9	50.8	55.0
Male	45.4	43.6	47.3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	53.7	51.0	56.4
Black	42.9	41.1	44.8
Hispanic	56.2	53.3	59.2
Other/Multiple	40.7	36.5	45.0
<b>Grade</b>			
9th	37.1	35.0	39.4
10th	44.7	41.1	48.4
11th	54.1	50.9	57.2
12th	61.9	59.3	64.5
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual	48.3	46.5	50.2
LGB	57.6	54.4	60.8
Not sure	41.8	36.1	47.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>49.2</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>50.8</b>

Drank alcohol before age 13 years			
Category	%	CI	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	11.2	10.2	12.3
Male	13.1	12.1	14.3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	9.5	8.4	10.6
Black	14.9	13.7	16.2
Hispanic	19.4	17.2	21.9
Other/Multiple	14.1	11.9	16.6
<b>Grade</b>			
9th	16.9	15.3	18.7
10th	11.3	9.7	13.1
11th	9.6	8.2	11.1
12th	10.2	8.8	11.8
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual	11.6	10.8	12.5
LGB	16.0	14.0	18.1
Not sure	13.0	9.5	17.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>12.2</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>13.0</b>

Current alcohol use			
Category	%	CI	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	32.2	30.3	34.2
Male	24.5	23.0	26.1
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	35.3	33.0	37.8
Black	19.5	18.0	21.2
Hispanic	28.0	25.3	31.0
Other/Multiple	21.5	18.3	25.2
<b>Grade</b>			
9th	18.3	16.7	20.1
10th	24.7	21.8	27.9
11th	31.7	28.7	34.7
12th	39.8	36.9	42.8
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual	27.9	26.3	29.5
LGB	32.6	29.7	35.5
Not sure	27.1	21.9	33.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>29.8</b>

Had 4 or more drinks (if female) or 5 or more drinks (if male) in a row within a couple of hours			
Category	%	CI	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	16.9	15.4	18.6
Male	13.4	12.2	14.8
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	20.3	18.3	22.5
Black	8.4	7.5	9.4
Hispanic	17.1	14.8	19.8
Other/Multiple	11.7	9.7	14.2
<b>Grade</b>			
9th	8.1	6.9	9.4
10th	12.4	9.9	15.5
11th	17.5	15.2	20.0
12th	23.6	21.1	26.3
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual	15.0	13.7	16.4
LGB	17.5	15.3	19.9
Not sure	13.4	10.2	17.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>16.5</b>

Attended a party or gathering in a home where parents permitted underage alcohol use			
Category	%	CI	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	24.3	22.7	- 26.0
Male	19.2	17.6	- 20.8
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	26.5	24.5	- 28.5
Black	14.6	13.5	- 15.9
Hispanic	22.2	20.0	- 24.5
Other/Multiple	17.4	14.9	- 20.2
<b>Grade</b>			
9th	15.2	13.7	- 16.9
10th	18.7	16.9	- 20.6
11th	24.9	22.0	- 28.1
12th	28.8	26.0	- 31.9
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual	21.9	20.6	- 23.4
LGB	22.6	20.1	- 25.2
Not sure	16.1	11.9	- 21.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>- 23.0</b>

Students perceive great risk of harm from drinking alcohol			
Category	%	CI	
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	36.7	34.9	- 38.6
Male	31.5	29.7	- 33.5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	35.0	32.9	- 37.2
Black	33.2	30.8	- 35.6
Hispanic	25.7	22.9	- 28.8
Other/Multiple	39.5	35.7	- 43.5
<b>Grade</b>			
9th	31.3	29.3	- 33.3
10th	32.4	30.3	- 34.6
11th	37.5	34.0	- 41.1
12th	36.3	32.6	- 40.1
<b>Sexual Identity</b>			
Heterosexual	34.0	32.3	- 35.6
LGB	34.6	31.6	- 37.8
Not sure	36.3	30.2	- 42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>34.1</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>- 35.7</b>

## Cuyahoga County Trend Data

The following table presents the prevalence of alcohol use among Cuyahoga County high school students in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019. The prevalence for each year is given (when available), with 95% confidence intervals below.

