



# 2012 Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Illegal and Prescription Drug 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 spring of 2012, the PRCHN conducted the YRBS among 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Cuyahoga County middle schools. A more detailed description of the methodology is available at our website, <http://prchn.org/yrbs.apsx>.

This brief report presents results from the 2012 Cuyahoga County Middle School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, with a particular focus on Illegal and Prescription Drug Use. In this brief report, we present:

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

Data for similar behaviors can be found at our website, <http://prchn.org/yrbs.aspx>.

## Illegal and Prescription Drug Use

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Illegal drug use can lead to unhealthy behaviors and negative consequences. Drug abuse may contribute to depression and suicide, unintended pregnancy, school failure, violent behavior, delinquency, and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.<sup>i</sup>

Marijuana is used for the intoxication or high that it gives users. For most youth, marijuana is not difficult to obtain.<sup>ii</sup> Many think marijuana is not as harmful as other illicit drugs; however, it has both short- and long-term health effects. The short-term effects include memory problems, loss of coordination, anxiety attacks, and increased heart rate.<sup>iii</sup> Possible long-term effects include respiratory problems, a weakened immune system, and cognitive deficits.<sup>iv</sup> While causation is complex, teens that use marijuana, are also more likely to have lower achievement, more delinquent behavior and aggression, and weaker relationships with parents.<sup>iii</sup>

Nationally, nine percent (9.1%) of teens aged 12-17 misused prescription drugs in 2005. In 2006, there were as many new abusers of prescription drugs as there were new users of marijuana.<sup>v</sup> Prescription and over the counter medications are widely available, free or inexpensive, and falsely believed to be safer than illicit drugs. In 2006, 2.1 million teens abused prescription drugs and an additional 2.1 million had misused over the counter cough and cold medications at least once in their lifetime.<sup>vi</sup>

## Healthy People 2020

Where possible, the Cuyahoga County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data are compared to the Healthy People 2020 benchmarks.<sup>vii</sup> This allows us to consider Cuyahoga County's progress towards the 10-year national objectives aimed at improving the health of all Americans.

Healthy People 2020 Objectives	Cuyahoga County 2012
<b>AH-7:</b> Reduce the proportion of adolescents who have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property to no more than 20.4%	9.3% of Cuyahoga County middle school students reported being offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property.
<b>SA-4.2:</b> Increase the proportion of adolescents aged 12 to 17 years perceiving great risk associated with substance abuse—Smoking marijuana once per month to 36.7%	68.1% of Cuyahoga County middle school students perceive great risk of harm (physically or in other ways) from smoking marijuana regularly.  45.3% of Cuyahoga County middle school students perceive great risk of harm (physically or in other ways) from trying marijuana once or twice.
<b>SA-13.2:</b> Reduce the proportion of adolescents reporting use of marijuana during the past 30 days to no more than 6.0%	6.5% of Cuyahoga County middle school students reported using marijuana at least once during the past 30 days.

## Overall Prevalence

The following table summarizes illegal and prescription drug use among the 12,341 middle school students who completed the 2012 Cuyahoga County YRBS. Prevalence estimates and 95% confidence intervals were computed for all variables.

Risk Behavior	% (95% Confidence Interval)
<b>Lifetime marijuana use</b> (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)	10.9% (10.1-11.7)
<b>Tried marijuana before age 11 years</b>	2.0% (1.7-2.3)
<b>Current marijuana use</b> (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	6.5% (5.9-7.1)
<b>Current unauthorized prescription drug use</b> (Used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	9.6% (9.0-10.3)
<b>Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property</b> (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)	9.3% (8.6-10.0)
<b>Students believe it is very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana</b>	72.5% (71.3-73.6)
<b>Students perceive that their parents believe it is very wrong for them to smoke marijuana</b>	88.7% (88.0-89.5)
<b>Students perceive great risk of harm from trying marijuana once or twice</b> (Physically or in other ways.)	45.3% (44.1-46.5)
<b>Students perceive great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly</b> (Physically or in other ways.)	68.1% (67.0-69.3)

## Regional Prevalence

The table below represents illegal and prescription drug use by the six regions of Cuyahoga County. This division was conducted to provide a geographic representation of the prevalence of different risk behaviors in Cuyahoga County. In 2012, we were able to weight to 4 of 6 regions in Cuyahoga County. The columns under Inner Ring—East and Inner Ring—West do not include data because school participation within those regions was insufficient to permit weighting.

