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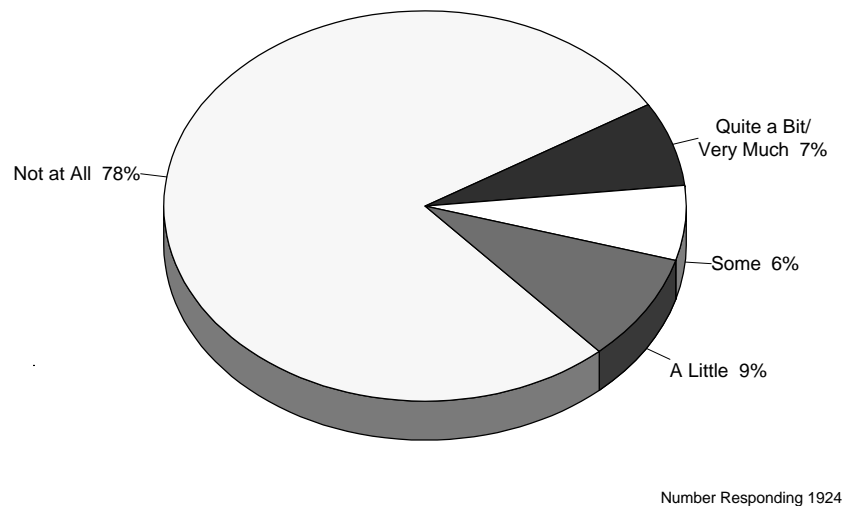
## CHAPTER 4

# Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use

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Recent statistics indicate many of the New Hampshire's youth drink. One major concern about adolescent alcohol use is the fatalities resulting from automobile accidents, the leading cause of death among adolescents. In addition, frequent alcohol use during adolescence is one of the best predictors of problem drinking in adulthood (Hawkins & Graham, 1997). Frequent alcohol use often puts individuals at risk for various behavioral (e.g., suicide), psychological (e.g., depression), social (e.g., divorce), and vocational (e.g., unemployment) consequences (Midanik & Tam, 1996; Newcomb and Bentler, 1988). For these reasons, we need to be concerned about teen alcohol and other drug use and the impact it has on other behaviors. In addition to surveying about teens' drug and alcohol use, we also asked youth if they worried about their parent(s)' drinking too much or using drugs. Our survey revealed some local youth worry about their parent(s)' drinking or drug use. Figure 4-1 shows 22% of all teens indicated they worry to some degree about parental alcohol or drug abuse.

**Figure 4-1: Parental Alcohol or Drug Abuse  
as a Teen Worry**



*Note: Due to rounding, some graphs may not total 100%. Merrimack 12*

## Overall Alcohol and Drug Use

Figure 4-2 shows the percentage of all teens who have used various substances at any time in the past. Alcohol (beer, wine, and hard liquor) is the most commonly used substance at the "any use at all" level (55%), followed by smoking tobacco (40%) and marijuana (29%).

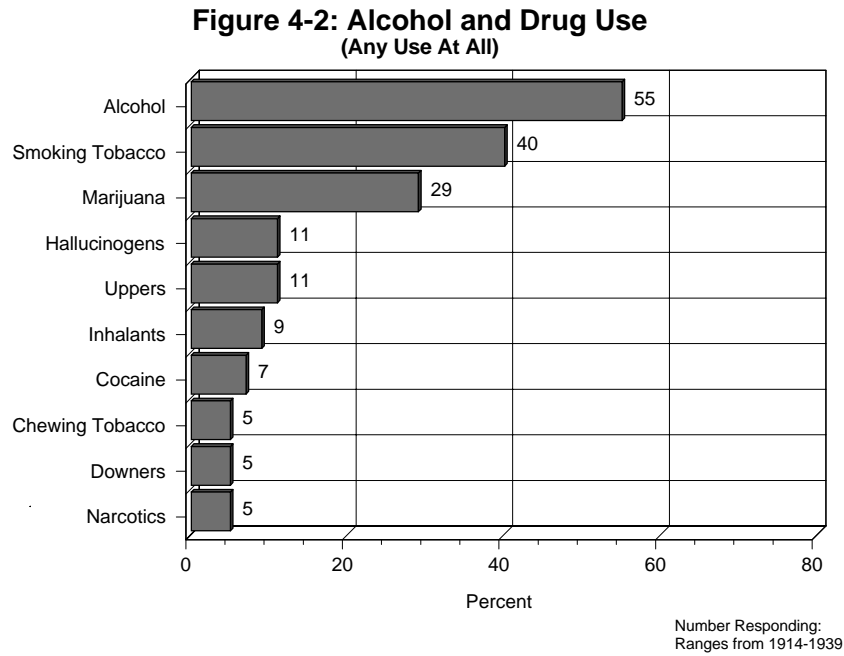


Figure 4-3 shows the percent of teens who use alcohol or other drugs on a monthly or more often basis. Alcohol is the substance most often used at this level (30%), followed by smoking tobacco (19%) and marijuana (13%).

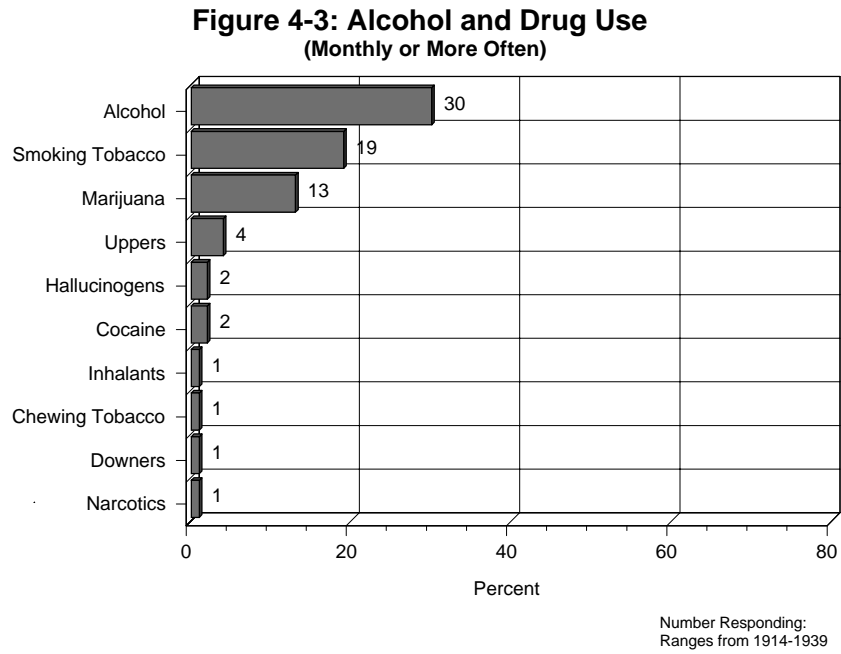


Figure 4-4 shows the percent of all teens who use various substances "once or twice a week" or more often. Alcohol (12%) and smoking tobacco (12%) are the most commonly used substances at this level of frequency, followed by marijuana (7%).

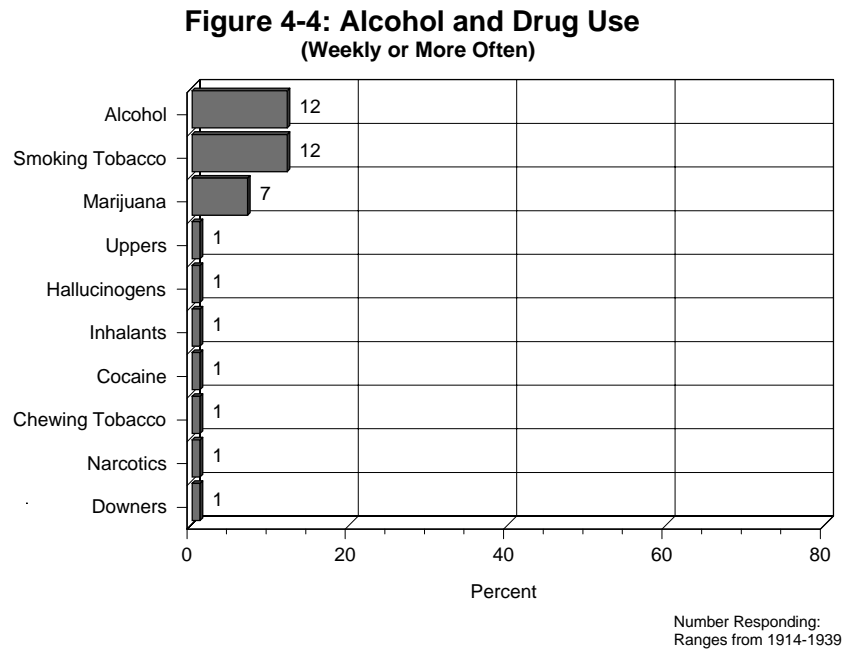


Figure 4-5 shows more high school students than middle school students have used alcohol, tobacco (both smoking and chewing), marijuana, hallucinogens, and uppers at the "any use at all" level. Differences in inhalants, cocaine, downers, and narcotics are slight.

**Figure 4-5: Alcohol and Drug Use**  
(Any Use at All, by School Level)

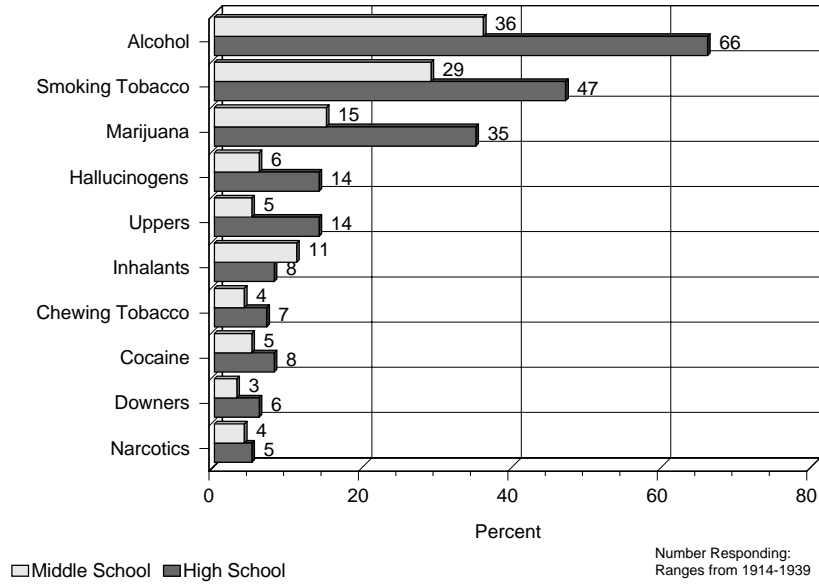


Figure 4-6 shows monthly or more often use of alcohol, smoking tobacco, and marijuana is also greater in high school than in middle school. Differences in monthly use of other substances are slight.

**Figure 4-6: Alcohol and Drug Use**  
(Monthly or More Often, by School Level)

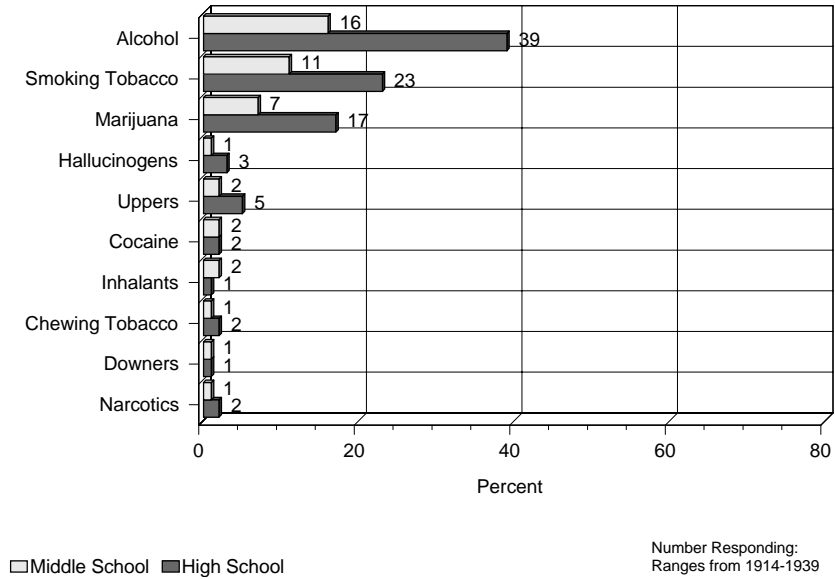
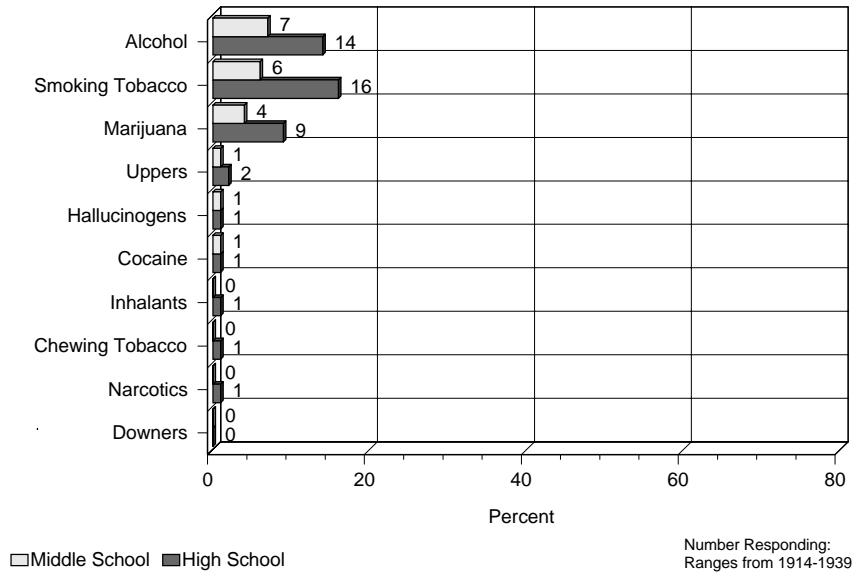


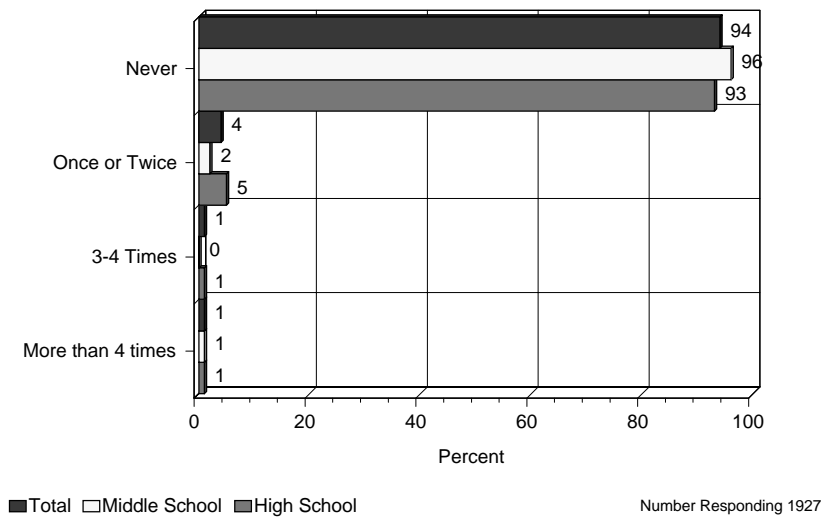
Figure 4-7 shows weekly use of alcohol, smoking tobacco, and marijuana are also more common in high school than in middle school. Differences in weekly use of other substances are slight.

