

Why Teens Drink and Why They Don't Drink. We asked teens, "If you drink, what is the one main reason why you drink?" Of teens who drink, the most common reasons chosen were: "I like the feeling of getting 'buzzed' and/or 'drunk'," (51%), "It helps me have more fun with my friends," (21%) and "It helps me relax," (12%). More high school students than middle school students and more boys than girls reported the main reason they drink is that they like the feeling of being "buzzed" or "drunk" (high school, 52%; middle school, 42%; males, 57%; females, 45%). Figure 4-49 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level. Figure 4-50 shows the breakdown by gender.

Figure 4-49: One Main Reason Why Teens Drink
(Of Those Who Drink, by School Level)

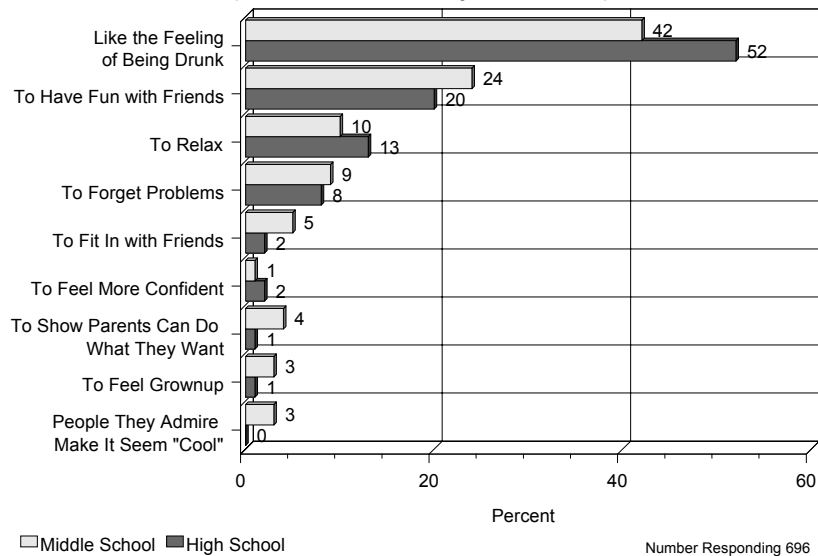
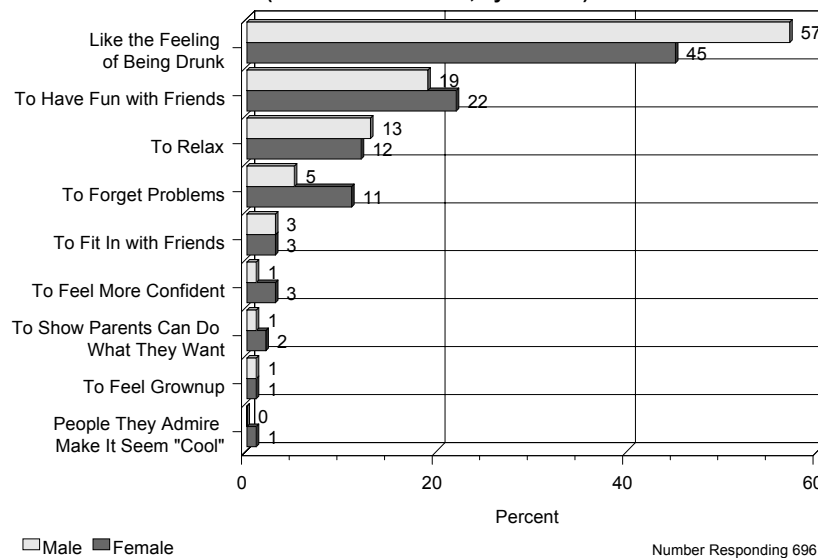


Figure 4-50: One Main Reason Why Teens Drink
(Of Those Who Drink, by Gender)



It is also good to know why teens say they *don't* drink. We asked teens, "If you don't drink, what is the one main reason why you don't drink alcohol?" The three most frequent responses were: "I don't want to mess up my body" (31%), "I don't need it to make me happy" (21%), and "My school, athletic or work performance would suffer" (17%). More middle school students than high school students said they don't drink because they don't want to mess up their bodies (middle school, 42% and high school, 24%). More high school students (25%) than middle school students (14%) said they don't drink because they don't need it to make them happy. Figure 4-51 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level.

Figure 4-51: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Drink
(Of Those Who Don't Drink, by School Level)

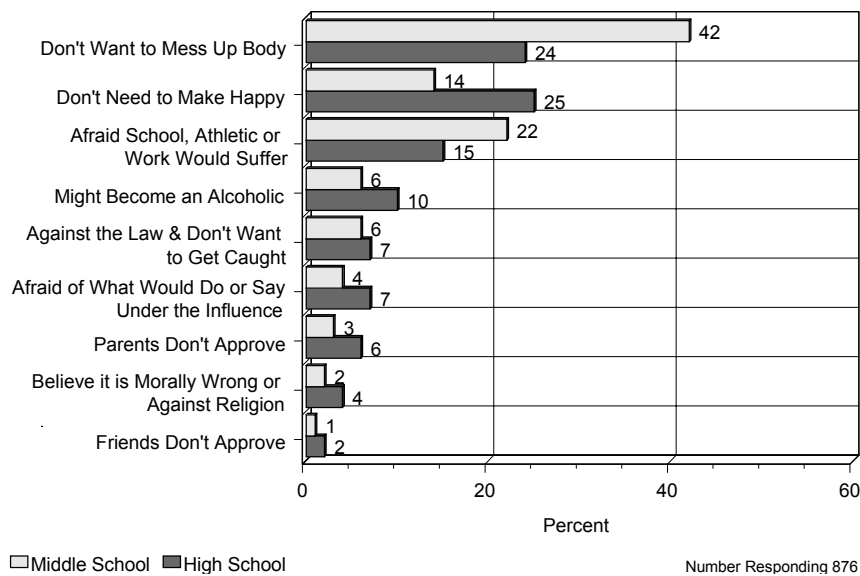
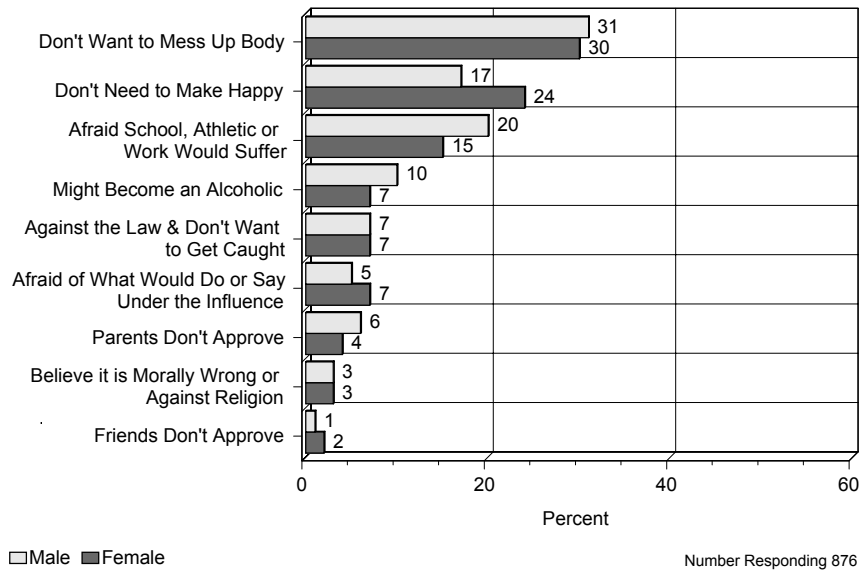


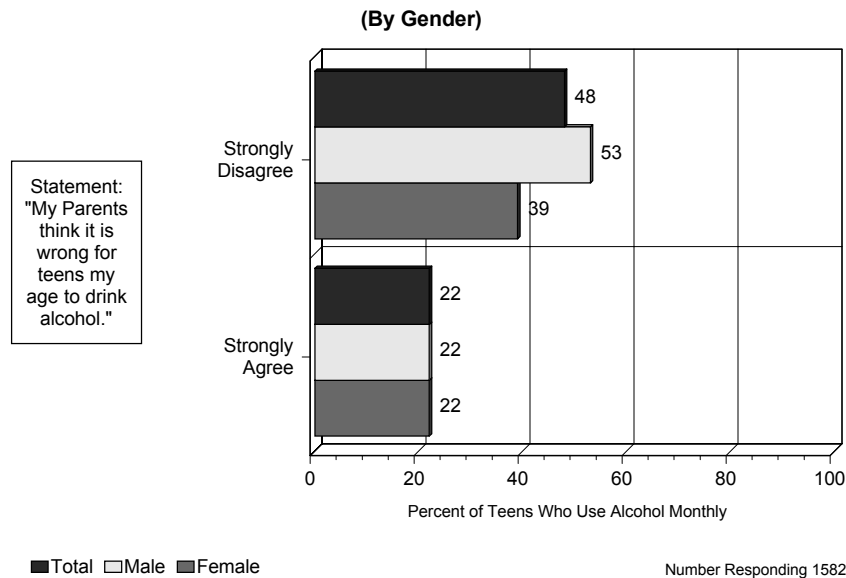
Figure 4-52 shows more females than males report they don't drink because they don't need it to make them happy (females, 24% and males, 17%). Males are slightly more likely to say they don't drink because their school, athletic or work performance would suffer (males, 20% and females, 15%). No major differences appear in other responses.