Cuyahoga County, 2011	Cuyahoga County, 2013	Cuyahoga County, 2015	Cuyahoga County, 2017	Cuyahoga County, 2019
<b>Ever used alcohol</b> (Had at least 1 drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during their life.)				
61.9 (60.3-63.6)	59.7 (58.0-61.4)	58.2 (56.2-60.1)	58.3 (56.9-59.7)	49.2 (47.5 - 50.8)
<b>Drank alcohol before age 13 years</b> (Other than a few sips.)				
15.6 (14.5-16.7)	15.2 (14.1-16.2)	14.4 (13.4-15.5)	15.3 (14.4-16.4)	12.2 (11.4 - 13.0)
<b>Current alcohol use</b> (Had at least 1 drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during the 30 days before the survey.)				
31.8 (30.3-33.3)	33.4 (31.7-35.1)	29.9 (27.8-32.1)	30.7 (29.5-32.0)	28.4 (26.9 - 29.8)
<b>*Had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours</b> (On 1 or more days during the 30 days before the survey.)				
15.3 (14.2-16.4)	17.0 (15.7-18.3)	15.8 (14.0-17.8)	n/a	n/a
<b>*Had 4 or more drinks in a row (if female) or 5 or more drinks (if male) within a couple of hours</b> (During the 30 days before the survey.)				
n/a	n/a	n/a	16.4 (15.4-17.5)	15.2 (14.1 - 16.5)
<b>**Attended a party or gathering in a home where parents permitted students to use alcohol</b> (One or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)				
23.8 (22.1-25.5)	n/a	22.4 (21.1-23.9)	n/a	21.7 (20.5 - 23.0)
<b>Students perceive great risk of harm from drinking alcohol</b> (Physically or in other ways, if drink one or two alcoholic beverages nearly every day.)				
47.7 (46.3 - 49.1)	49.6 (48.2 - 50.9)	n/a	n/a	34.1 (32.7 - 35.7)

\*In 2017, “had 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row within a couple of hours” was revised to “had 4 or more drinks in a row (if female) or 5 or more drinks (if male) within a couple of hours.” Both items are included in this table.

\*\* In 2019, “where parents permitted students to use alcohol” was revised to “permitted underage alcohol use”.

## Contact Information

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**Prepared by:**

Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
Case Western Reserve University  
10900 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-7069  
www.prchn.org

**For more information please contact:**

Erika S. Trapl, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Department of Population & Quantitative Health Sciences  
Director, Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
Case Western Reserve University  
Erika.trapl@case.edu  
216-368-0098

Jean L. Frank, MPH  
Director of Adolescent Evaluation and Surveillance  
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
Case Western Reserve University  
Jean.frank@case.edu  
216-368-5913

Audrey E. Kinsella, MPH  
Data Coordinator  
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
Case Western Reserve University  
Audrey.kinsella@case.edu  
216-368-5746

Catherine C. Osborn, MA  
School-Based Evaluation and Surveillance Coordinator  
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
Case Western Reserve University  
Catherine.osborn@case.edu  
216-368-5771

Oluchi O. Onyeukwu, BS  
Surveillance and Evaluation Intern  
Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods  
Case Western Reserve University  
Oluchi.onyeukwu@case.edu

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<sup>i</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2019). Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HHS Publication No. PEP19-5068, NSDUH Series H-54). Rockville, MD: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>

<sup>ii</sup> Marshall, E.J. (2014). Adolescent alcohol use: Risks and consequences. *Alcohol and Alcoholism* 49(2): 160-164.

<sup>iii</sup> Kochanek, K.D., Murphy, S.L., Xu, J.Q., Tejada-Vera, B. (2016). Deaths: Final data for 2014. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, 65(4). Hyattsville, MD: *National Center for Health Statistics*. Retrieved August 25, 2016, from [http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65\\_04.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr65/nvsr65_04.pdf) - PDF

<sup>iv</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2007. *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General.