**Figure 4-7: Alcohol and Drug Use**  
(Weekly or More Often, by School Level)



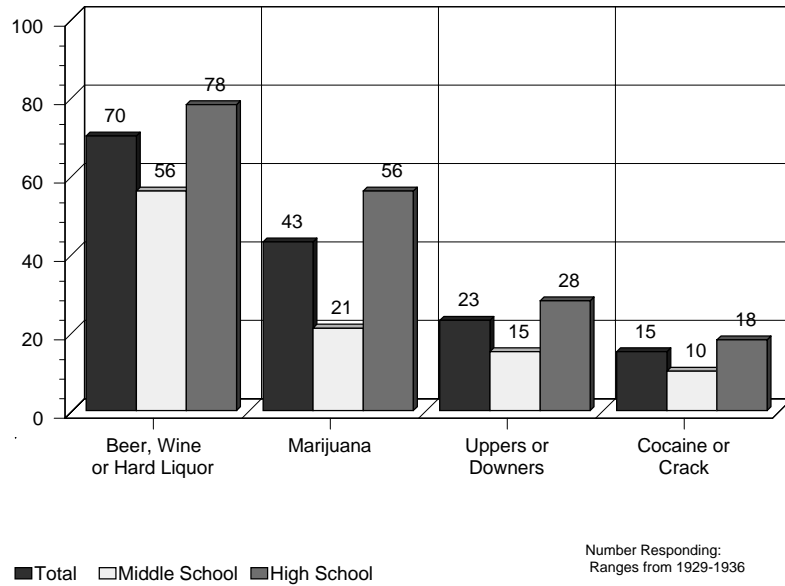
Students were asked, "In the *past month*, have you missed classes or work because of your use of drugs or alcohol?" Figure 4-8 shows that 6% of students reported they had missed classes or work at least one time in the past month because of their use of drugs or alcohol. Three percent (3%) of middle school students, and 7% of high school students said they had missed school or work.

**Figure 4-8: Times Teens Missed School or Work Because of Their Use of Drugs or Alcohol**  
(In the Past Month, by School Level)



Obtainability. Figure 4-9 shows the perceived ease of obtaining alcohol and other drugs on the basis of school level. It is worth noting well over half of high school youth believe alcohol is easy or very easy to get.

**Figure 4-9: Obtainability Of Alcohol and Other Drugs**  
(Very Easy or Easy to Get, by School Level)



Perceived Risk. We asked local teens a series of questions regarding how risky they thought certain behaviors are. We asked, "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; try marijuana once or twice; smoke marijuana regularly; use inhalants; take 1 or 2 drinks of an alcoholic beverage nearly every day; and have 5 or more drinks at one time each weekend?" Figure 4-10 shows those youth who consider these activities to be of "no risk" or "slight risk".

**Figure 4-10: Perceived Risk of Alcohol and Other Drug Use  
(No Risk or Slight Risk, by School Level)**

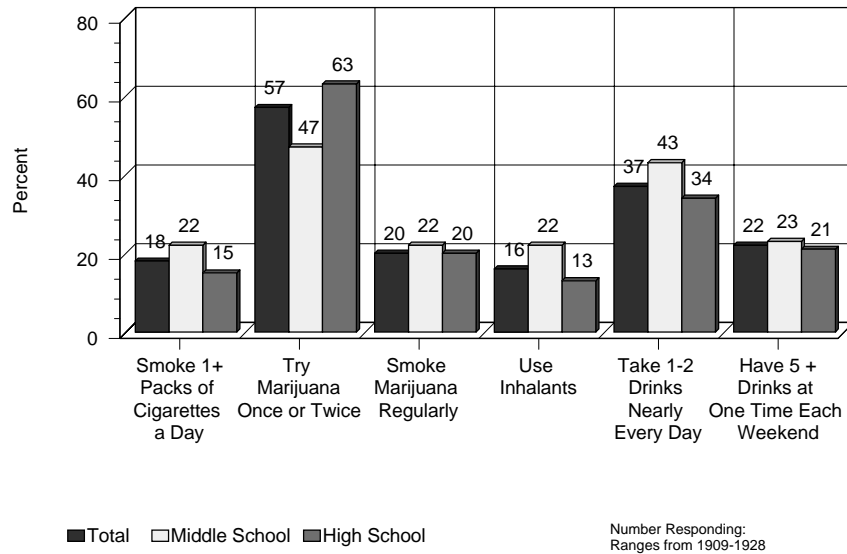
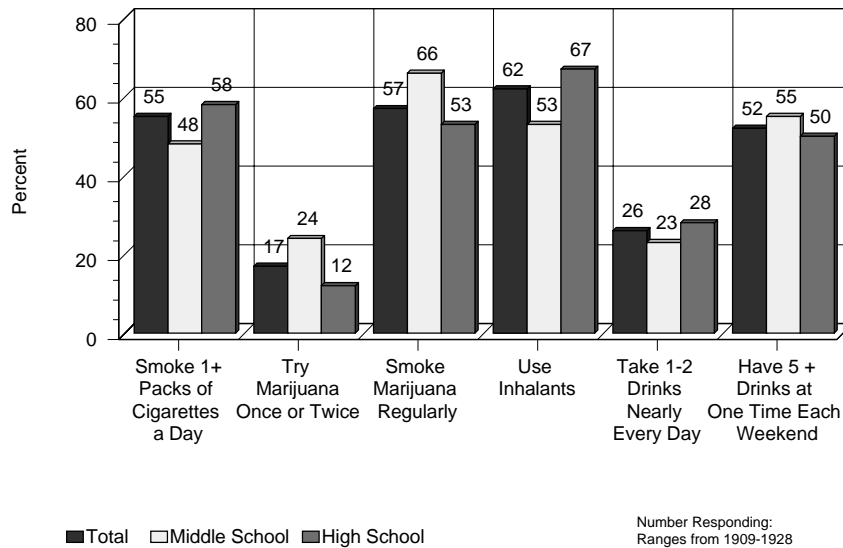


Figure 4-11 shows those who consider these activities to be of "great risk." More middle school students than high school students felt trying marijuana once or twice (middle school, 24%; high school, 12%), smoking marijuana regularly (middle school, 66%; high school, 53%), and binge drinking (middle school, 55%; high school, 50%) were of great risk. More high school students than middle school students felt smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day (middle school, 48%; high school, 58%), using inhalants (middle school, 53%; high school, 67%), and taking 1-2 drinks nearly every day (middle school, 23%; high school, 28%) were of "great risk."

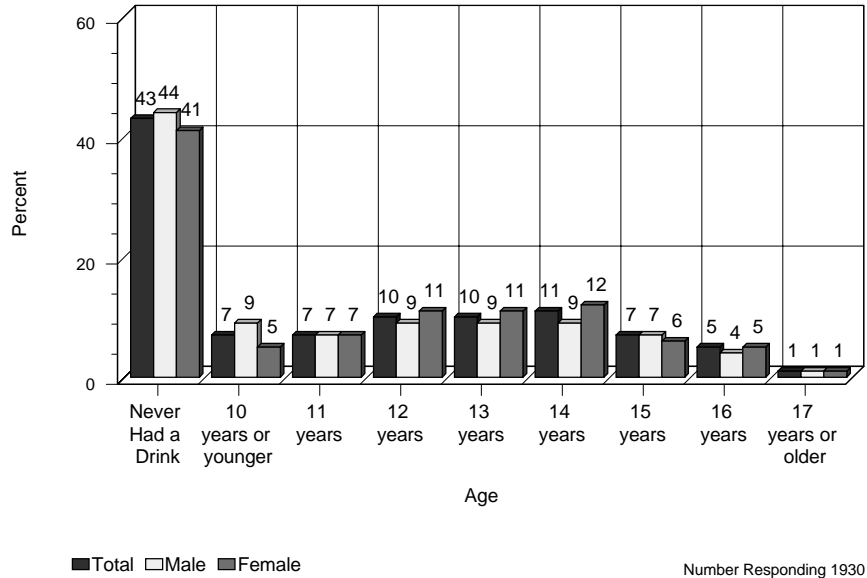
**Figure 4-11: Perceived Risk of Alcohol and Other Drug Use  
(Great Risk, by School Level)**



**Alcohol Use**

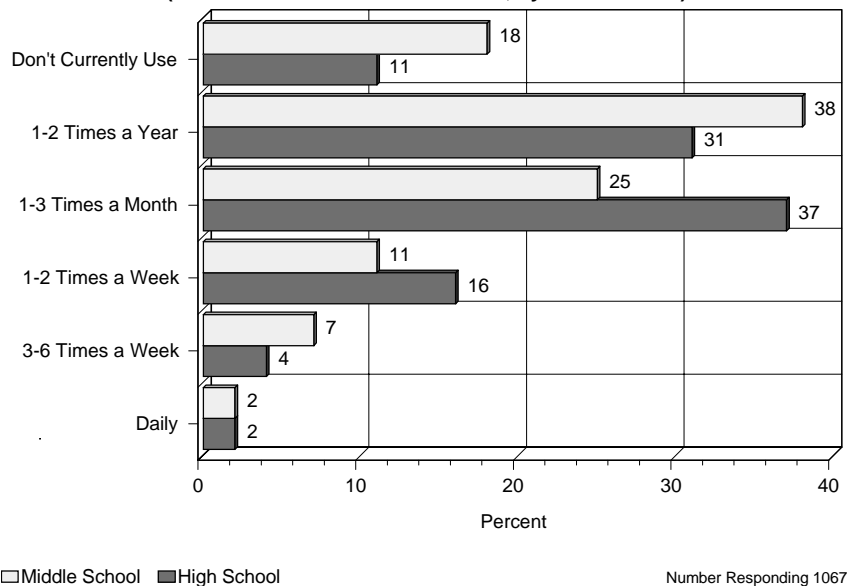
Figure 4-12 shows how old students were when they first consumed alcohol. The average reported age teens first consumed alcohol is 13.

**Figure 4-12: Age Students Had Their First Drink of Alcohol (By Gender)**



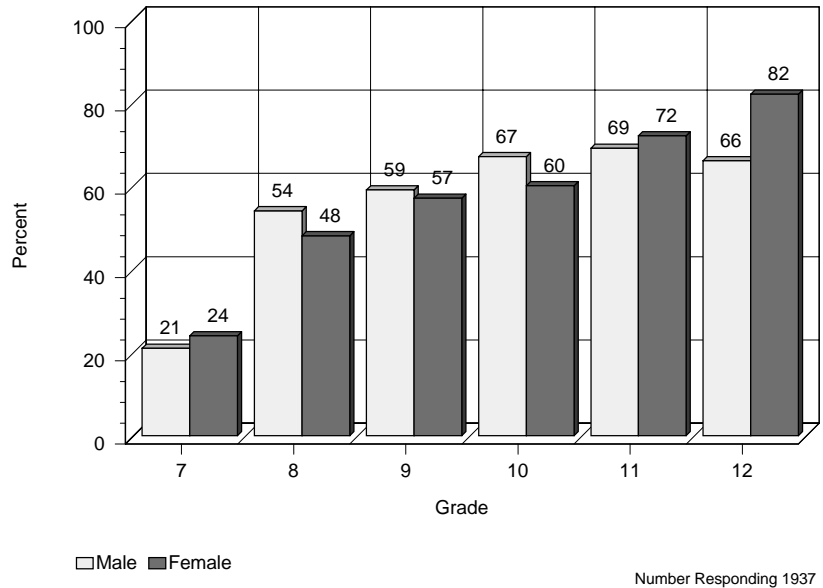
**Frequency.** Overall, 55% of local teens have at some point consumed alcohol. Figure 4-13 shows how often local teens consume alcohol on the basis of school level.

**Figure 4-13: Frequency of Alcohol Use (Of Those Who Have Had Alcohol, by School Level)**



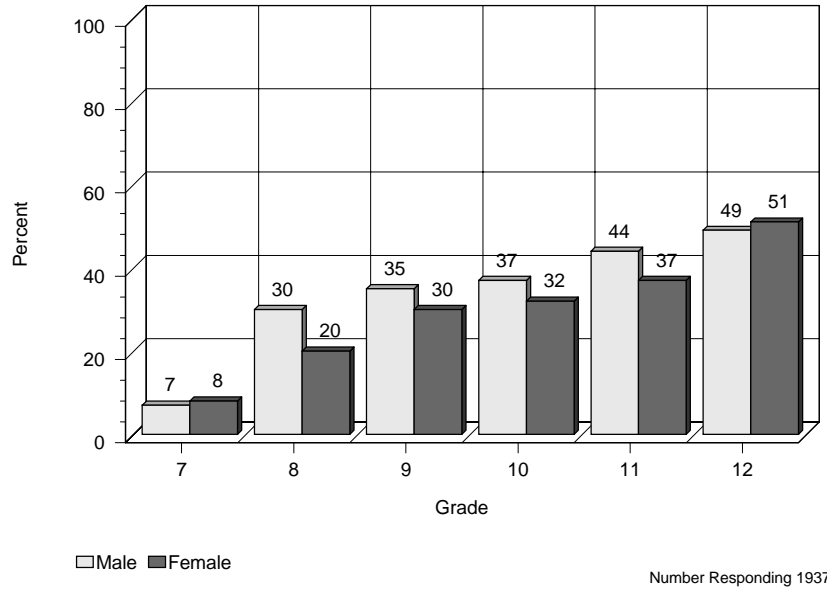
The consumption of alcohol increases as teens grow older. Figure 4-14 summarizes the percentages of males and females, at each grade level, who reported having consumed alcohol some time in the past. On the basis of school level, about 1 out of 3 middle school youth (36%) and about 2 out of 3 (66%) high school youth have consumed alcohol at some time.