Figure 4-52: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Drink
(Of Those Who Don't Drink, by Gender)



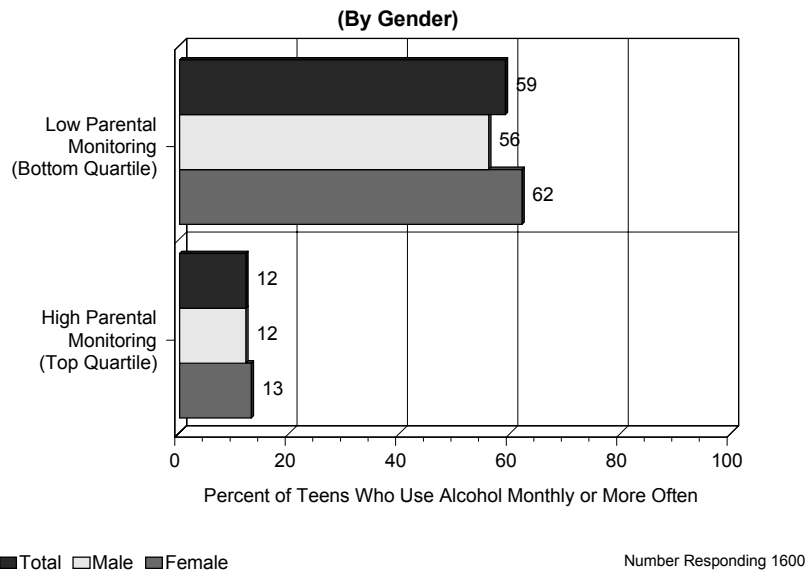
Parents' Role in Teen Drinking. Parents can play an important role in teens' decisions about drinking alcohol (Ary et al., 1999; Ary & Duncan, 1999; Flannery, Williams & Vazsonyi, 1999). Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about drinking may influence their decision whether or not to drink. As Figure 4-53 shows, teens who feel strongly that their parents would not approve of teens their age drinking are much less likely to drink. Of those who feel strongly that their parents would not approve, 22% drink alcohol monthly or more often. Of those who do not believe that their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to drink, 48% drink monthly. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values appear to have an effect upon both females' and males' levels of monthly drinking.

Figure 4-53: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Levels of Monthly Teen Drinking



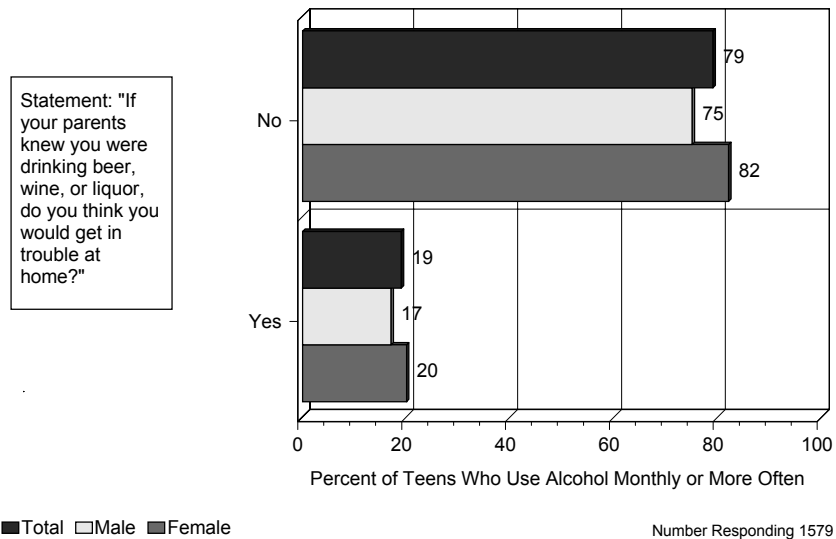
Research has also suggested parental monitoring can be an important factor in preventing adolescent risky behavior (Ary & Duncan, 1999; Flannery, Williams & Vazsoryi, 1999; Rodgers, 1999). Figure 4-54 shows a strong relationship between parental monitoring and local teens not drinking. Parental monitoring refers to parents' supervision and awareness of their child's activities (see Chapter 7 pp. 137-138). Sixty-two percent (62%) of females with low monitoring by parents drink alcohol on a monthly basis or more often, while 13% of females with high monitoring reported drinking at this level. The effect of high monitoring on monthly drinking is also strong for males. Only 12% of the males with high parental monitoring drank monthly or more often, while 56% of the males with low monitoring reported drinking at this level. Only 12% of the males with high parental monitoring drank monthly or more often, while 56% of the males with low monitoring drank monthly or more often.

Figure 4-54: Relationship Between Parental Monitoring and Levels of Monthly Teen Drinking



Another strong factor influencing local teen drinking is whether or not teens believe they will get in trouble at home if they drink. As Figure 4-55 shows, both males and females are much less likely to drink alcohol on a monthly or more often basis if they believe their drinking will get them in trouble at home (79% vs. 19%).

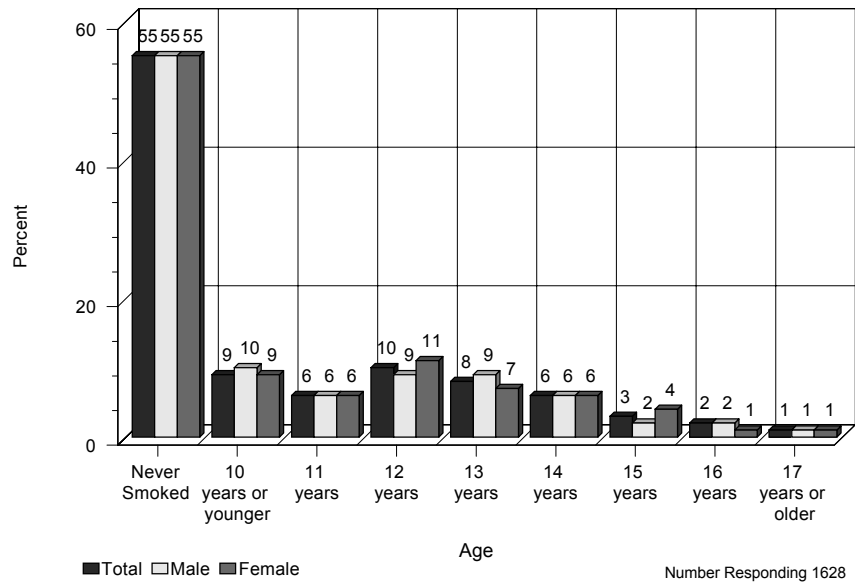
Figure 4-55: Relationship Between Monthly Teen Drinking and Thinking They Will Get In Trouble At Home (By Gender)



Tobacco Use

Smoking tobacco is one of the most harmful risk factors affecting a person's health. Studies have found that teens who smoke cigarettes are more likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs (Lewinsohn, Rohde & Brown, 1999, Merrill, Kleber, Shwartz, Liu & Lewis, 1999). Following alcohol (beer, wine, or hard liquor), smoking tobacco is the second most commonly used chemical substance by local teens when considering any use at all. Locally, 44% of youth have smoked tobacco at some time in the past. The average age that students first experimented with tobacco was 12 years old. Figure 4-56 shows the age at which students first experimented with tobacco.

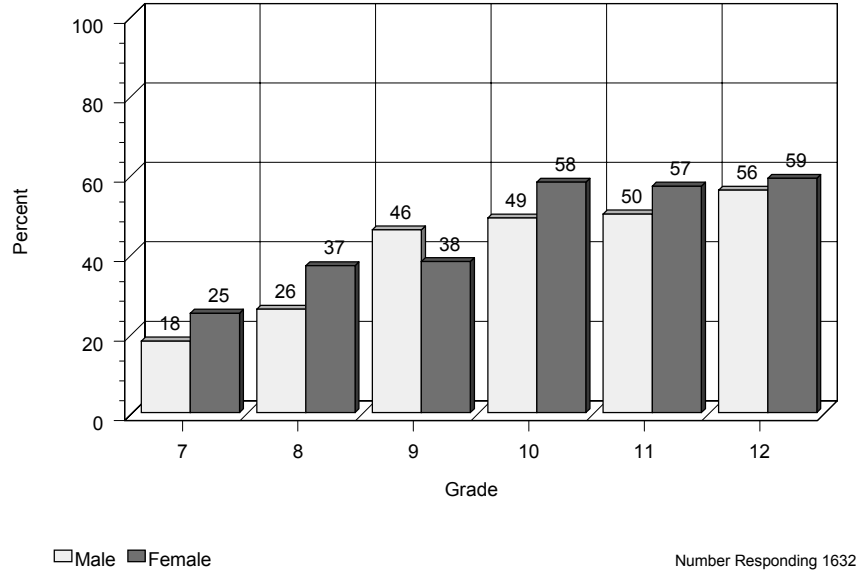
Figure 4-56: Age Students First Experimented with Tobacco (By Gender)



A recent study by the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey found that, nationally, 70.2% (N.H., 69.1%) of high school youth (*grades 9-12*) have tried cigarette smoking (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998). New Hampshire ranks 20th out of the 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

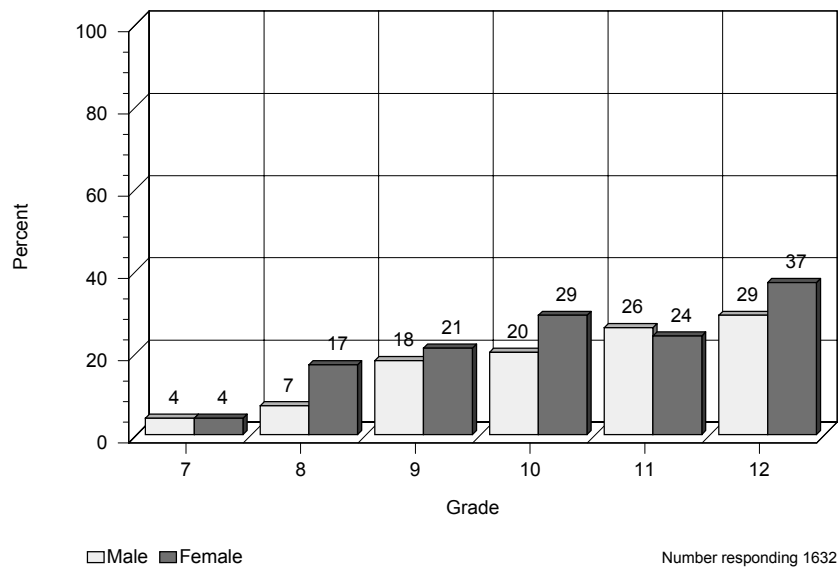
Frequency. Figure 4-57 shows "any use at all" of smoking tobacco, on the basis of gender and grade level. As with drinking, more teens smoke tobacco as they get older. By the 12th grade, 56% of males and 59% of females have smoked tobacco at least once in their lives.