Risk Behavior	CMSD-East % (95% CI)	CMSD-West % (95% CI)	Inner Ring-East % (95% CI)	Inner Ring-West % (95% CI)	Outer Ring-East % (95% CI)	Outer Ring-West % (95% CI)
Lifetime marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)	18.3% (15.6-21.0)	17.1% (14.3-19.8)	N/A	N/A	6.6% (5.4-7.8)	5.8% (4.9-6.7)
Tried marijuana before age 11 years	4.6% (3.2-6.0)	3.9% (2.7-5.0)	N/A	N/A	0.9% (0.4-1.5)	1.0% (0.6-1.3)
Current marijuana use (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	11.6% (9.3-13.8)	9.7% (7.8-11.6)	N/A	N/A	4.5% (3.4-5.6)	3.7% (2.9-4.4)
Current unauthorized prescription drug use (Used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)	13.1% (11.2-14.9)	13.9% (11.9-15.9)	N/A	N/A	8.2% (6.8-9.6)	7.9% (6.8-9.0)
Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)	10.3% (8.1-12.5)	10.6% (8.9-12.3)	N/A	N/A	8.3% (6.8-9.7)	7.4% (6.4-8.3)
Students believe it is very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana	61.8% (58.6-65.1)	64.9% (62.0-67.9)	N/A	N/A	76.4% (73.8-78.9)	80.4% (78.8-82.1)
Students perceive that their parents believe it is very wrong for them to smoke marijuana	79.3% (76.6-81.9)	81.8% (79.4-84.2)	N/A	N/A	91.4% (89.7-93.0)	93.5% (92.5-94.6)
Students perceive great risk of harm from trying marijuana once or twice (Physically or in other ways.)	35.0% (32.2-37.8)	37.2% (34.4-40.0)	N/A	N/A	50.7% (48.0-53.4)	52.7% (50.5-54.9)

Risk Behavior	CMSD-East % (95% CI)	CMSD- West % (95% CI)	Inner Ring-East % (95% CI)	Inner Ring-West % (95% CI)	Outer Ring-East % (95% CI)	Outer Ring-West % (95% CI)
Students perceive great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly (Physically or in other ways.)	47.9% (44.6-51.1)	50.5% (47.7-53.3)	N/A	N/A	74.8% (72.4-77.3)	81.1% (79.3-82.9)

## Demographic Prevalence

The tables below allow for further comparisons of illegal and prescription drug use between demographic groups. Data are presented by gender, race/ethnicity, and grade level. A statistically significant difference exists between groups if the 95% confidence intervals do not overlap.

Lifetime marijuana use		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	8.5	7.5 - 9.5
Male	13.1	12.0 - 14.2
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	14.7	13.2 - 16.1
White	7.6	6.7 - 8.5
Hispanic	19.8	17.1 - 22.6
Other/Multiple	13.7	10.4 - 17.0
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	7.3	6.5 - 8.1
8th	13.8	12.6 - 14.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>10.1 - 11.7</b>

Tried marijuana before age 11 years		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	1.1	0.8 - 1.4
Male	2.7	2.2 - 3.3
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	3.0	2.3 - 3.6
White	0.9	0.6 - 1.2
Hispanic	5.7	3.5 - 8.0
Other/Multiple	4.6	2.0 - 7.3
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	1.8	1.3 - 2.2
8th	1.7	1.3 - 2.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>1.7 - 2.3</b>

Current marijuana use		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	5.0	4.2 - 5.7
Male	7.8	7.0 - 8.7
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	9.0	7.8 - 10.1
White	4.4	3.7 - 5.1
Hispanic	11.9	9.4 - 14.4
Other/Multiple	8.9	6.1 - 11.6
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	4.0	3.4 - 4.7
8th	8.3	7.4 - 9.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>5.9 - 7.1</b>

Current unauthorized prescription drug use		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	10.6	9.6 - 11.5
Male	8.7	7.8 - 9.6
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	11.8	10.5 - 13.1
White	7.4	6.6 - 8.2
Hispanic	17.3	14.6 - 20.0
Other/Multiple	12.8	9.9 - 15.7
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	8.7	7.8 - 9.7
8th	10.0	9.1 - 10.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>9.0 - 10.3</b>

Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	6.9	5.9 - 7.8
Male	11.5	10.4 - 12.5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	10.7	9.4 - 12.0
White	7.9	7.0 - 8.7
Hispanic	13.6	11.5 - 15.7
Other/Multiple	13.2	9.6 - 16.7
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	7.7	6.9 - 8.6
8th	10.4	9.4 - 11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>8.6 - 10.0</b>