**Figure 4-14: Teens Who Drink Alcohol**  
(Any Use at All, by Grade and Gender)



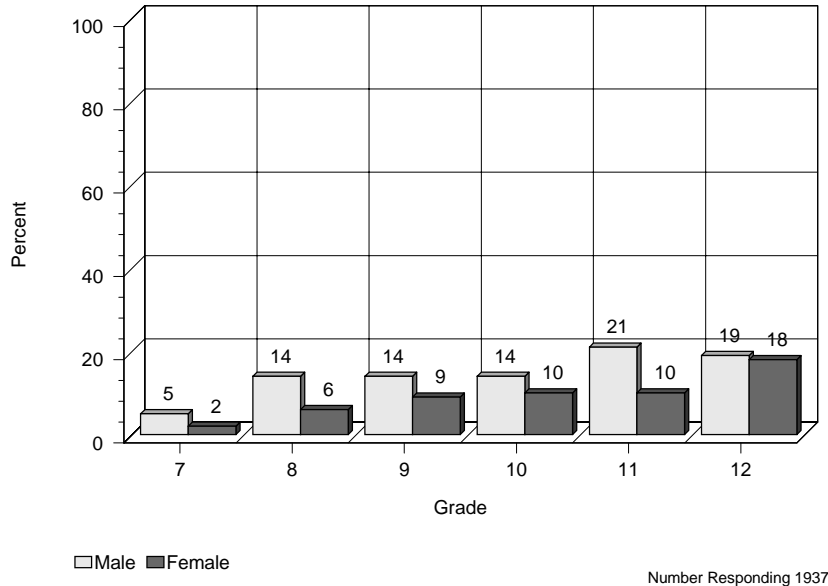
Monthly use of alcohol is shown in Figure 4-15. Overall, 30% of local youth reported using alcohol once a month or more often (middle school, 16%; high school, 39%). Monthly use of alcohol is slightly greater for males than females (males, 32%; females, 29%).

**Figure 4-15: Teens Who Drink Alcohol**  
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



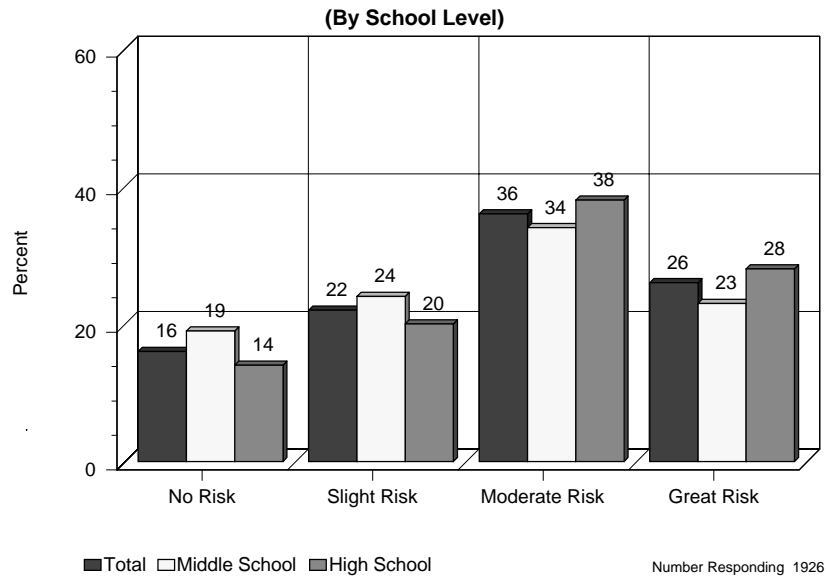
Weekly use of alcohol is noted in Figure 4-16. Eleven percent (11%) of all youth reported the consumption of alcohol at least once a week or more (middle school, 7%; high school, 14%). Weekly alcohol use from middle school to high school nearly doubles for males (middle school males, 10%; high school males, 17%) and triples for females (middle school females, 4%; high school females, 12%).

**Figure 4-16: Teens Who Drink Alcohol**  
(Weekly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)

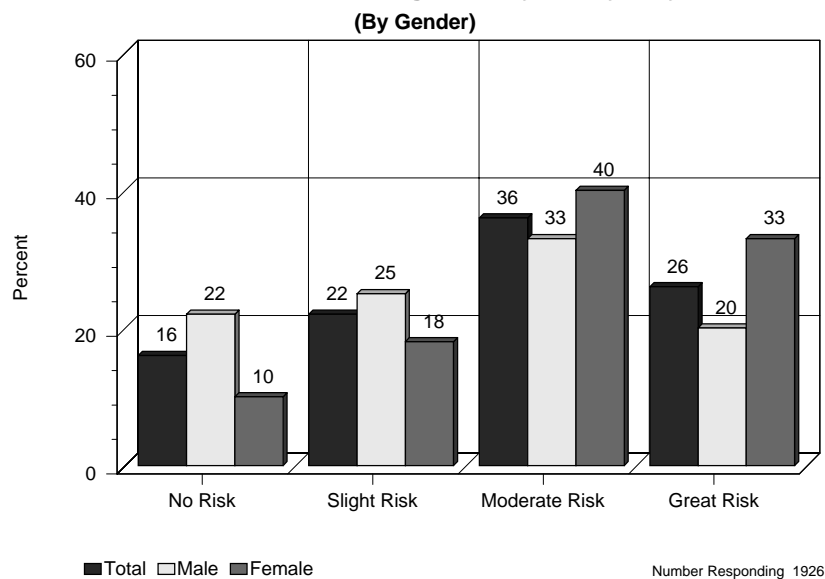


Perceived Risk of Drinking. We asked local youth how risky they thought taking one or two drinks nearly every day is. Overall, 26% felt taking one or two drinks every day carries a great risk. Figure 4-17 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level. Figure 4-18 shows the breakdown by gender.

**Figure 4-17: Perceived Risk: Take 1 or 2 Drinks of an Alcoholic Beverage Nearly Every Day**

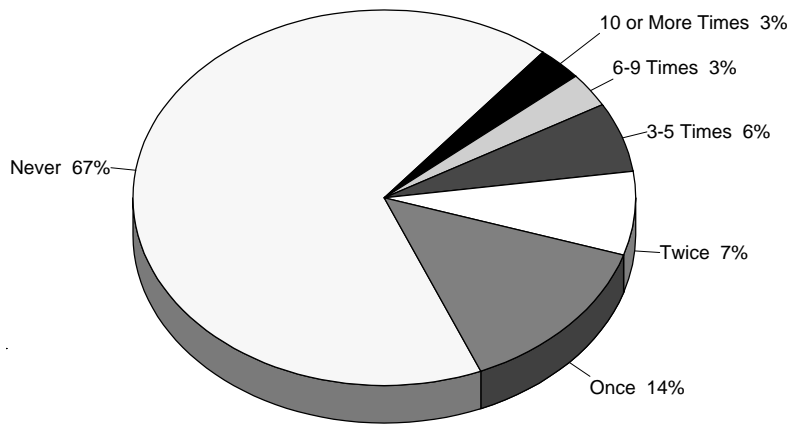


**Figure 4-18: Perceived Risk: Take 1 or 2 Drinks of an Alcoholic Beverage Nearly Every Day**



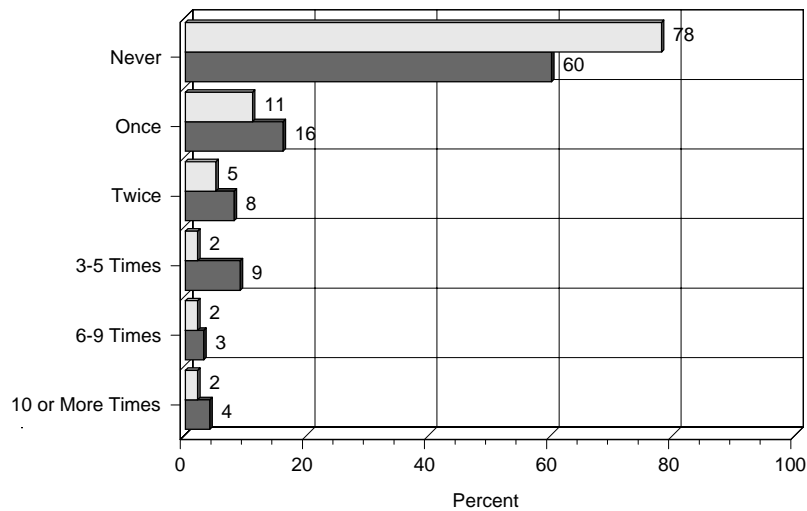
**Binge Drinking.** Local teens were asked the question *"During the **past month**, have you had **5 or more** alcoholic drinks at one time?"* A drink was defined *"a glass of wine or beer, a bottle or can of beer, a shot of liquor, or a mixed drink."* Figure 4-19 shows the responses to this question. Thirty-three percent (33%) of teens reported having 5 or more drinks at one time (binge drinking) at least once in the past month. As Figure 4-20 shows, fewer middle school youth engaged in binge drinking in the past month than high school youth (middle school, 22%; high school, 40%).

**Figure 4-19: Frequency of Binge Drinking**  
(Number of Times in the Past Month)



Number Responding 1932

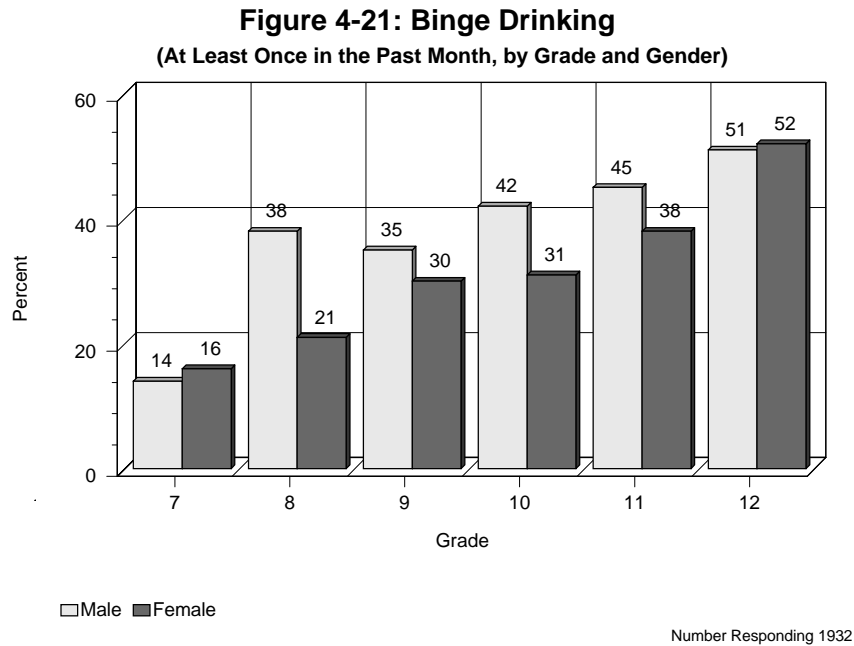
**Figure 4-20: Frequency of Binge Drinking**  
(Number of Times in the Past Month, by School Level)



□ Middle School ■ High School

Number Responding 1932

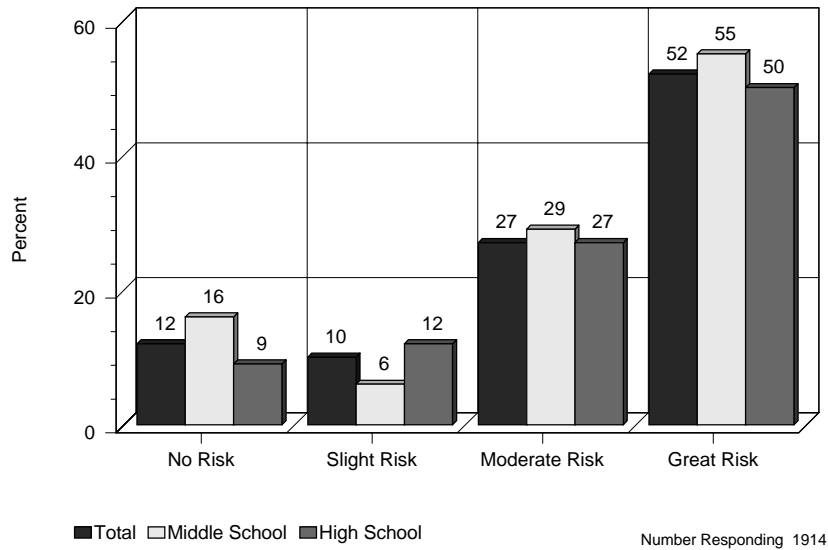
Figure 4-21 shows teens' drinking 5 or more drinks in a row (binge drinking) increases at nearly every grade level. Overall, slightly more males (36%) reported binge drinking than females (31%). In the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 51% of males and 52% of females reported binge drinking in the past month. The rate for males increases from 26% in middle school to 43% in high school, while the rate for females increases from 18% in middle school to 37% in high school. Frequent binge drinking can indicate a pattern of abusive drinking that may require professional attention.



The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey found nationally, 33.4% (N.H., 35.5%) of high school youth (*grades 9-12*) reported drinking heavily at least once during the month before they were surveyed (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 1998). TAP found 40% of Merrimack youth, *grades 9-12*, have had 5 or more drinks in a row at least once in the past month. New Hampshire ranks 9<sup>th</sup> out of 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

Perceived Risk of Binge Drinking. We asked local youth how much they felt people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they have 5 or more drinks at one time (binge drinking) once or twice each weekend. In all, 52% reported they felt it was a "great risk"; 22% said they felt it was "no" or "slight risk." Figure 4-22 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level. Figure 4-23 shows the responses broken down by gender.