Figure 4-57: Teens Who Smoke Tobacco
(Any Use at All, by Grade and Gender)



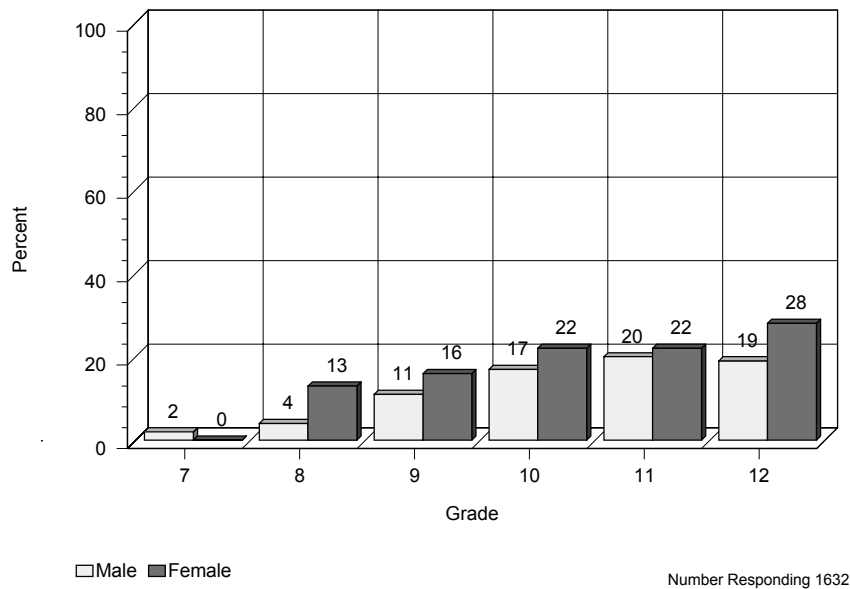
Twenty percent (20%) of local teens reported smoking tobacco monthly or more often (middle school, 8%, high school, 25%, male, 18% and female 23%). Figure 4-58 shows the monthly use of smoking tobacco, on the basis of gender and grade level.

Figure 4-58: Teens Who Smoke Tobacco
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



Fifteen percent (15%) of students surveyed report they smoke weekly or more often. Figure 4-59 shows in the 12th grade, 28% of females and 19% of males reported smoking tobacco at least once a week or more often. This level of tobacco use is considered to be a smoking habit. High school students are almost four times as likely to smoke tobacco on a weekly or more basis as are middle school students (middle school, 5% and high school, 19%). Weekly tobacco smoking by males dramatically increases between middle school (3%) and high school (16%); tobacco smoking by females also increases substantially (middle school females, 7% and high school females, 22%).

Figure 4-59: Teens Who Smoke Tobacco
(Weekly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



Perceived Risk. We asked local students, "How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day?" Figure 4-60 shows responses broken down by school level. Figure 4-61 shows responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-60: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day (By School Level)

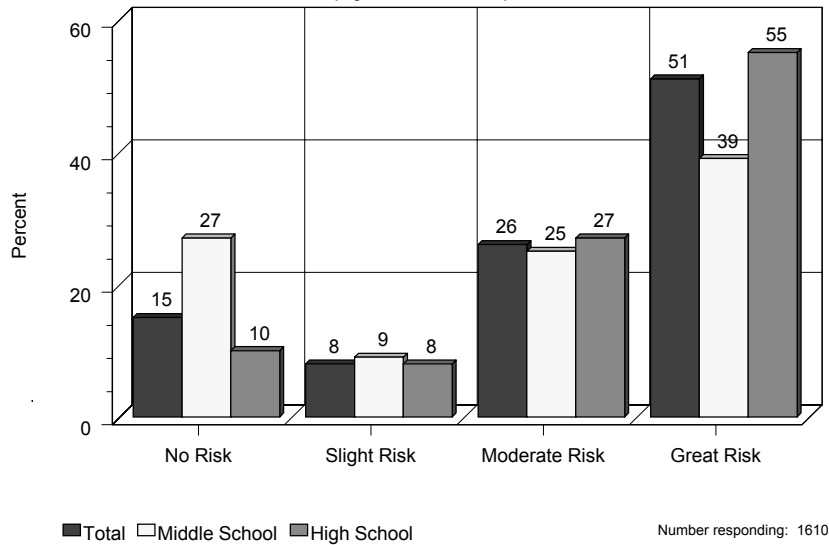
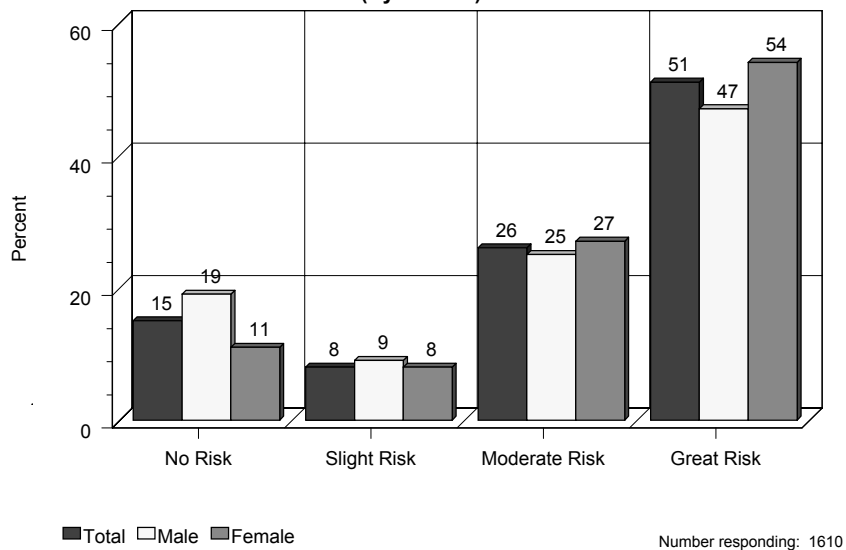
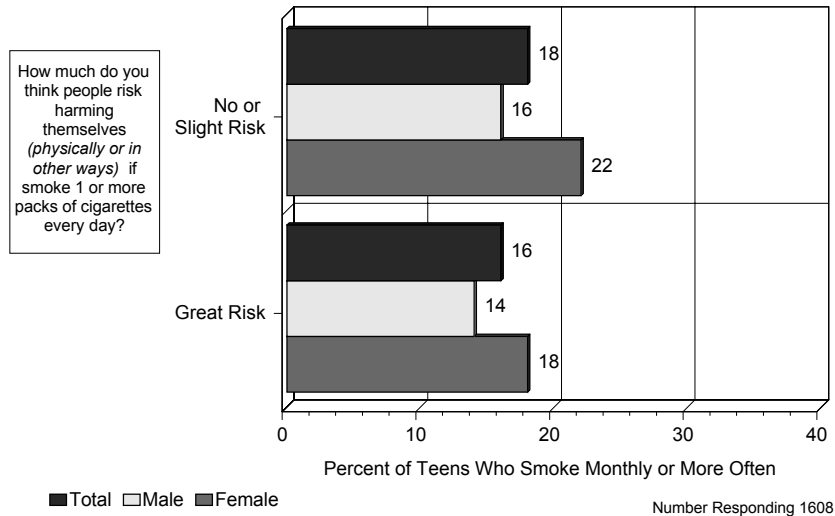


Figure 4-61: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day (By Gender)



Eighteen percent (18%) of those who consider smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day to be of no or slight risk smoke monthly or more often. Of those who consider smoking to be of great risk, 16% smoke monthly or more often. Figure 4-62 shows that there is little difference between the numbers of teens who smoke in each category of perceived risk. Even though teens know that smoking is dangerous, they continue the habit. This shows that there must be other reasons why teens smoke.

Figure 4-62: Relationship Between Teens' Perceived Risk of Smoking One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day vs. Monthly Teen Smoking (By Gender)



The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 54% of 8th grade students, 62% of 10th grade students and 71% of 12th grade students surveyed think smoking one or two packs of cigarettes daily carries a great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 37% of local 8th grade students, 58% of local 10th grade students and 60% of local 12th grade students said they felt doing so has great risk.

Obtainability. The survey asked local youth where they get tobacco. Figure 4-63 shows how students who use tobacco responded. The most commonly reported source of tobacco was from friends their own age or older (36%). As Figure 4-64 shows, middle school students who smoke are more likely to obtain tobacco by getting it from friends their own age (36%) or by taking from their parents or a friend's parent (19%). High school students who smoke are more likely to get tobacco by asking someone of legal age to buy it for them (28%), or from friends their own age (24%).

Figure 4-63: Where Teens Get Tobacco Products
(Of Those Who Smoke)

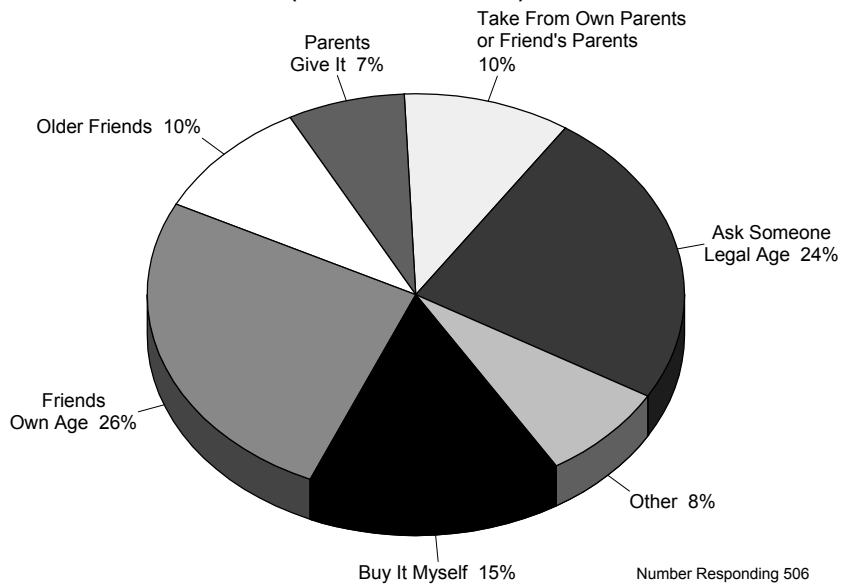


Figure 4-64: Where Teens Get Tobacco Products
(Of Those Who Smoke, by School Level)