Students believe it is very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	76.8	75.4 - 78.2
Male	68.5	66.8 - 70.1
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	65.3	63.2 - 67.3
White	77.6	76.1 - 79.0
Hispanic	64.8	61.6 - 68.0
Other/Multiple	73.5	69.4 - 77.7
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	78.3	76.8 - 79.7
8th	67.5	65.9 - 69.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.5</b>	<b>71.3 - 73.6</b>



Students perceive that their parents believe it is very wrong for them to smoke marijuana		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	91.4	90.5 - 92.3
Male	86.3	85.2 - 87.4
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	84.1	82.7 - 85.6
White	92.4	91.6 - 93.2
Hispanic	80.2	77.1 - 83.2
Other/Multiple	85.7	81.8 - 89.5
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	90.2	89.3 - 91.2
8th	88.0	86.9 - 89.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>88.7</b>	<b>88.0 - 89.5</b>

Students perceive great risk of harm from trying marijuana once or twice		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	45.4	43.7 - 47.0
Male	45.9	44.2 - 47.5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	39.7	37.7 - 41.6
White	49.1	47.5 - 50.7
Hispanic	39.7	36.3 - 43.1
Other/Multiple	45.7	41.0 - 50.5
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	49.4	47.8 - 51.0
8th	41.5	40.0 - 43.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.3</b>	<b>44.1 - 46.5</b>

Students perceive great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly		
Category	%	CI
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	71.7	70.1 - 73.3
Male	64.9	63.3 - 66.5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
Black	55.3	53.2 - 57.3
White	77.4	76.0 - 78.9
Hispanic	51.6	48.2 - 55.0
Other/Multiple	62.6	57.5 - 67.7
<b>Grade</b>		
7th	71.6	69.9 - 73.3
8th	65.3	63.8 - 66.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>67.0 - 69.3</b>

## Cuyahoga County Trend Data

The following table presents the prevalence of illegal and prescription drug use among Cuyahoga County middle school students in 2008, 2010, and 2012. The prevalence for each year is given (when available), with 95% confidence intervals below.

Cuyahoga County, 2008	Cuyahoga County, 2010	Cuyahoga County, 2012
<b>Lifetime marijuana use</b> (Used marijuana one or more times during their life.)		
9.9% (9.0-10.8)	12.7% (11.4-14.0)	10.9% (10.1-11.7)
<b>Tried marijuana before age 11 years</b>		
2.4% (1.7-3.1)	2.3% (1.8-2.9)	2.0% (1.7-2.3)
<b>Current marijuana use</b> (Used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)		
6.2% (5.5-6.9)	7.0% (6.0-7.9)	6.5% (5.9-7.1)
<b>Current unauthorized prescription drug use</b> (Used prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription one or more times during the 30 days before the survey.)		
N/A	N/A	9.6% (9.0-10.3)
<b>Offered, sold, or given drugs on school property</b> (One or more times during the 12 months before the survey.)		
6.3% (5.6-6.9)	9.0% (8.1-9.8)	9.3% (8.6-10.0)
<b>Students believe it is very wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana</b>		
75.3% (73.3-77.4)	72.8% (71.3-74.3)	72.5% (71.3-73.6)
<b>Students perceive that their parents believe it is very wrong for them to smoke marijuana</b>		
91.5% (89.9-93.0)	89.2% (88.2-90.1)	88.7% (88.0-89.5)
<b>Students perceive great risk of harm from trying marijuana once or twice</b> (Physically or in other ways.)		
N/A	42.5% (40.8-44.2)	45.3% (44.1-46.5)
<b>Students perceive great risk of harm from smoking marijuana regularly</b> (Physically or in other ways.)		
N/A	69.5% (67.8-71.2)	68.1% (67.0-69.3)

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<sup>i</sup> Wu, W., Khan, A. 2005. Adolescent Illicit Drug Use: Understanding and Addressing the Problem. *Medscape Public Health & Prevention*. 3(2).

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<sup>iii</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse. NIDA InfoFacts: Marijuana. National Institute on Drug Abuse Web site. Available at <http://www.nida.nih.gov/Infobox/marijuana.html>. Accessed on July 24, 2008.

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<sup>vi</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2007. Results from the 2006 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: National Findings. Office of Applied Studies, NSDUH Series H-32, DHHS Publication No. SMA 07-4293. Rockville, MD.

<sup>vii</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Tobacco Use*. Retrieved from 2020 Topics & Objectives: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/objectiveslist.aspx?topicid=40>