**Figure 4-22: Perceived Risk: Binge Drinking  
Once or Twice Each Weekend  
(By School Level)**



**Figure 4-23: Perceived Risk: Binge Drinking  
Once or Twice Each Weekend  
(By Gender)**

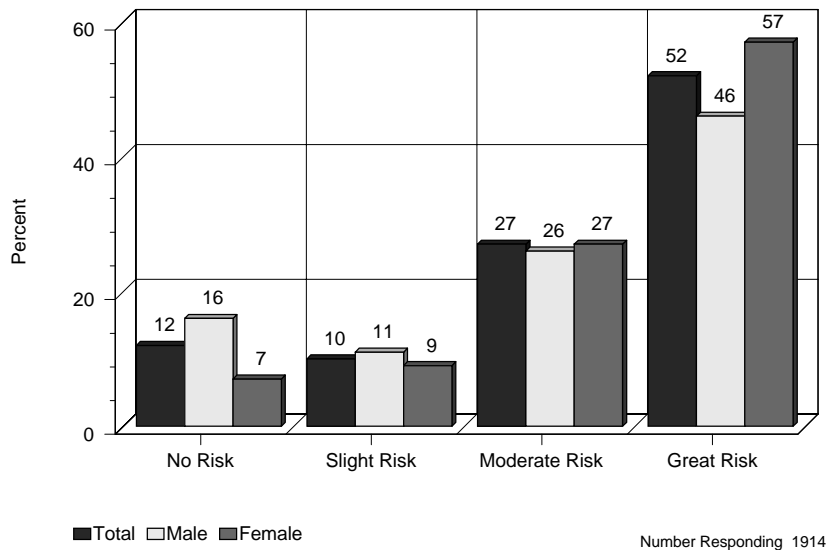
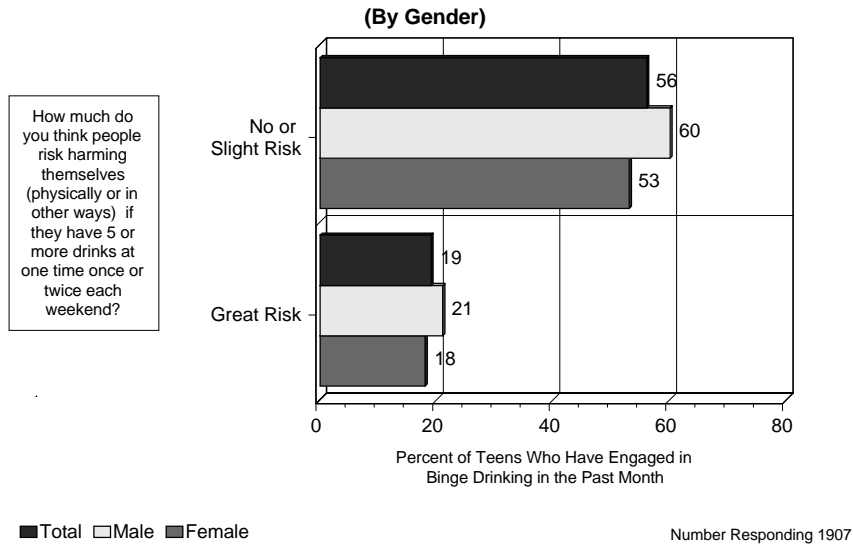


Figure 4-24 shows 56% of teens who consider having 5 or more drinks in a row at one time (binge drinking) as "no risk" or "slight risk" have engaged in binge drinking at least once in the past month. Of those who consider binge drinking a "great risk," only 19% have done so.

**Figure 4-24: Perceived Risk: Binge Drinking Every Weekend vs. Those Who Have Engaged in Binge Drinking at Least Once in the Past Month**

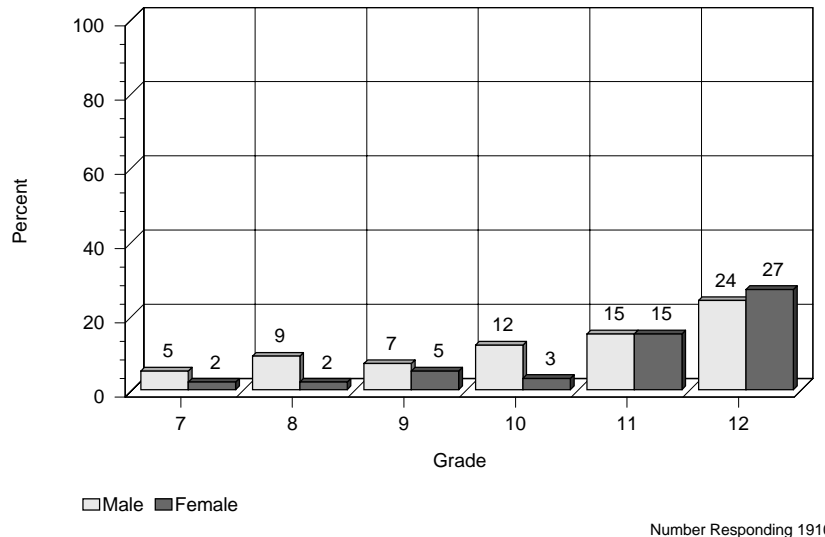


The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 56% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 53% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 43% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students surveyed think heavy drinking carries great risk (Johnson, O'Malley and Bachman, 1999). TAP found in the local area, 52% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 55% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 41% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported they felt doing so has great risk.

Drinking and Driving. We asked local youth, "*During the **past month**, have you driven a motorized vehicle (car, truck, motorcycle, snowmobile, etc.) after drinking alcohol or using drugs?*" Ten percent (10%) of all local youth said they drove at least once in the past month after drinking alcohol or using drugs (middle school, 5% and high school, 11%). One out of four 12<sup>th</sup> graders (males, 24%; females 27%) indicated they drove at least once in the past month after drinking or using drugs. Figure 4-25 displays the responses by grade and gender.

**Figure 4-25: Teens Who Have Driven A Vehicle After Drinking or Using Drugs**

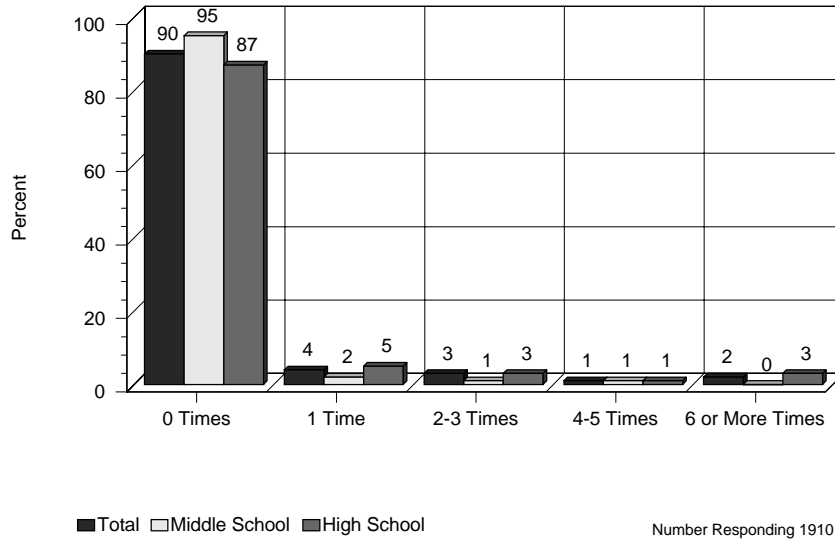
(In the Past Month, by Grade and Gender)



The issue of teens driving under the influence of alcohol is a major concern. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998) found nationally, 16.9% of high school youth had driven a vehicle after drinking alcohol in the month preceding the survey. For N.H., this statistic is 13% of high school youth (CDC, 1998). New Hampshire ranked 27<sup>th</sup> out of the 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

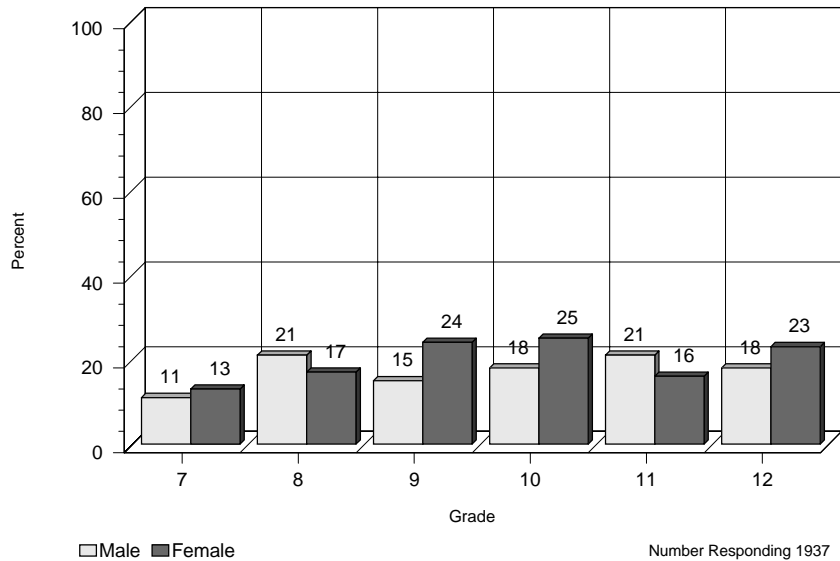
Figure 4-26 shows the frequency of driving after drinking or doing drugs by school level.

**Figure 4-26: Frequency of Driving in a Vehicle After Drinking or Using Drugs**  
(In the Past Month, by School Level)



Another concern is the issue of teens riding with a driver who may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. We asked local youth, "During the *past month*, have you ridden in a motorized vehicle when you were concerned about a driver who had been drinking or using drugs?" Figure 4-27 displays how many teens rode with a driver (either a friend or an adult) who had been drinking or using drugs in the past month, by grade and gender. Figure 4-28 shows the frequency of teens' riding with a driver (either a friend or an adult) who had been drinking or doing drugs by school level.

**Figure 4-27: Teens Who Have Ridden in a Vehicle with a Driver Who Had Been Drinking or Using Drugs (At Least Once in the Past Month, by Grade and Gender)**



**Figure 4-28: Frequency of Riding in a Vehicle With a Driver Who Had Been Drinking or Using Drugs (At Least Once in the Past Month, by School Level)**

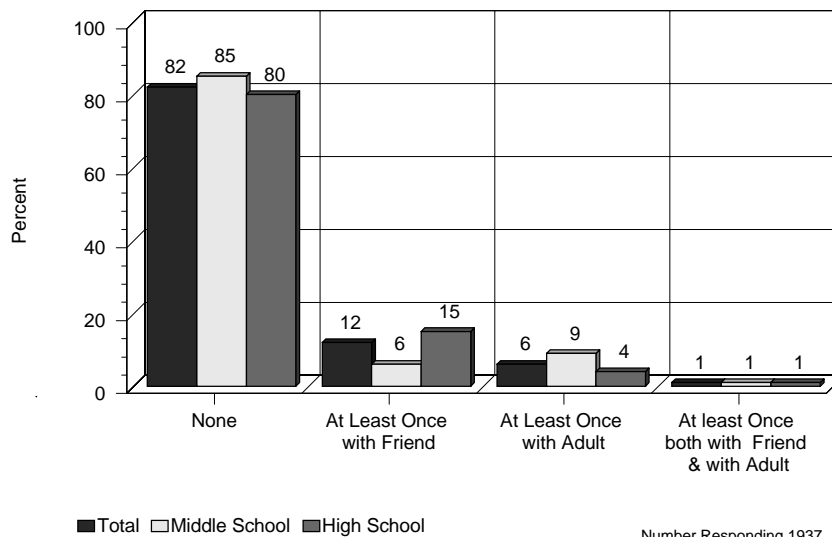
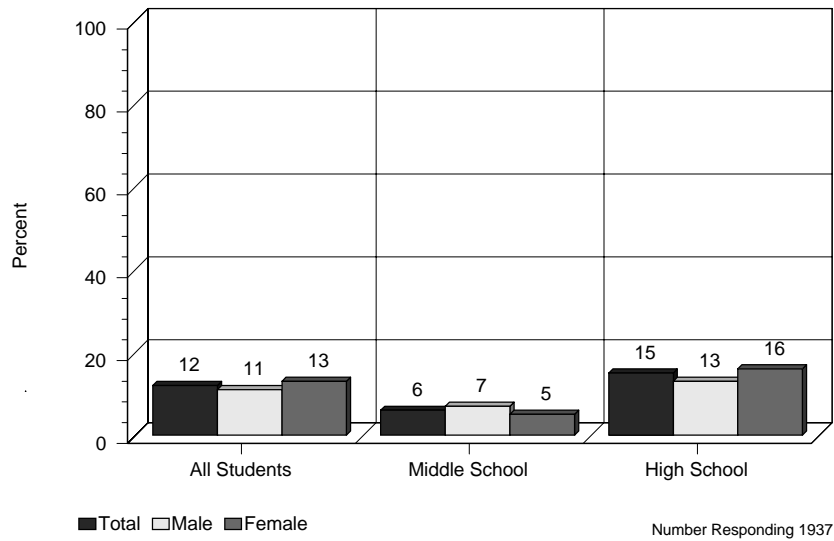


Figure 4-29 shows 12% of all local youth said they rode at least once in the past month with a friend who had been drinking alcohol or using drugs. Middle school youth were less likely to have ridden with a friend who had been drinking or using drugs than were high school youth (middle school, 6% and high school, 15%).