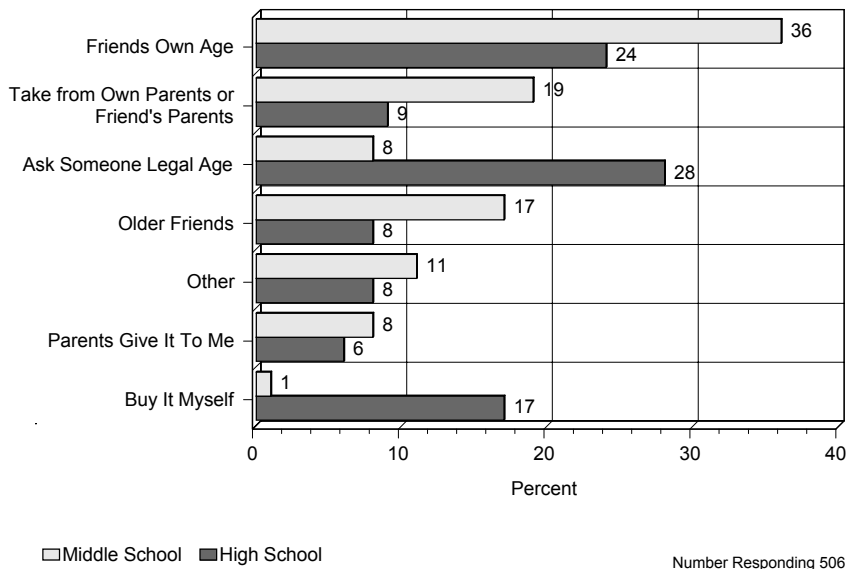
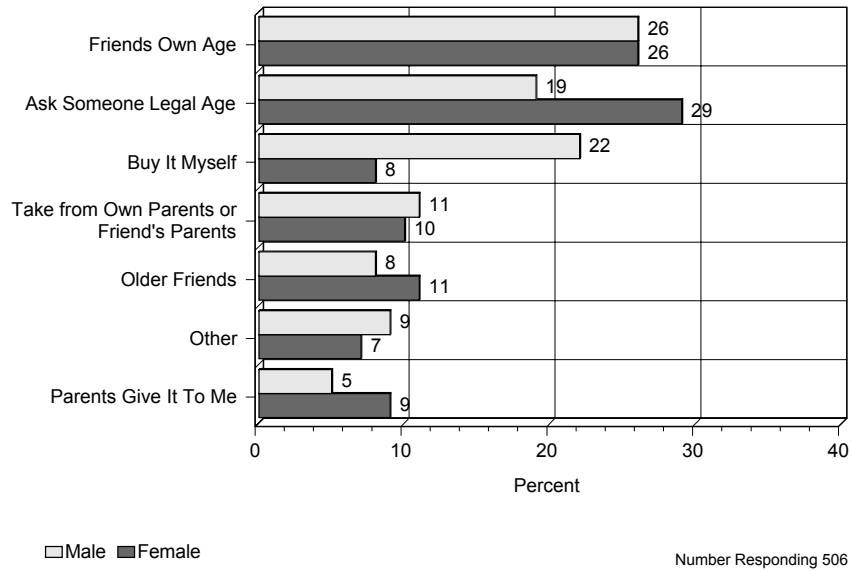


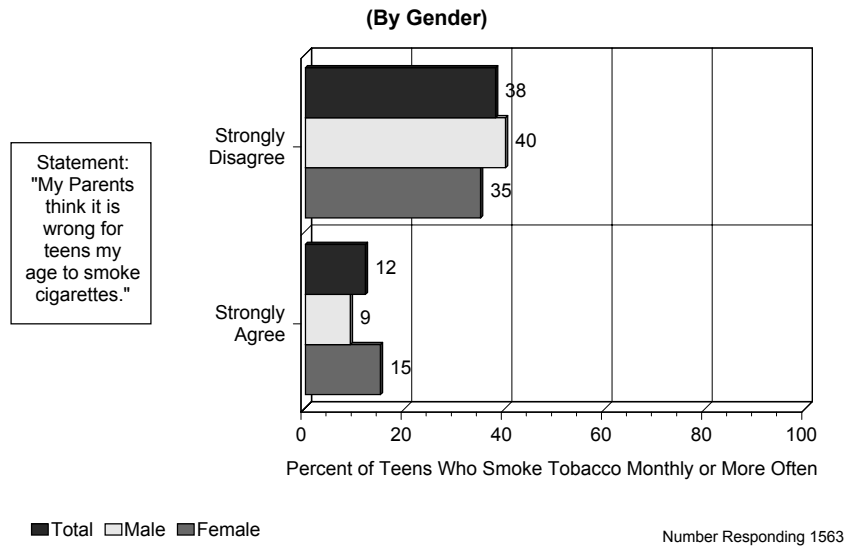
Figure 4-65 shows females who smoke are more likely to get tobacco by asking someone of legal age to buy or get it for them (29%) or from friends their own age (26%). Males who smoke are likely to get it from friends their own age (26%) or buying it themselves (22%).

Figure 4-65: Where Teens Get Tobacco Products
(Of Those Who Smoke, by Gender)



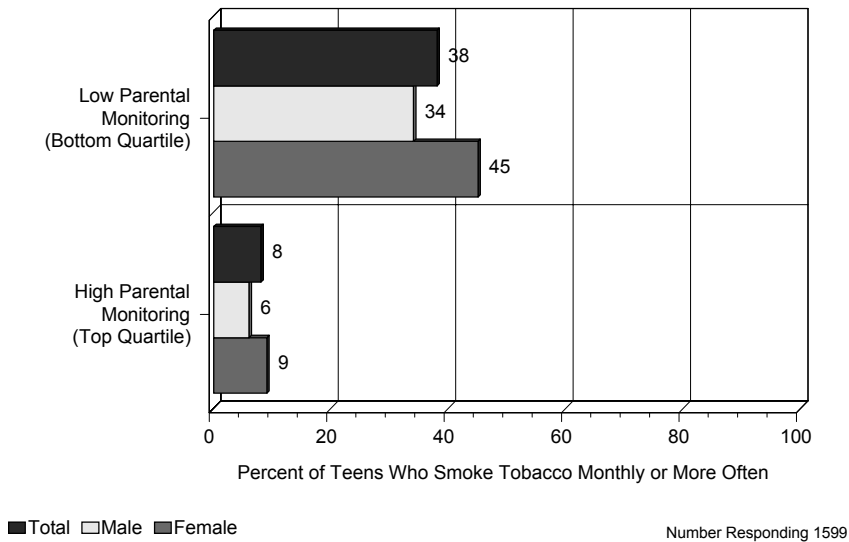
Parents' Role in Teen Tobacco Smoking. As with alcohol, parents are influential in teens' decisions about tobacco smoking. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about tobacco smoking may influence their decision to smoke or not smoke. As Figure 4-66 shows, teens who strongly feel their parents think it's wrong for teens their age to smoke cigarettes are much less likely to smoke. Of those who strongly agree their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to smoke tobacco, 38% smoke monthly. Of those who do *not* believe their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to smoke tobacco, 38% smoke monthly. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about smoking have an effect upon both females' and males' levels of monthly smoking.

Figure 4-66: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Levels of Monthly Teen Tobacco Smoking



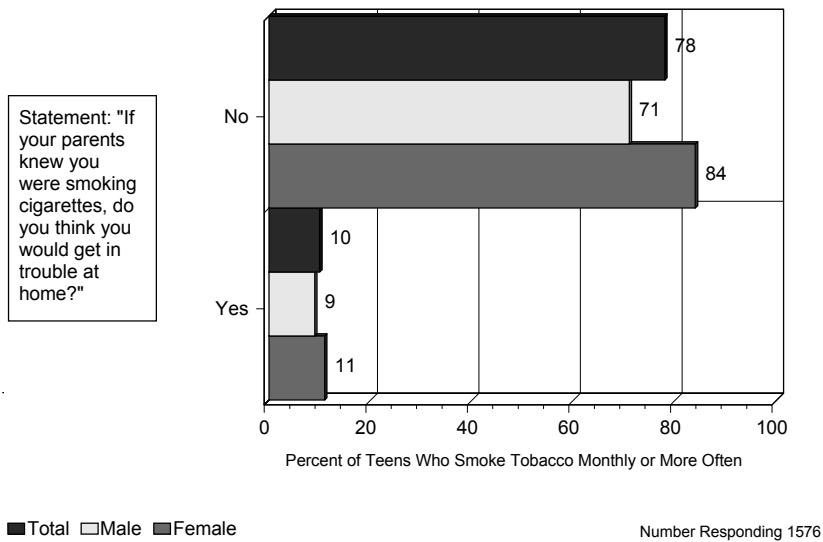
Parental monitoring positively affects levels of teen tobacco smoking. Figure 4-67 shows teens with a high level of parental monitoring are less likely to smoke tobacco monthly (8%) than are teens with a low level of parental monitoring (38%). Higher levels of parental monitoring show a greater effect on monthly smoking levels for females than for males (a difference of 36% for females vs. a 28% difference for males).

Figure 4-67: Relationship Between Parental Monitoring and Levels of Monthly Teen Tobacco Smoking (By Gender)



Teens believing they will get in trouble at home also appears to have a strong influence on their behavior. Figure 4-68 shows the responses of students to the question of whether they thought they would get in trouble at home if their parents knew they smoked tobacco. Males who did not think they would get in trouble at home over this issue were far more likely (71%) to smoke tobacco on a monthly basis than were those who did think they would be in trouble (9%). Females were also much more likely to smoke monthly if they thought they would not get in trouble (not get in trouble, 84%; get in trouble, 11%).

Figure 4-68: Relationship Between Teens' Level of Monthly Smoking and Thinking They'll Get in Trouble at Home (By Gender)



Marijuana Use

Frequency. Following alcohol and tobacco, marijuana is the third most reported substance used by local youth when considering "any use at all". Thirty-nine percent (39%) of all students reported having used marijuana at some time (middle school, 17% and high school, 47%). Figure 4-69 shows the breakdown for any marijuana use at all by gender and grade level.

Figure 4-69: Teens Who Use Marijuana
(Any Use at All, by Grade and Gender)

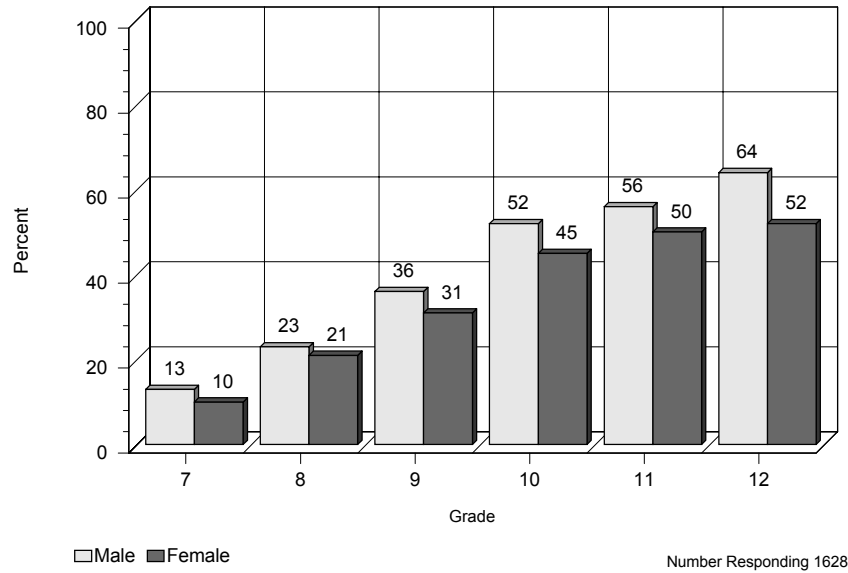
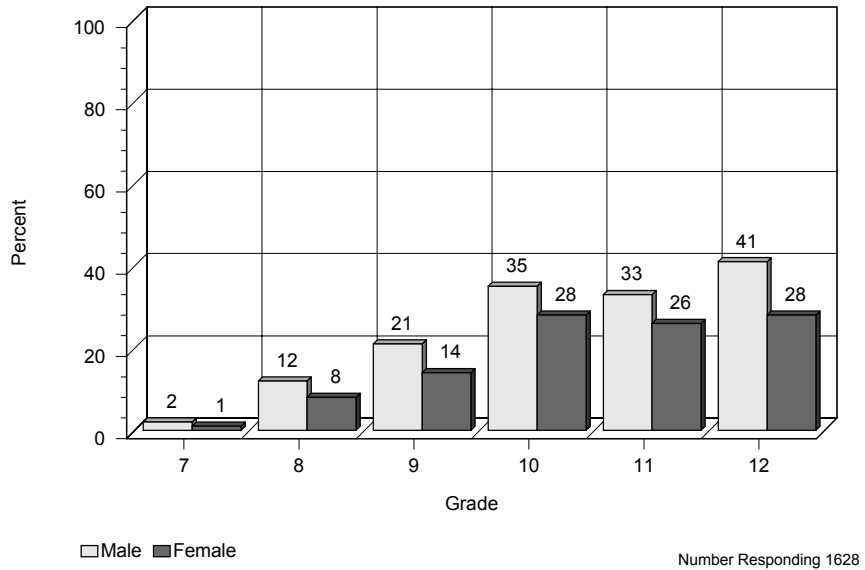


Figure 4-70 shows the breakdown of monthly marijuana use by grade and gender. Overall, 21% of all local youth reported using marijuana on a monthly or more often basis (middle school, 6% and high school, 27%).

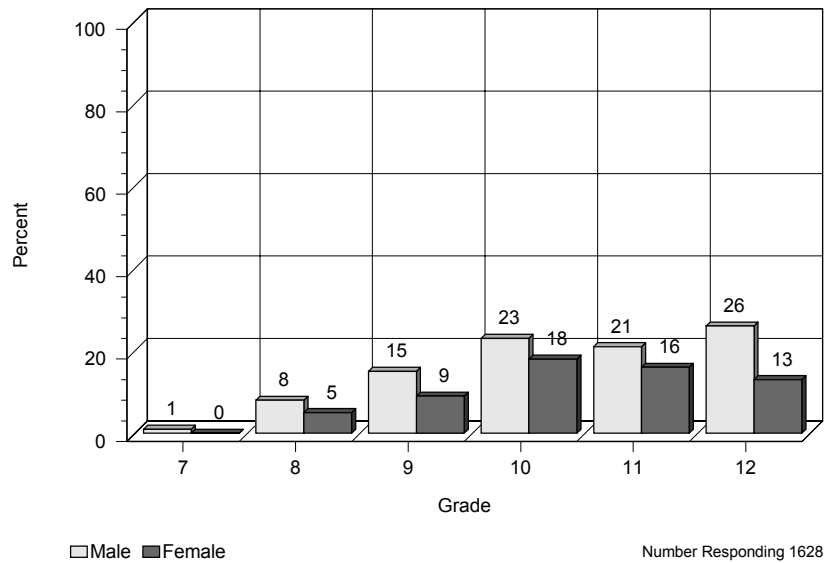
Figure 4-70: Teens Who Use Marijuana
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998) found 26.2% (N.H., 32.0%) of high school youth (*grades 9-12*) used marijuana one or more times during the 30 days preceding the survey. New Hampshire ranks 2nd out of 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

Figure 4-71 shows weekly marijuana use by grade and gender. Thirteen percent (13%) of all students reported using marijuana at least once a week (middle school, 3% and high school, 17%). The rate for males' weekly use greatly increased between middle school and high school (middle school males, 4% and high school males, 21%). The rate for females also increased (middle school, 2% and high school, 14%). For males, weekly marijuana use peaks in grade 12 (26%). Females' weekly use of marijuana peaks in grade 10 (18%).

Figure 4-71: Teens Who Use Marijuana
(Weekly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



Obtainability. Overall, as Figure 4-72 shows, 50% of students tell us it is "very easy" or "easy" to obtain marijuana. Figure 4-73 shows there is a large difference between middle school, where only 21% believe it is "very easy" or "easy" to get marijuana, and high school, where 61% believe it is. In middle school 32% of students don't know how obtainable marijuana is, while in high school, 18% of students don't know.

Figure 4-72: Obtainability of Marijuana

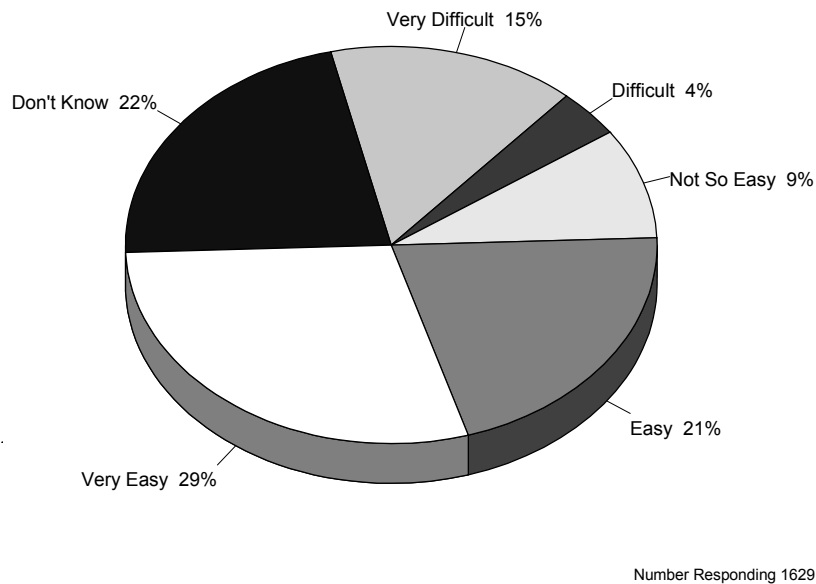
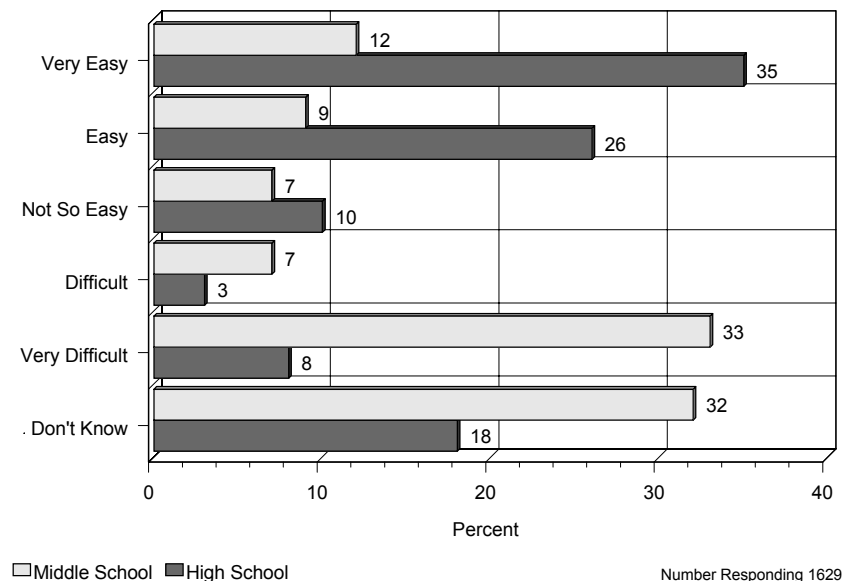


Figure 4-73: Obtainability of Marijuana (By School Level)



Why Teens Do and Don't Use Marijuana. We asked teens "What is the one main reason why you use marijuana?" Overall, the three most common reasons chosen were: "I like the feeling of getting 'buzzed' and/or 'high'" (60%), "It helps me relax" (16%), and "It helps me have more fun with my friends" (14%). Figure 4-74 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level. Figure 4-75 shows the breakdown by gender.

Figure 4-74: One Main Reason Why Teens Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Use Marijuana, by School Level)