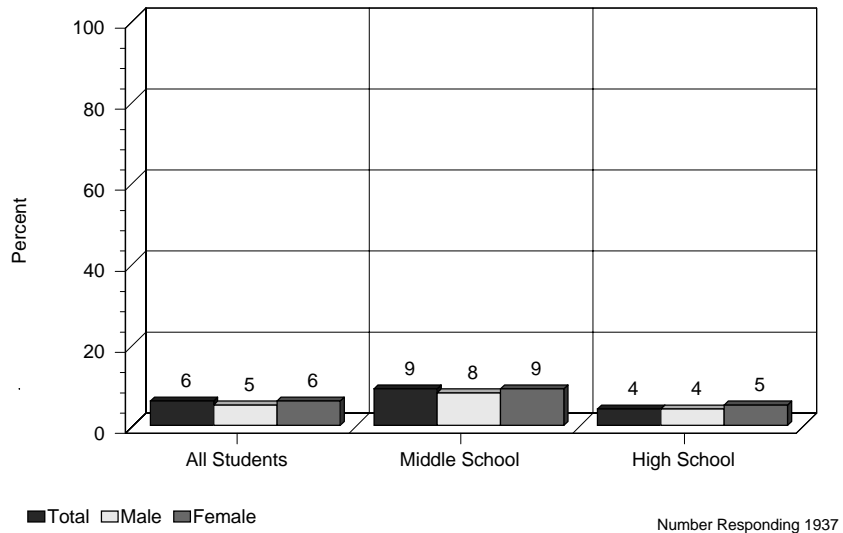
**Figure 4-29: Teens Who Have Ridden with a Friend Who Had Been Drinking or Using Drugs**  
(At Least Once in the Past Month, by Gender and School Level)



Nationally, 36.6% (N.H., 30%) of high school students had ridden with a driver who had been drinking alcohol in the month preceding the survey (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998). New Hampshire ranks 28<sup>th</sup> out of the 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

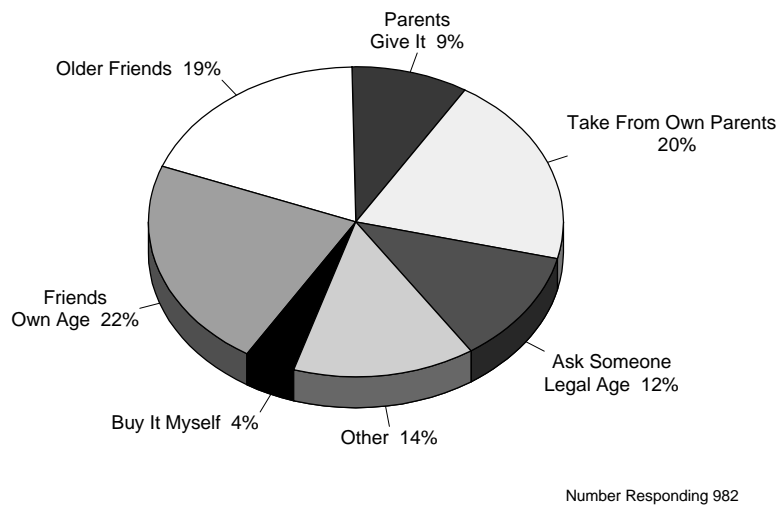
Figure 4-30 shows 6% of students have ridden with an adult who had been drinking or using drugs.

**Figure 4-30: Teens Who Have Ridden with an Adult Who Had Been Drinking or Using Drugs (At Least Once in the Past Month, by Gender and School Level)**



Obtainability of Alcohol. The survey asked local youth where they get alcohol. Figure 4-31 shows how students who use alcohol responded. The most commonly reported source of alcohol was from friends their own age (22%). As Figure 4-32 shows, middle school students who drink are more likely to obtain alcohol by taking it from their parents or a friend's parents (37%) or from friends their own age or older (25%). High school students who drink are more likely to get it from friends their own age or older (46%) or by asking someone of legal age to buy it for them (16%).

**Figure 4-31: Where Teens Get Alcohol**  
(Of Those Who Drink)



**Figure 4-32: Where Teens Get Alcohol**  
(Of Those Who Drink, by School Level)

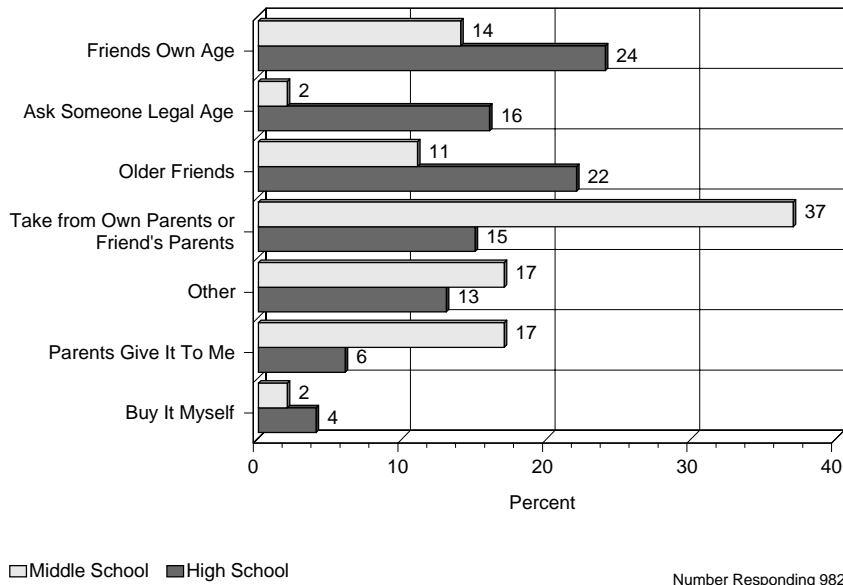
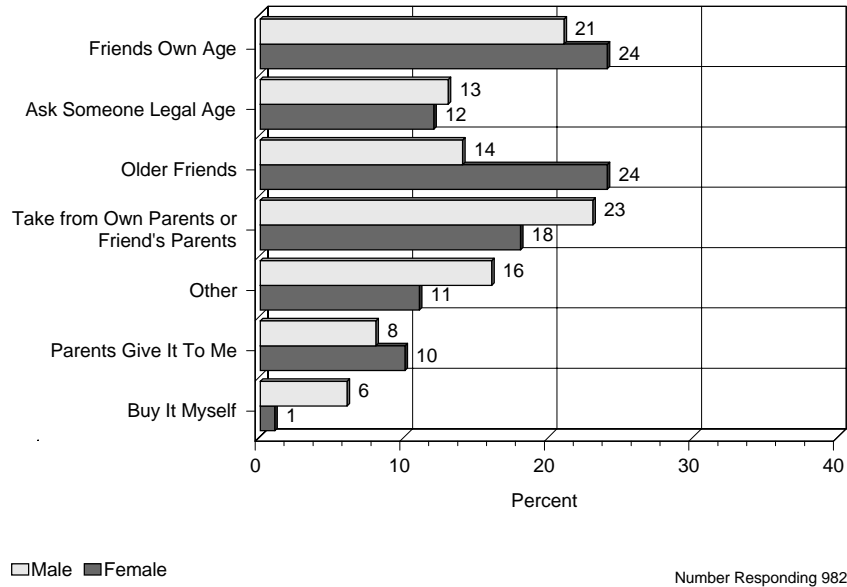


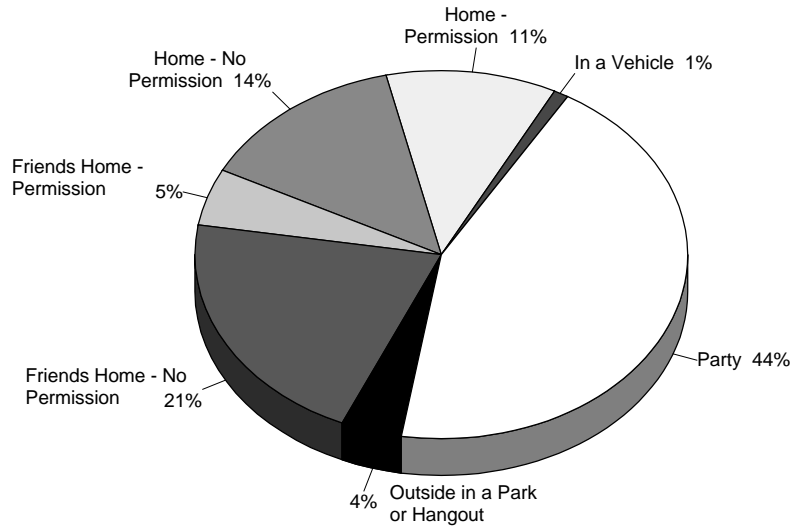
Figure 4-33 shows females who drink are likely to get alcohol from their older friends (24%) or friends their own age (24%). Males who drink are likely to take alcohol from their parents or friend's parents (23%) or get it from friends their own age (21%).

**Figure 4-33: Where Teens Get Alcohol**  
(Of Those Who Drink, by Gender)



Teens were asked, "If you drink alcohol, where do you **most often** drink it?" As shown in Figure 4-34, more teens drink at parties than any other place (44%).

**Figure 4-34: Where Teens Drink Alcohol  
(Of Those Who Drink)**



Number Responding 989

Figure 4-35 shows that parties are the most common place for high school students to drink (51%). The most common place for middle school students to drink is at a friend's home without their parents' permission (28%), followed closely by drinking at a party (23%). The home appears to be a common place to consume alcohol. Eleven percent (11%) of teens who drink reported drinking at home with their parents' permission (15% for middle school students and 9% for high school students). Five percent (5%) drink at a friend's home with their parents' permission (middle school, 3% and high school, 6%).

**Figure 4-35: Where Teens Drink Alcohol**  
(Of Those Who Drink, by School Level)

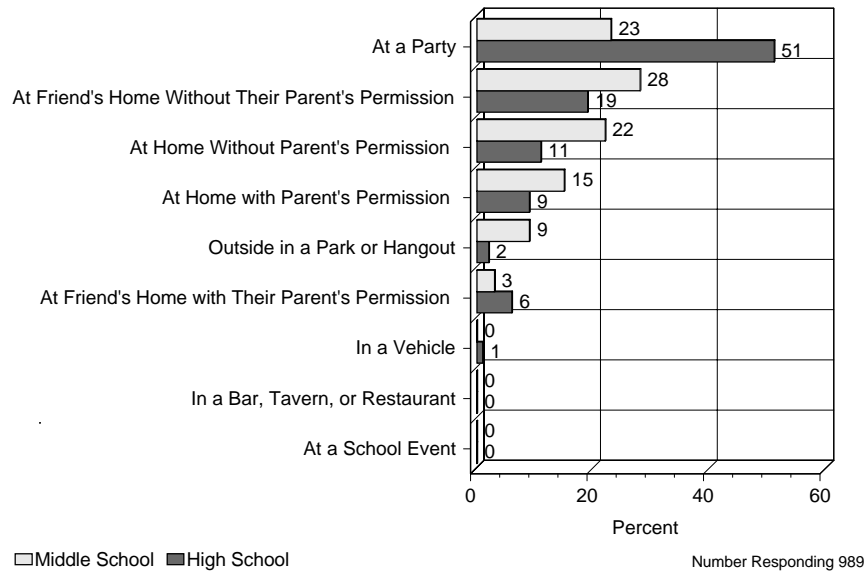
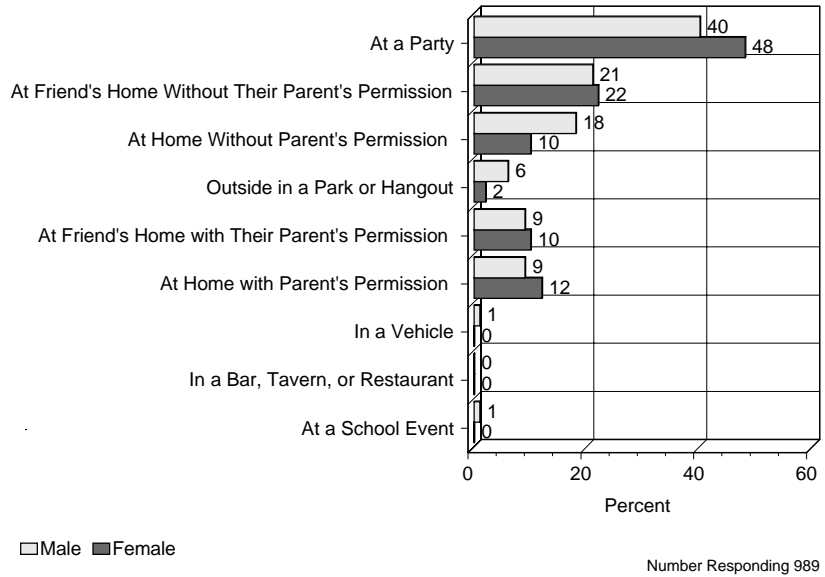


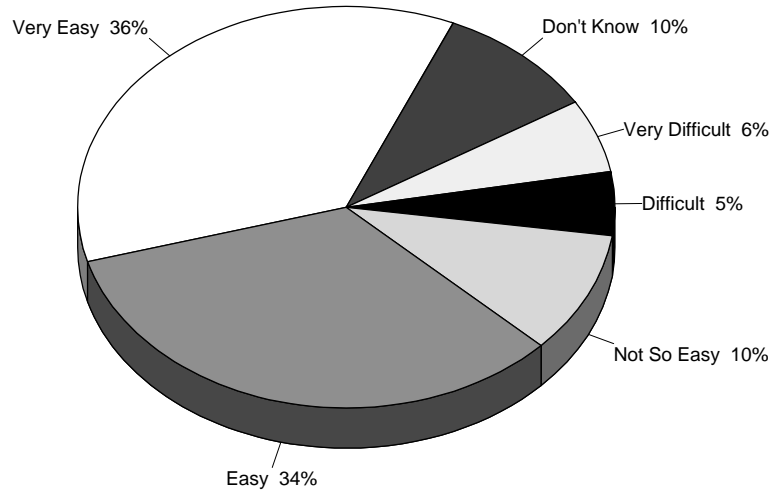
Figure 4-36 shows the most common places for teens to drink, reported for males and females.

**Figure 4-36: Where Teens Drink Alcohol**  
(Of Those Who Drink, by Gender)



As Figure 4-37 shows, 70% of students surveyed think it is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain alcohol.

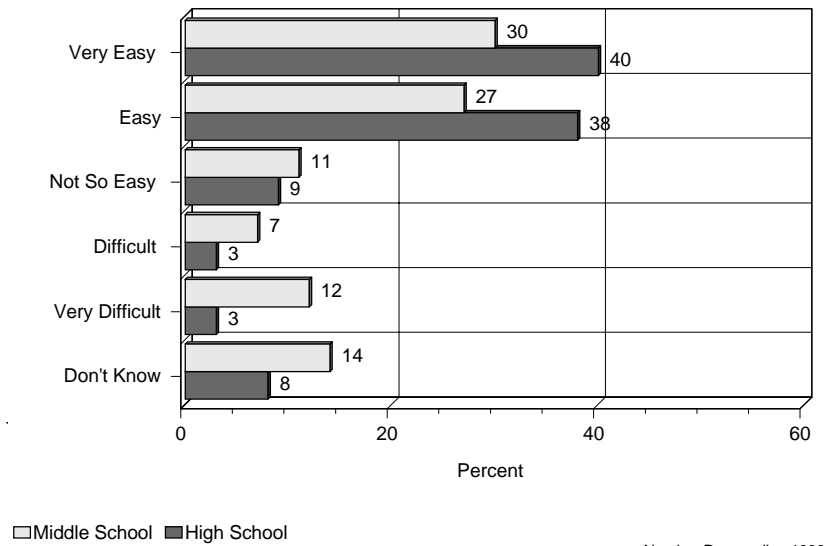
**Figure 4-37: Obtainability of Alcohol**



Number Responding 1936

Figure 4-38 shows over two thirds of students think it is "easy" or "very easy" to obtain alcohol (middle school, 57%; high school students, 78%; males, 70%; females, 70%). Ten percent (10%) said it was "difficult" or "very difficult" to get alcohol (middle school, 19%; high school, 6%) and 10% of local teens did not know how easy or difficult it was to get alcohol (middle school, 14%; high school, 8%).

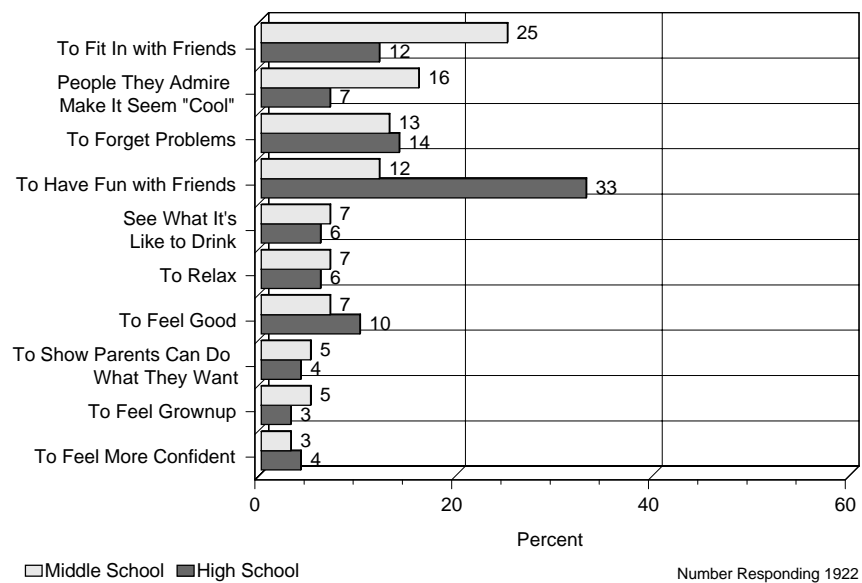
**Figure 4-38: Obtainability of Alcohol**  
(By School Level)



On the positive side, it is important to note that 45% of local students reported never having used alcohol (middle school, 64%; high school, 34%). About two-thirds of all teens surveyed (67%) report never having had 5 or more drinks in a row in the past month (middle school, 78%; high school, 60%).

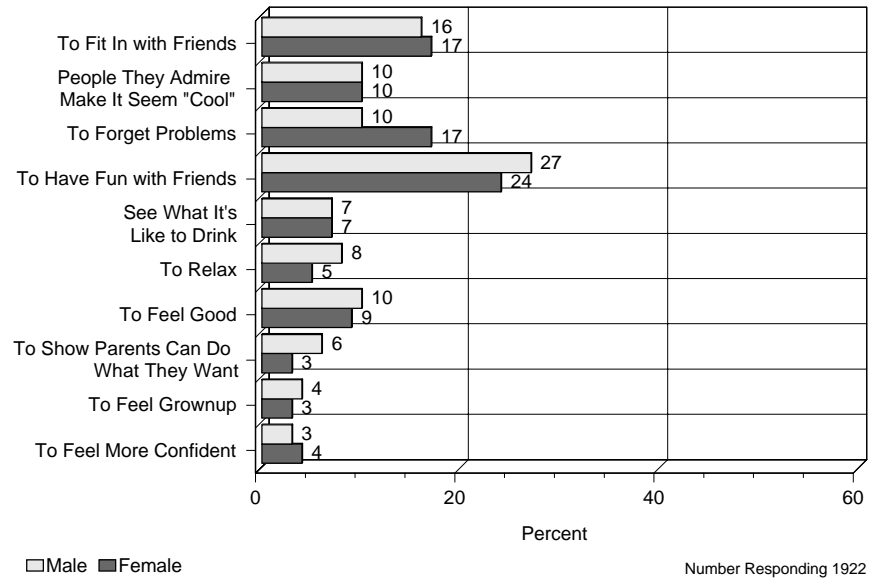
Why Teens Drink and Why They Don't Drink. We asked teens, "What do you think is the *one main reason* why teens your age drink alcohol?" Overall, the most common reasons chosen were: "It helps them have more fun with their friends." (28%), "They want to fit in with their friends." (16%) and "It helps them forget their problems." (14%). Although high school students felt students were more likely to drink because it helps them have more fun with their friends (middle school, 12%; high school, 33%), middle school students felt students were more likely to drink because they wanted to fit in (middle school, 25%; high school, 12%). Figure 4-39 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level.

**Figure 4-39: One Main Reason Why Teens Drink  
(By School Level)**



Females were more likely than males to indicate they think students drink to forget their problems (males, 10%; females, 17%). Figure 4-40 shows the breakdown by gender.

**Figure 4-40: One Main Reason Why Teens Drink**  
(By Gender)



It is also good to know why teens say they *don't* drink. We asked teens, "What do you think is the **one main reason** why teens your age don't drink alcohol?" The three most frequent responses were: "They don't want to mess up their bodies." (28%), "Their school, athletic or work performance would suffer" (19%); and "It's against the law and they're afraid they might get caught." (15%). 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, 40%; high school, 21%). More high school students (24%) than middle school students (11%) said they don't drink because they don't need it to make them happy. Figure 4-41 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level.

**Figure 4-41: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Drink  
(By School Level)**

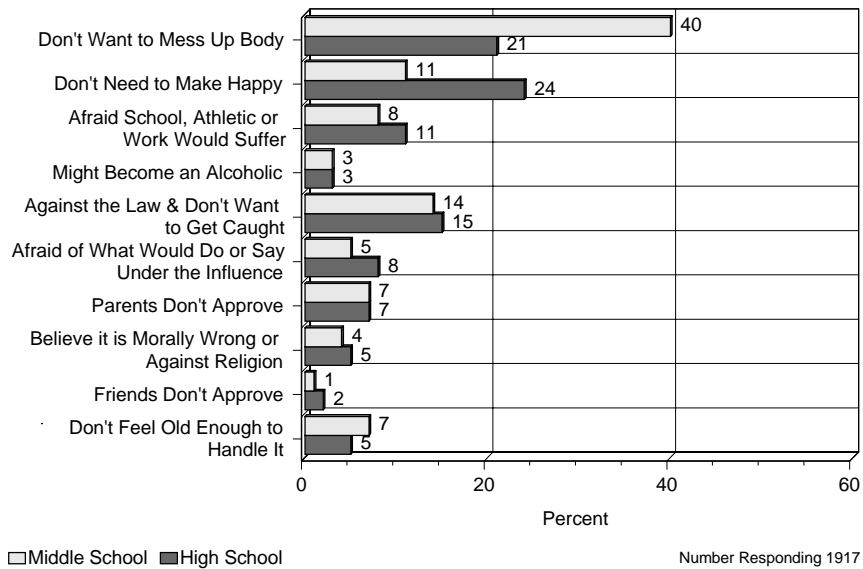
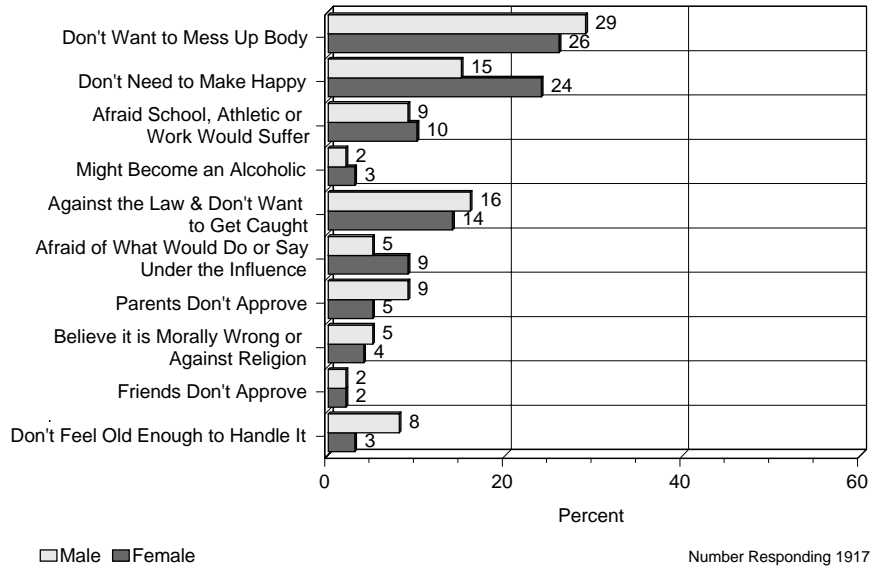


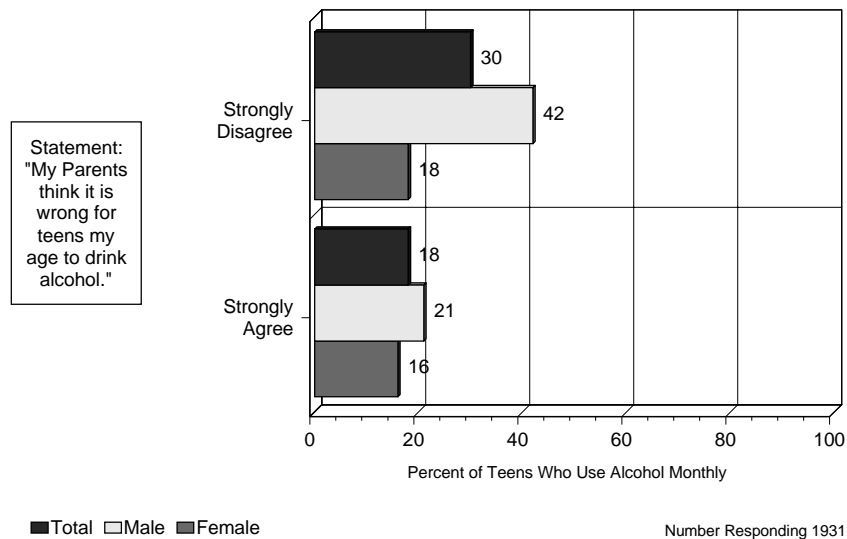
Figure 4-42 shows more females than males report they feel students don't drink because they don't need it to make them happy (females, 24% and males, 15%). Males are more likely to say they feel students don't drink because they don't feel old enough to handle it (males, 8%; females, 3%).

**Figure 4-42: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Drink  
(By Gender)**



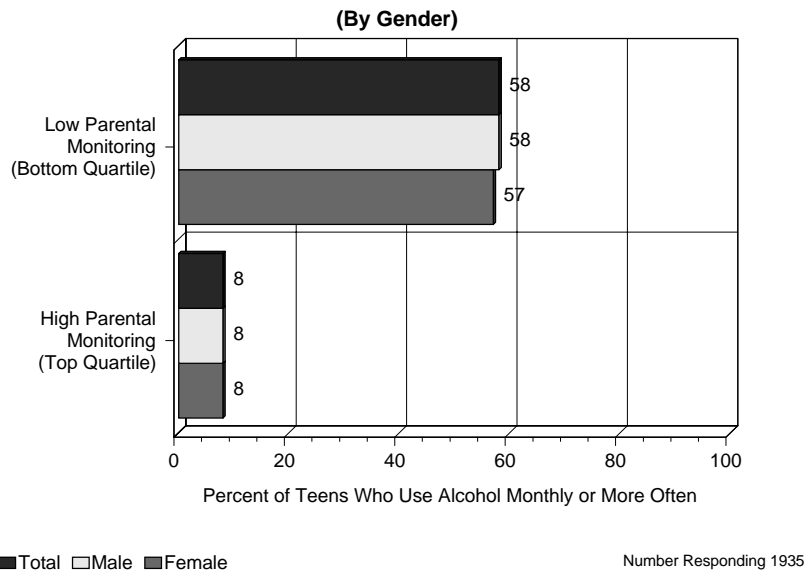
Parents' Role in Teen Drinking. Parents can play an important role in teens' decisions about drinking alcohol (Ary et al., 1999; Ary & Duncan, 1999; Flannery, Williams & Vazsonyi, 1999). Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about drinking may influence their decision whether or not to drink. As Figure 4-43 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, 18% 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, 30% drink monthly. Perceptions of parental values regarding drinking appear to have a greater effect on males' (42% vs 21%) than females' (18% vs 16%) levels of monthly drinking.

**Figure 4-43: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Levels of Monthly Teen Drinking (By Gender)**



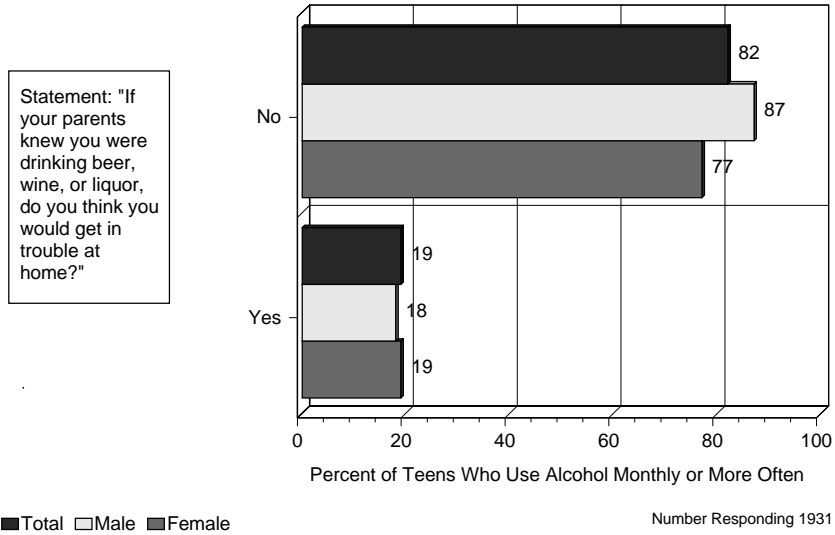
Research has also suggested parental monitoring can be an important factor in preventing adolescent problem behavior (Ary & Duncan, 1999; Flannery, Williams & Vazsoryi, 1999; Rodgers, 1999). Figure 4-44 shows a strong relationship between parental monitoring and local teens not drinking. Parental monitoring refers to parents' supervision and awareness of their child's activities (see Chapter 7 pp. 129-131). Fifty-seven percent (57%) of females with low monitoring by parents drink alcohol on a monthly or more often basis, while 8% of females with high monitoring reported drinking at this level. The effect of high monitoring on monthly drinking is also strong for males. Only 8% of the males with high parental monitoring drank monthly or more often, while 58% of the males with low monitoring drank monthly or more often.