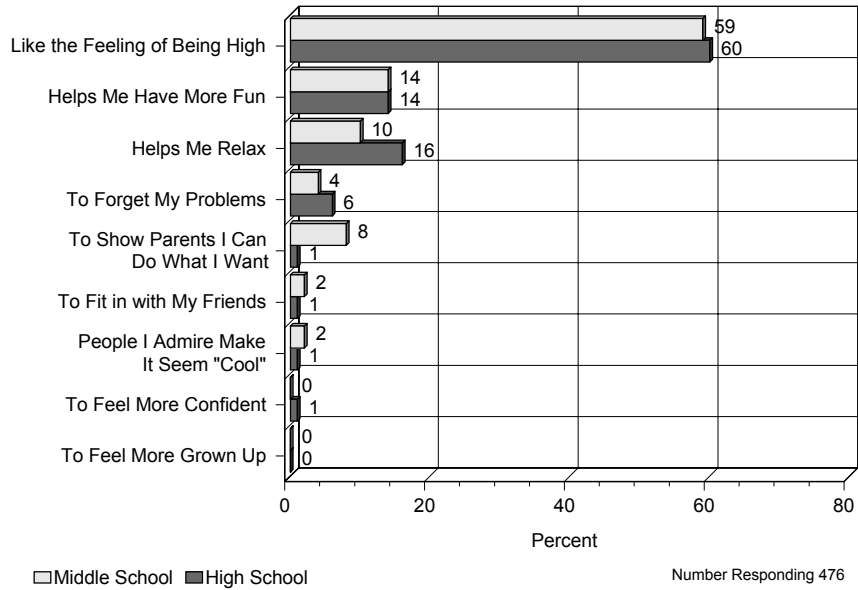
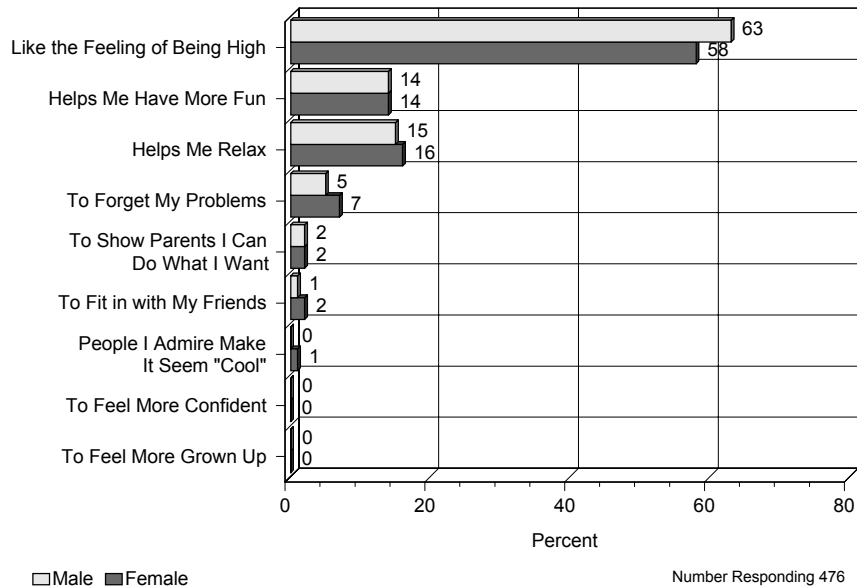


Figure 4-75: One Main Reason Why Teens Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Use Marijuana, by Gender)



It is also useful to know why teens *don't* use marijuana. We asked teens, "If you don't use marijuana, what is the one main reason why?" Overall, 42% of local teens did not use marijuana because they don't want to mess up their bodies. Other teens reported they did not use marijuana because "I don't need it to make me happy" (20%) and "My school, athletic or work performance would suffer" (13%). Figure 4-76 shows the breakdown of responses by school level and Figure 4-77 shows the breakdown by gender.

Figure 4-76: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Don't Use Marijuana, by School Level)

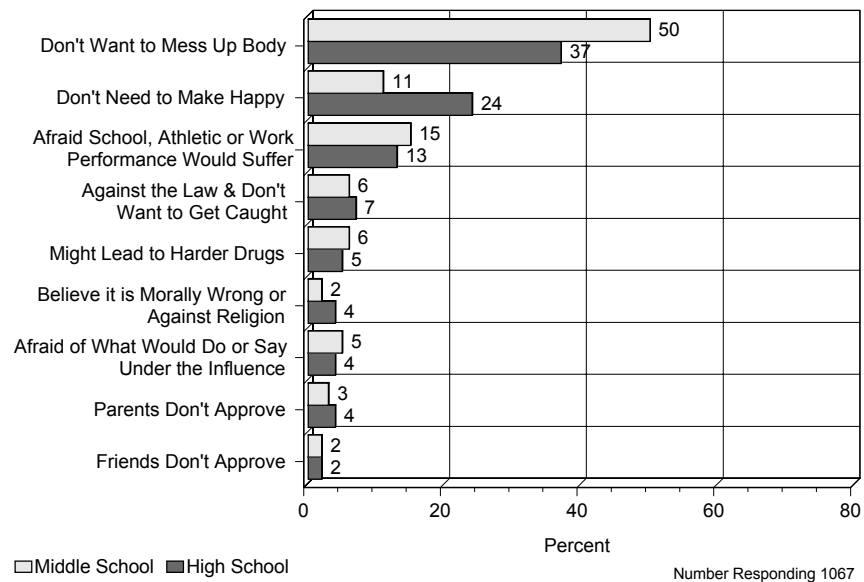
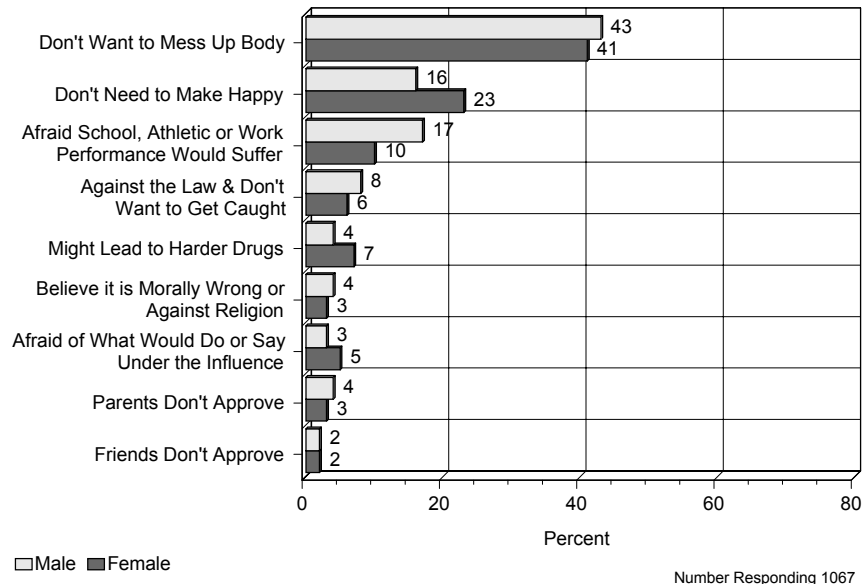


Figure 4-77: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Don't Use Marijuana, by Gender)



Perceived Risk. We asked students, "How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they try marijuana once or twice?" Figure 4-78 reveals 69% of students responded they felt this experimentation with marijuana carried "no" or "slight" (middle school, 58% and high school, 73%). Figure 4-79 shows all responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-78: Perceived Risk: Try Marijuana Once or Twice (By School Level)

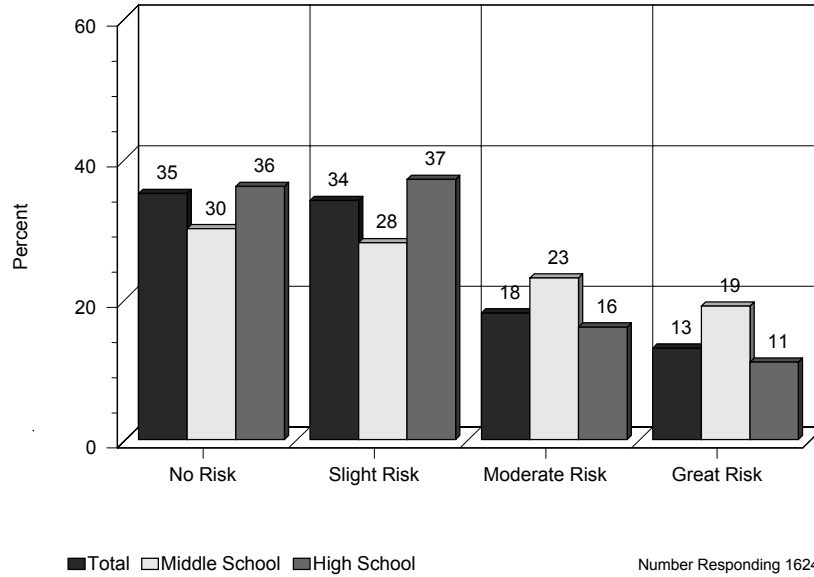


Figure 4-79: Perceived Risk: Try Marijuana Once or Twice (By Gender)

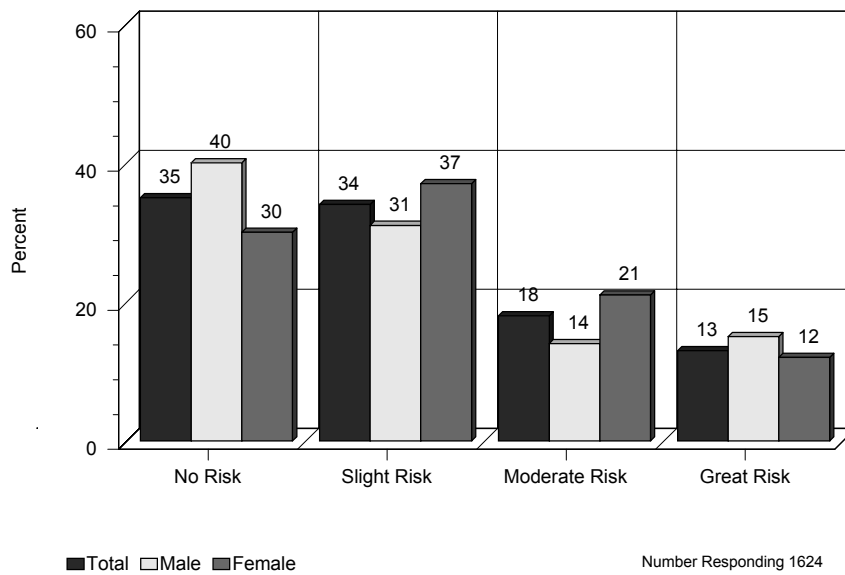
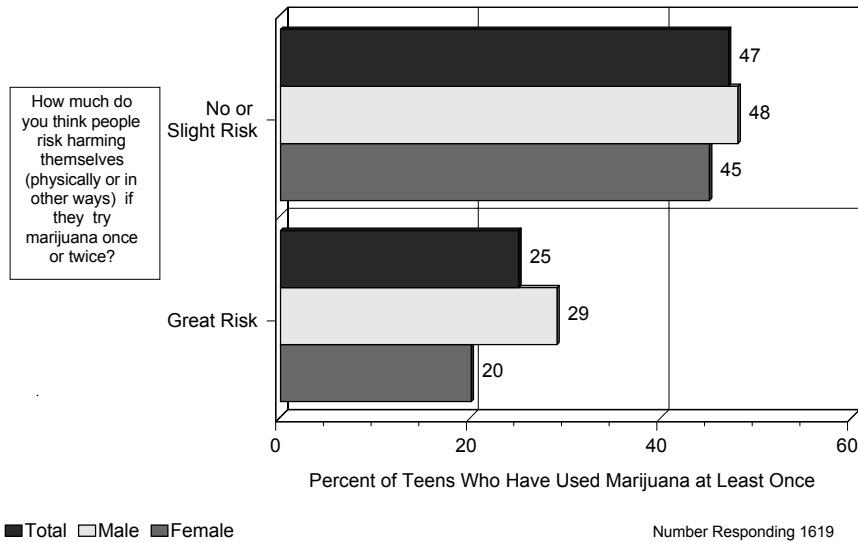


Figure 4-80 shows 47% of those who consider trying marijuana once or twice to be of “no” or “slight” risk have used marijuana at least once. Of those who consider this to be of great risk, 25% report using marijuana at least once.