**Figure 4-44: 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 4-45 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 (82% vs. 19%).

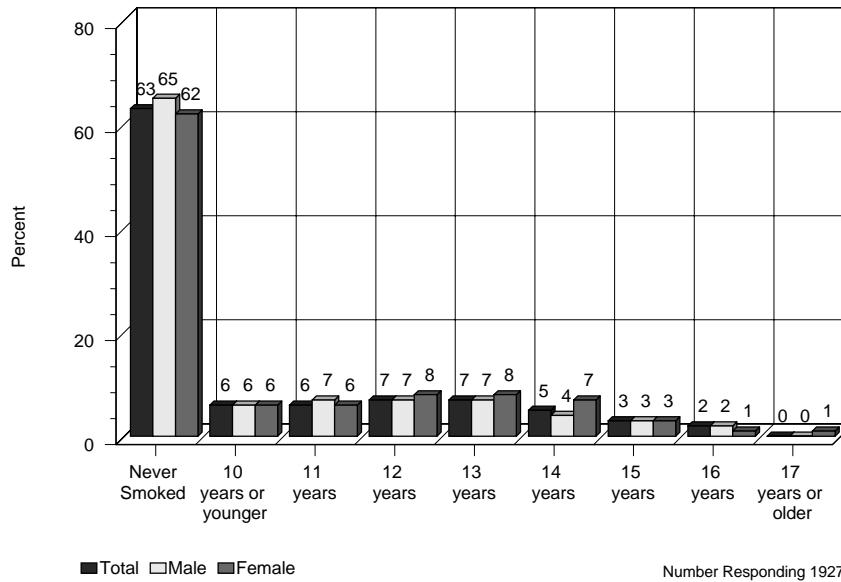
**Figure 4-45: Relationship Between Monthly Teen Drinking and Thinking They Will Get in Trouble at Home (By Gender)**



## 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, smoking tobacco is the second most commonly used chemical substance by local teens when considering "any use at all." Locally, 37% of youth have smoked tobacco at some time in the past. Figure 4-46 shows the age at which students first experimented with tobacco. The average age students first experimented with tobacco is 12.

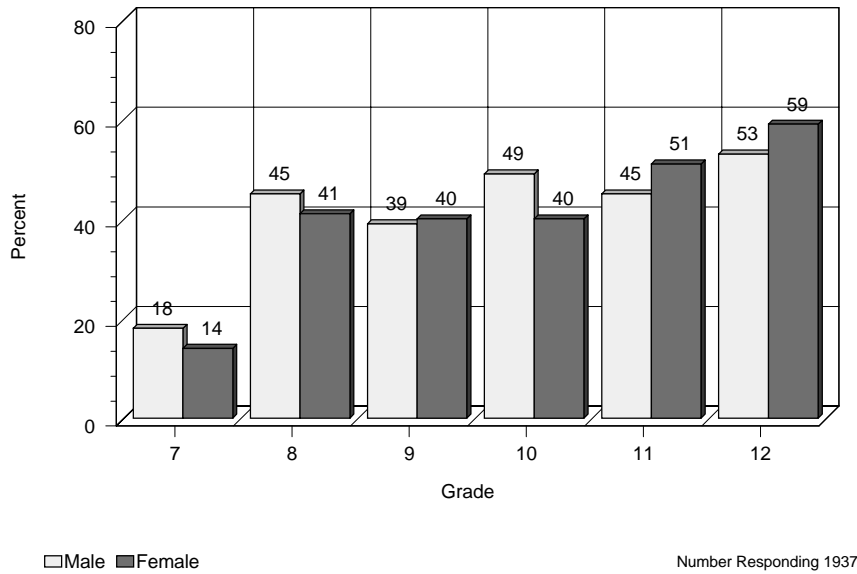
**Figure 4-46: Age Students First Experimented with Tobacco (By Gender)**



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 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

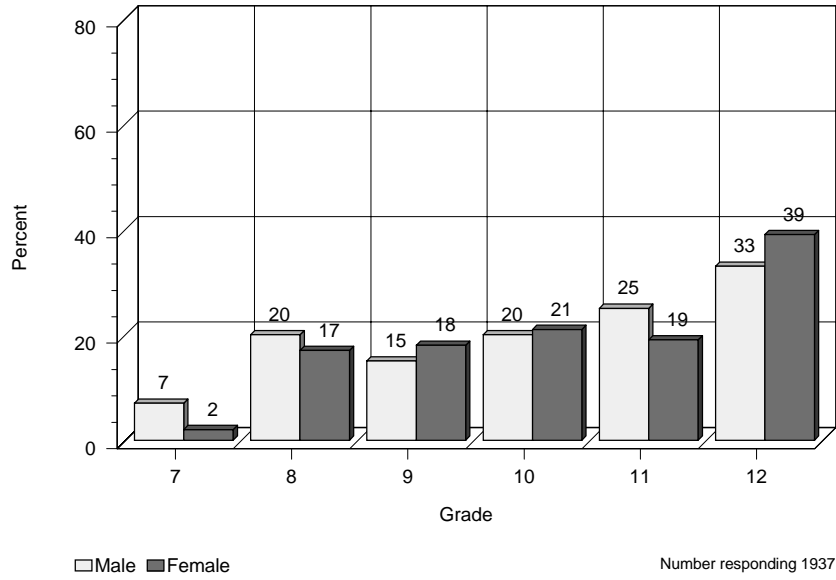
Frequency. Figure 4-47 shows "any use at all" of smoking tobacco, on the basis of gender and grade level. As with drinking, more teens smoke tobacco as they get older. In the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 53% of males and 59% of females have smoked tobacco at least once in their lives.

**Figure 4-47: Teens Who Smoke Tobacco**  
(Any Use at All, by Grade and Gender)



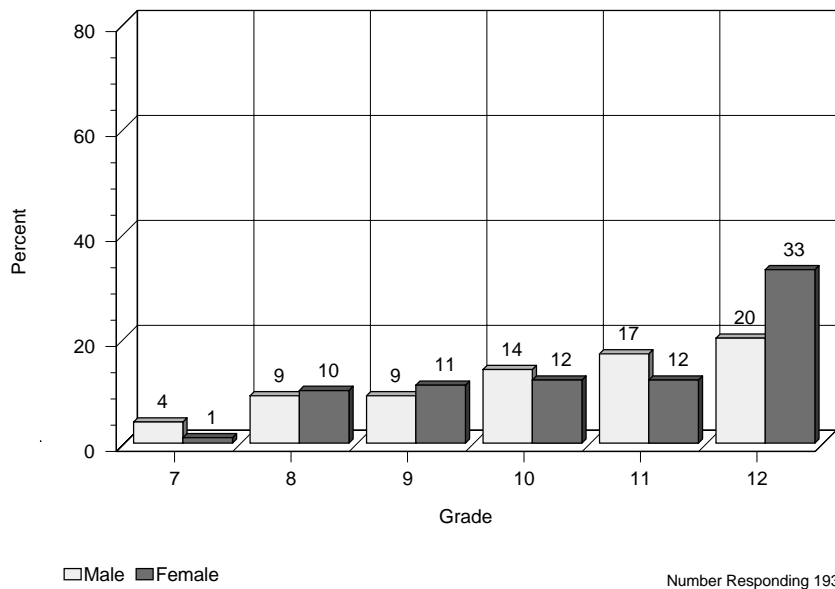
Nineteen percent (19%) of local teens reported smoking tobacco monthly or more often (middle school, 11%; high school, 23%; males, 19%; females, 19%). Figure 4-48 shows the monthly use of smoking tobacco, on the basis of gender and grade level.

**Figure 4-48: Teens Who Smoke Tobacco**  
 (Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



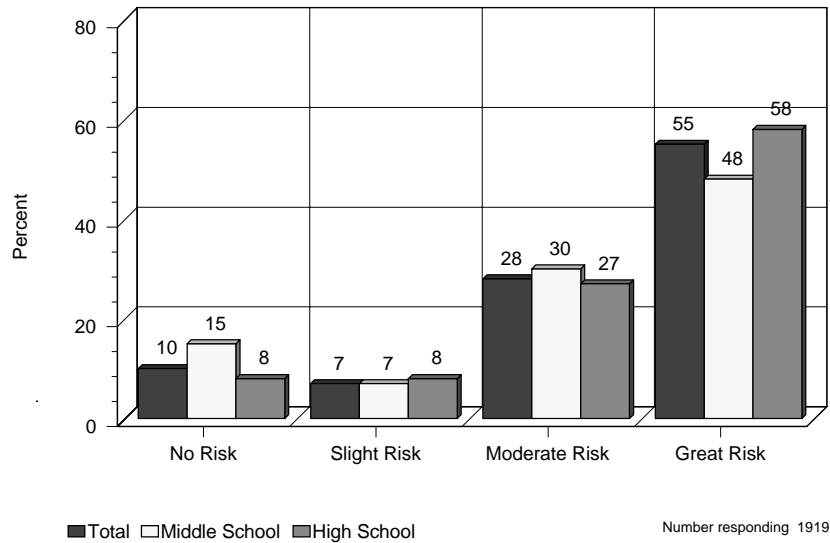
Twelve percent (12%) of students surveyed reported they smoke weekly or more often. Figure 4-49 shows in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, 33% of females and 20% of males reported smoking tobacco at least once a week or more often. This level of tobacco use is considered to be a smoking habit. High school students are more likely to smoke tobacco on a weekly or more basis than middle school students (middle school, 6%; high school, 16%). Weekly tobacco smoking by males increases from middle school (6%) to high school (15%); tobacco smoking by females also increases substantially from middle school (5%) to high school (16%).

**Figure 4-49: 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 4-50 shows all responses broken down by school level. Figure 4-51 shows responses broken down by gender.

**Figure 4-50: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day (By School Level)**



**Figure 4-51: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day (By Gender)**

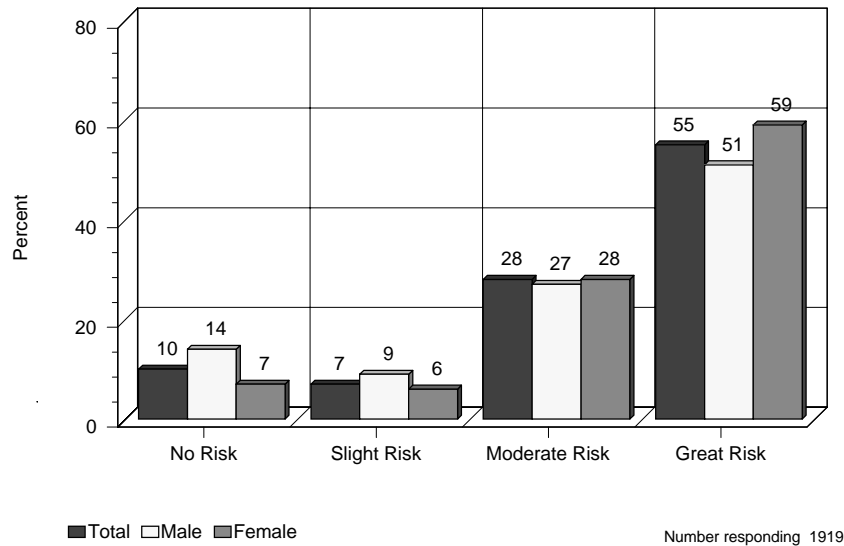
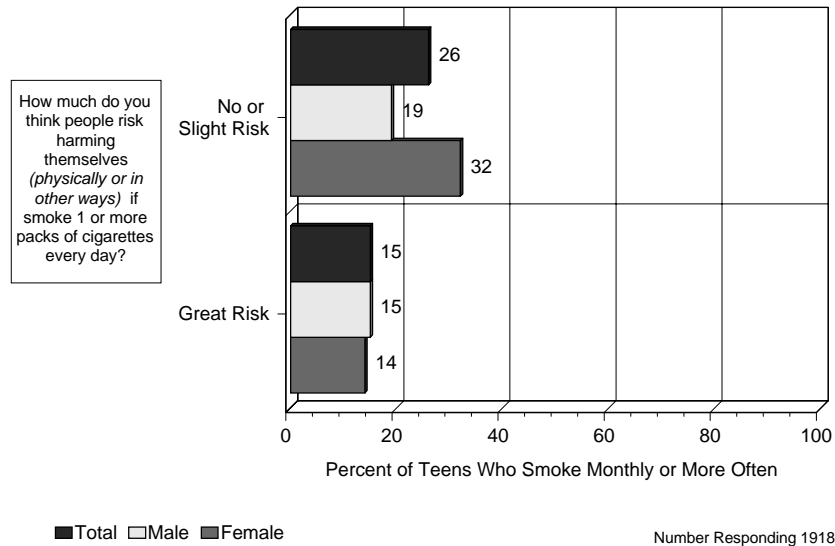


Figure 4-52 shows that teens who believe smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day poses a "great risk" (15%) are less likely to smoke on a monthly basis than teens who feel smoking poses "no" or "slight risk" (26%).