Figure 4-80: Relationship Between Perceived Risk of Trying Marijuana Once or Twice vs. Any Use at All of Marijuana (By Gender)



The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 28% of 8th grade students, 20% of 10th grade students and 17% of 12th grade students surveyed think trying marijuana carries a great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 20% of local 8th grade students, 11% of local 10th grade students and 10% of local 12th grade students said they felt doing so has great risk.

We also asked youth, "How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they smoke marijuana regularly?" Figure 4-81 shows 32% consider regular use of marijuana to be of "no" or "slight" risk.

Figure 4-81: Perceived Risk: Smoke Marijuana Regularly (By School Level)

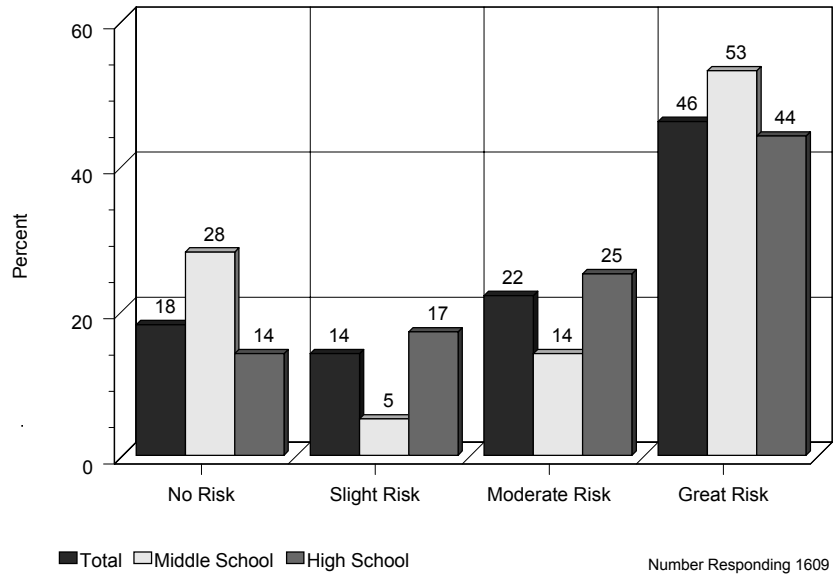
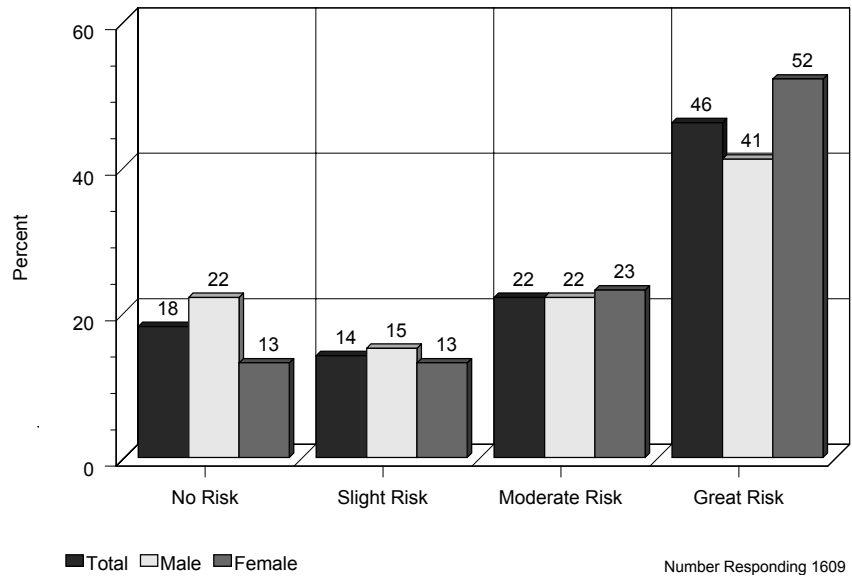


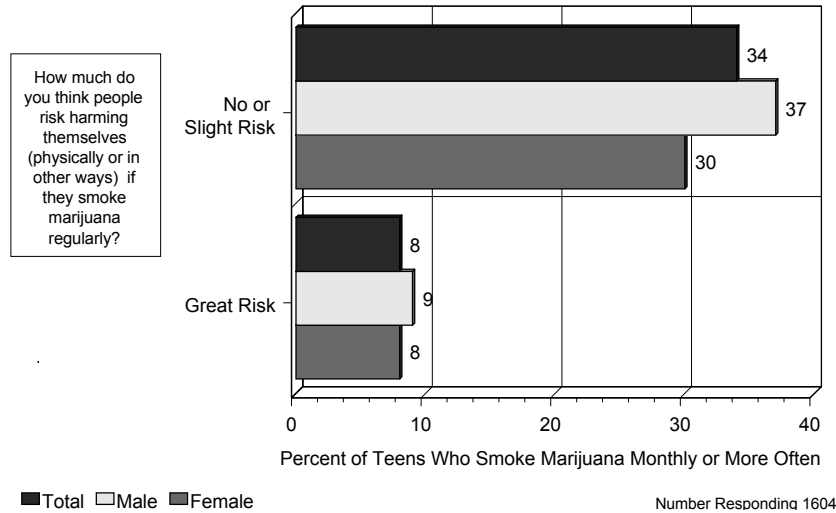
Figure 4-82 shows the responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-82: Perceived Risk: Smoke Marijuana Regularly (By Gender)



TAP data indicate those who consider regular marijuana use to be of great risk are less likely to smoke marijuana monthly or more often. Figure 4-83 shows 34% of those who consider smoking marijuana regularly to be of “no” or “slight” risk smoke monthly or more often. Only 8% of those who consider smoking to be of great risk use marijuana monthly or more often.

Figure 4-83: Relationship Between Teens' Perceived Risk of Smoking Marijuana Regularly and Teens' Monthly Use of Marijuana (By Gender)



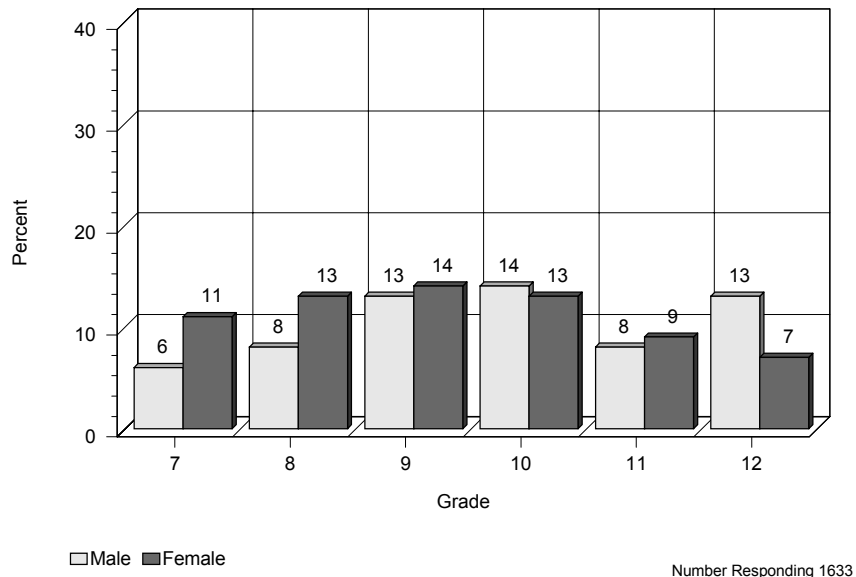
The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 73% of 8th grade students, 66% of 10th grade students and 59% of 12th grade students think regular marijuana smoking carries a great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 50% of local 8th grade students, 43% of local 10th grade students and 38% of local 12th grade students said they felt doing so has great risk.

Inhalant Use

Inhalants are also used by local teens. Some examples of inhalants are glue, white-out correction fluid, gasoline, contents of spray cans and paint thinners. Inhalants are particularly dangerous because they are so accessible to young people. Eleven percent (11%) of local teens reported having used inhalants at some time in the past (middle school, 10% and high school, 12%). Figure 4-84 shows the breakdown for any use at all, by grade level and gender. Two percent (2%) of local youth reported using inhalants monthly or more often (middle school students 2% and high school students, 2%).

We asked students "If you have used inhalants, how old were you when you first used inhalants?" Eighty-nine percent (89%) of those responding said that they had never used inhalants. Of middle school students who reported they *have used* inhalants, 38% of said that the first time was at 10 years of age or younger (males, 37% and females, 38%). Of high school students who have used inhalants, 88% said that they first used them at age 14 or younger (males, 88% and females, 87%). The average age that students first used inhalants was 12 years old.

Figure 4-84: Teens Who Use Inhalants
(Any Use at All, by Grade and Gender)



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998) found 16.0% (N.H. 24.7%) of the nation's high school youth (*grades 9-12*) have sniffed or inhaled intoxicating substances at least once in their lifetime. New Hampshire ranks 3rd out of 33 states surveyed (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998).

Perceived Risk. We asked local students, "How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use inhalants?" Figure 4-85 shows that 26% of local youth feel that doing so has "no" or "slight risk" (middle school, 40%, high school, 20%). More high school students (57%) than middle school students (32%) feel that using inhalants carries "great risk." Figure 4-86 shows the responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-85: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use (By School Level)

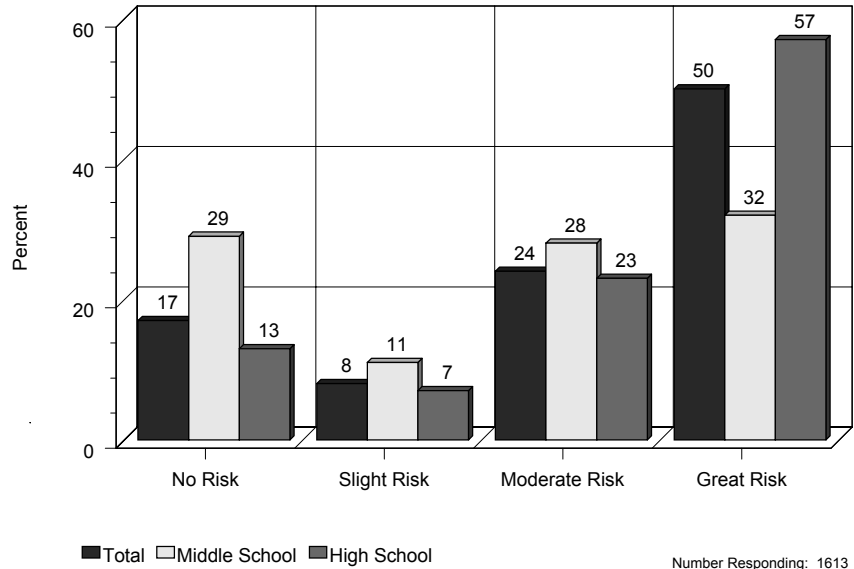
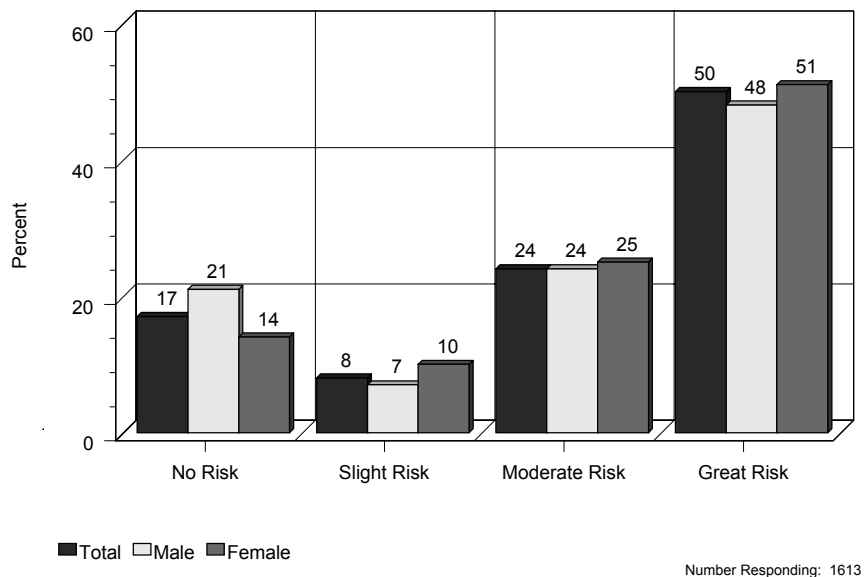
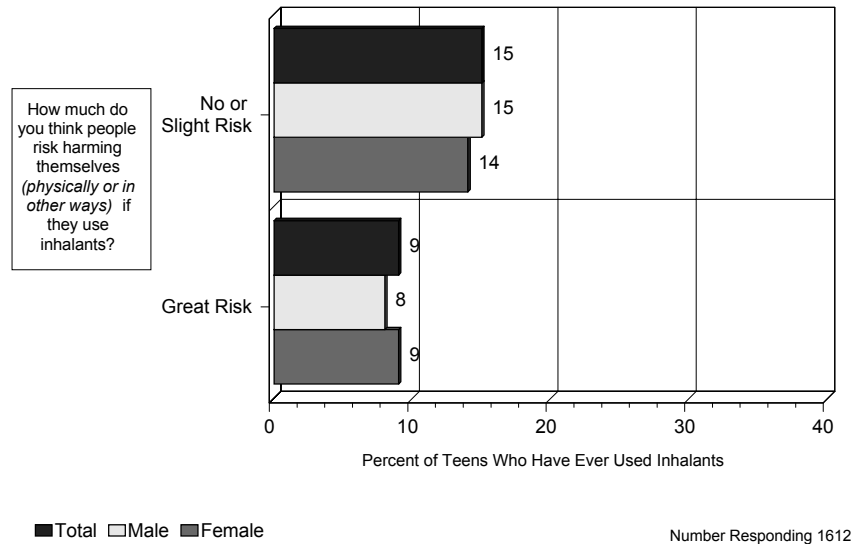


Figure 4-86: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use (By Gender)



TAP data indicate youth who perceive inhalant use as less risky are more likely to use inhalants. Figure 4-87 shows 15% of those who consider inhalant use to be of less risk use inhalants compared with 9% who consider inhalant use to be of great risk.

Figure 4-87: Relationship Between Teens' Perceived Risk of Inhalant Use and Any Use of Inhalants (By Gender)



The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 asked 8th and 10th graders about the perceived harmfulness of inhalants. Their data found 40% of 8th grade students and 48% of 10th grade students think trying inhalants once or twice carries great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 33% of local 8th grade students, 51% of local 10th grade students and 66% of local 12th grade students said they felt doing so has great risk. Awareness of the risks of inhalant use appears to grow as teens get older.

Other Drugs

It is important to note that although drugs other than alcohol, smoking tobacco, and marijuana are not as commonly used, they are in fact being used by local teens. They are each dangerous and life-threatening to our youth and the use of these drugs should be acknowledged. The table below shows rates of use broken down by any use at all, monthly use, and weekly use by local teens. Figures 4-4 (p. 16), 4-5 (p. 17) and 4-6 (p.18) also have this information in chart form. Figures 4-7 (p. 19), 4-8 (p. 20) and 4-9 (p. 21) display this information on the basis of school level. Overall, high school youth reported higher rates of drug use.

Type of Drug	Any Use At All	Monthly Use	Weekly Use
Hallucinogens	15%	6%	2%
Uppers	14%	5%	2%
Cocaine	8%	3%	1%
Chewing Tobacco	8%	2%	1%
Downers	7%	2%	1%
Narcotics	5%	2%	1%
Steroids	4%	2%	1%

Prevention

D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) is a series of classroom lessons for children in kindergarten through 12th grade. It is led by a police officer in order to teach the students to “resist peer pressure and live productive drug-and-violence-free lives.” (D.A.R.E., n.d.). We asked teens if they were participants in the 17-week D.A.R.E. program in either 5th or 6th grade, and what their feelings were about their experience and the program. Figure 4-88 shows teen attitudes toward the D.A.R.E. Program by school level. Almost half (44%) of middle school students felt D.A.R.E. has and continues to have an influence on their decision not to use drugs, while 22% of high school students feel so. More than a third (36%) of high school students and 16% of middle school students believe D.A.R.E. never influenced their decisions.

Figure 4-88: Teens' Attitudes Toward D.A.R.E. Program
(By School Level)

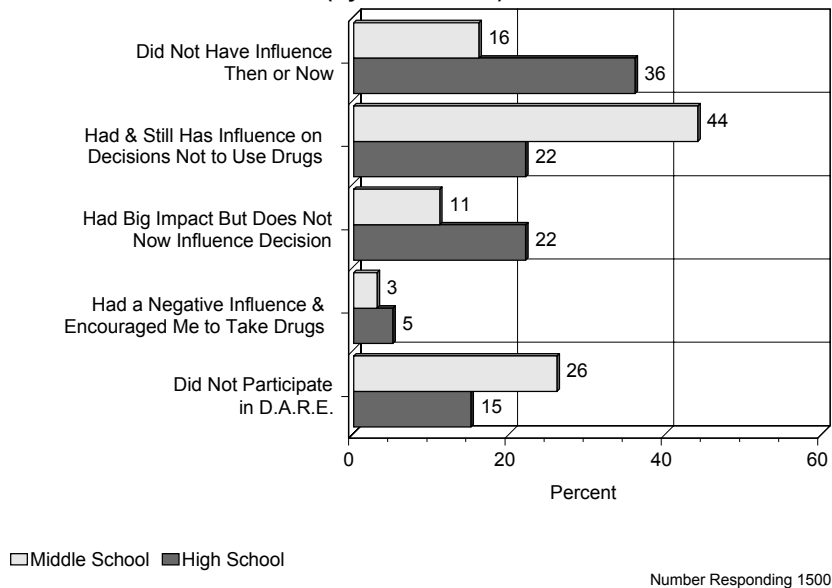
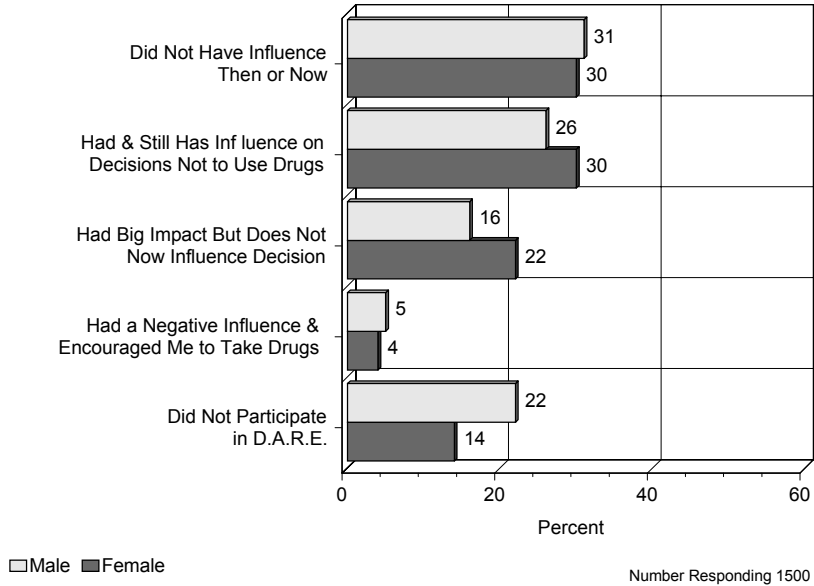


Figure 4-89 shows the breakdown of teen attitudes toward D.A.R.E. by gender. More females than males reported although the program had a big impact on them at the time, it no longer influences their decisions on not using drugs (females, 22% and males, 16%). More males than females report not participating in D.A.R.E. (males, 22% and females, 14%).

Figure 4-89: Teens' Attitudes Toward D.A.R.E. Program
(By Gender)



Along with programs such as D.A.R.E., students also receive messages about drug and alcohol abuse from adults such as coaches. We asked students how many times a coach or assistant coach had spoken to them about the importance of not using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs in the past year. About two out of five students (37%) said their coach had never spoken to them, while almost the same amount (38%) said they had been spoken to at least twice in the past year by a coach or assistant coach about these topic. Overall, 63% of local youth had been spoken to at least once about not using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs. Figure 4-90 shows a more detailed illustration of the responses.

Figure 4-90: Number of Times Coach Has Spoken to Teens About Not Using Alcohol, Tobacco or Other Drugs (In the Past Year, Of Those Who Participate in Organized Sports)