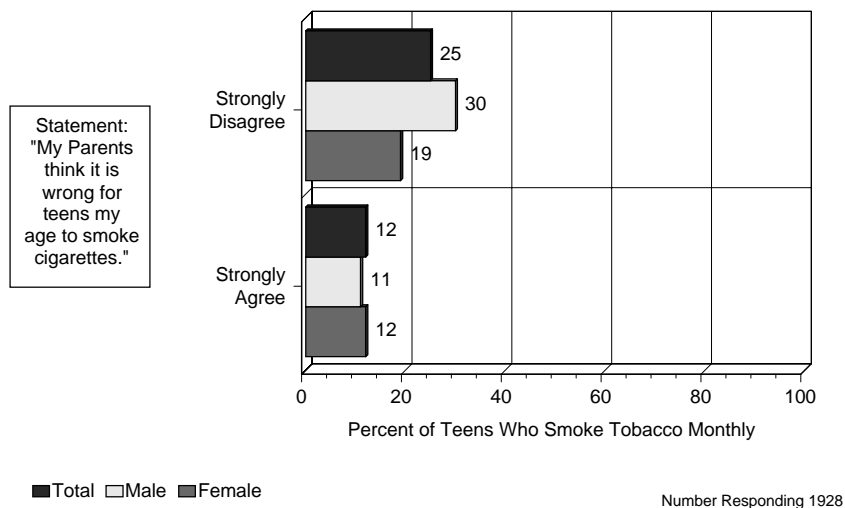
**Figure 4-52: Perceived Risk of Smoking One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day and Monthly Teen Smoking (By Gender)**



The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 54% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 62% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 71% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students surveyed think smoking one or two packs of cigarettes daily carries a great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 47% of local 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 56% of local 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 65% of local 12<sup>th</sup> grade students said they felt doing so has great risk.

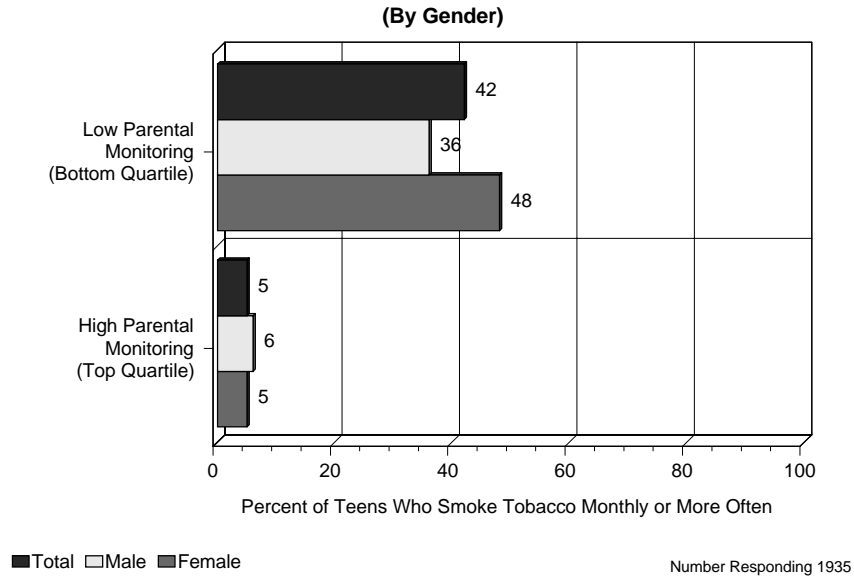
Parents' Role in Teen Tobacco Smoking. As with alcohol, parents are influential in teens' decisions about tobacco smoking. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about tobacco smoking may influence their decision to smoke or not smoke. As Figure 4-53 shows, teens who strongly feel their parents think it's wrong for teens their age to smoke cigarettes are less likely to smoke. Of those who strongly agree their parents think it's wrong, 12% smoke tobacco monthly or more often. Of those who do not believe their parents think it is wrong for teens their age to smoke tobacco, 25% smoke monthly or more often. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about smoking appear to have a greater effect upon males' levels of smoking (30% vs 11%) than females' smoking (19% vs. 12%).

**Figure 4-53: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Levels of Monthly Teen Tobacco Smoking (By Gender)**



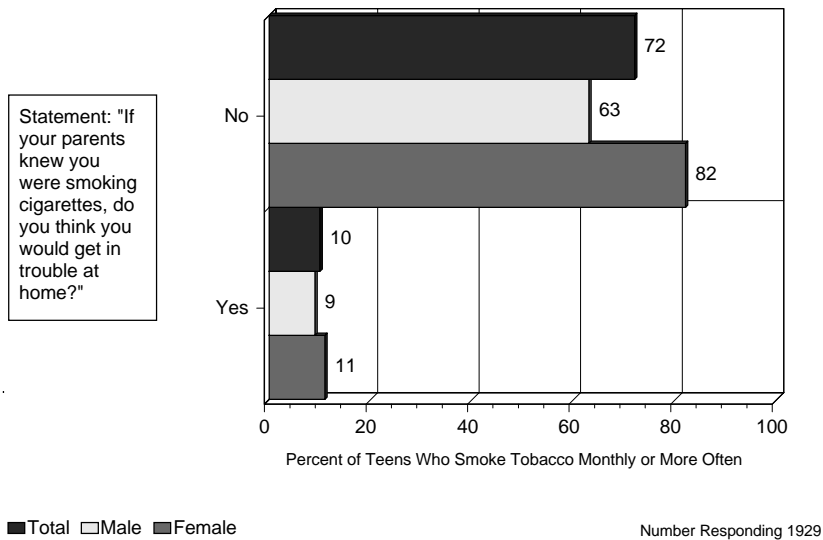
Parental monitoring positively affects levels of teen tobacco smoking. Figure 4-54 shows teens with a high level of parental monitoring (5%) are much less likely to smoke tobacco monthly than are teens with a low level of parental monitoring (42%). Higher levels of parental monitoring show a greater effect on monthly smoking levels for females than for males (a difference of 43% for females vs a 30% difference for males).

**Figure 4-54: Relationship Between Parental Monitoring and Levels of Monthly Teen Tobacco Smoking**



Teens believing they will get in trouble at home also appears to have a strong influence on their behavior. Figure 4-55 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 (63%) 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, 82%; get in trouble, 11%).

**Figure 4-55: Relationship Between Teens' Level of Monthly Smoking and Thinking They'll Get in Trouble at Home (By Gender)**



## Marijuana Use

Following alcohol and tobacco, marijuana is the third most commonly used substance by local teens when considering "any use at all." Locally, 29% of youth have smoked marijuana at some time in the past (middle school, 15%; high school, 35%). Figure 4-56 shows the age at which students first experimented with marijuana. The average reported age students first experimented with marijuana is 13.

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

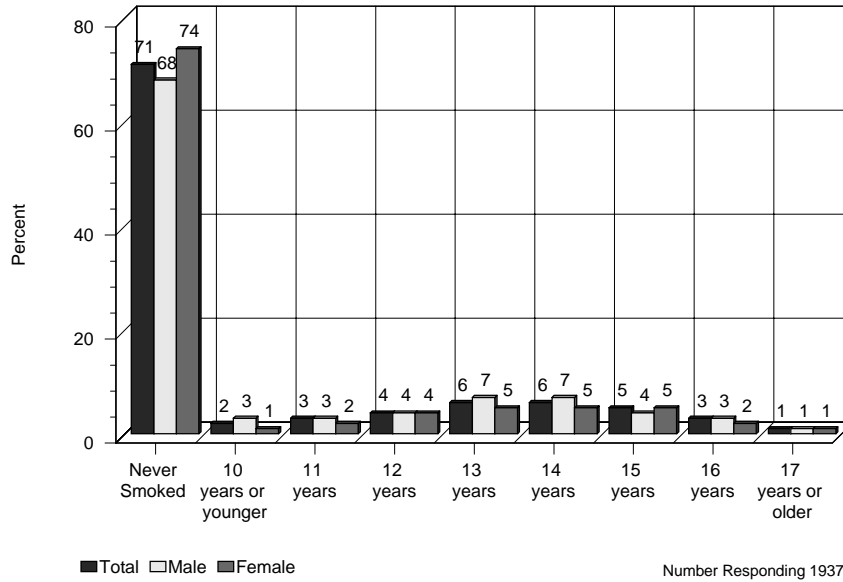


Figure 4-57 shows the breakdown for any marijuana use at all by grade level and gender.

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

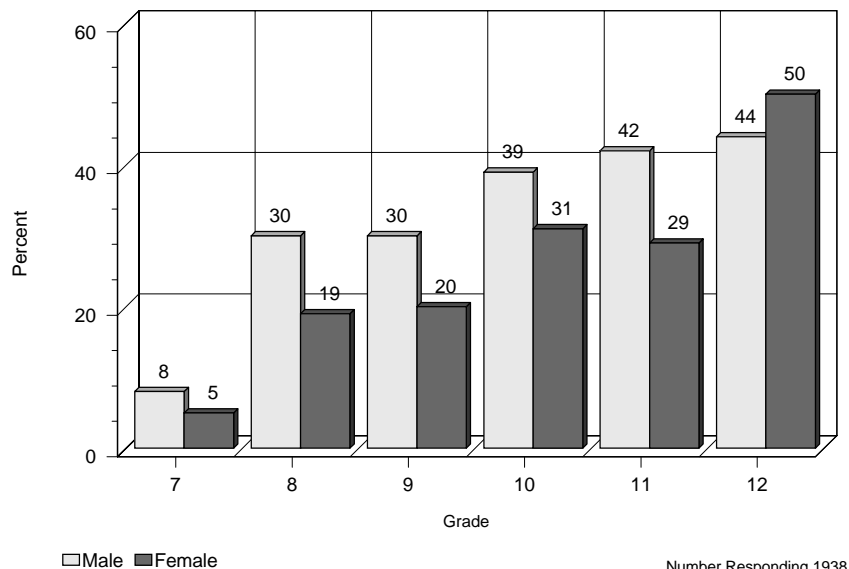
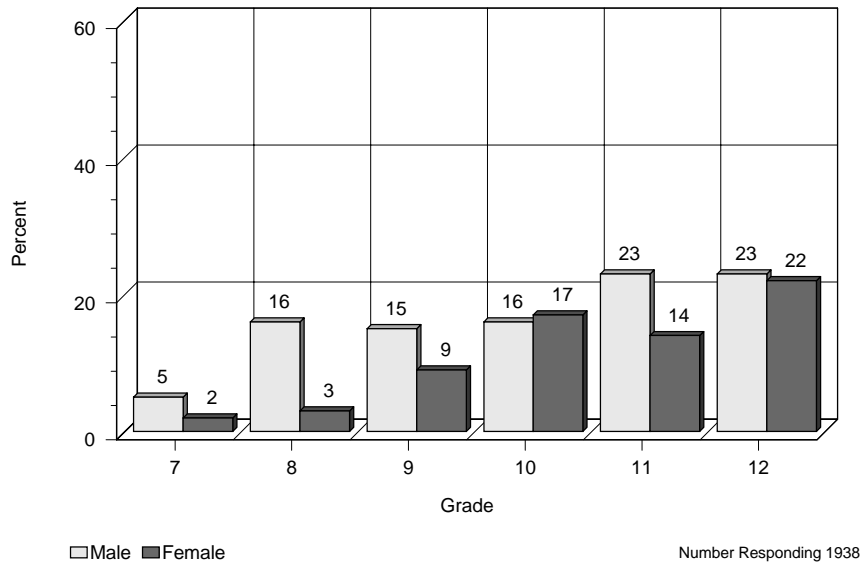


Figure 4-58 shows the breakdown of monthly marijuana use by grade and gender. Overall, 13% of all local youth reported using marijuana on a monthly or more often basis (middle school, 7%; high school, 17%).

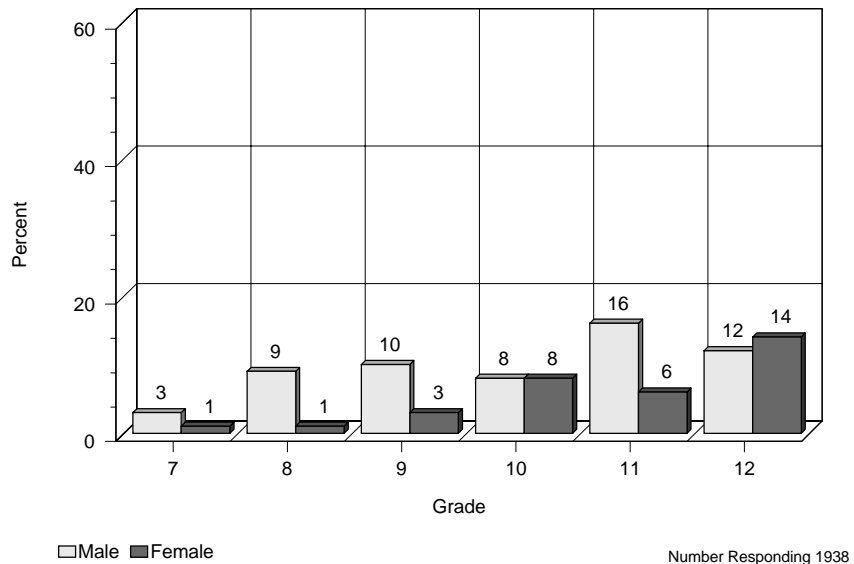
**Figure 4-58: Teens Who Use Marijuana**  
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



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 2<sup>nd</sup> out of 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

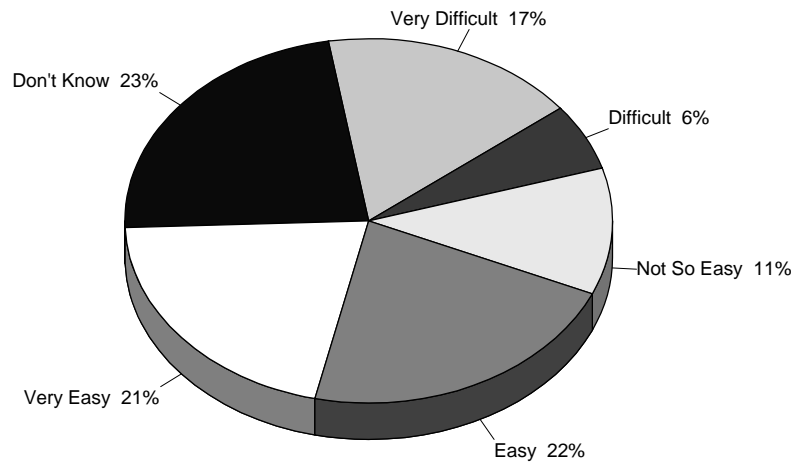
Figure 4-59 shows weekly marijuana use by grade level and gender. Seven percent (7%) of all students reported using marijuana at least once a week (middle school, 4%; high school, 9%). The rate for weekly use increases between middle school and high school for both males and females (middle school males, 6%; high school males, 12%; middle school females, 1%; high school females, 8%). For males, weekly marijuana use peaks in grade 11 (16%). Females' weekly use of marijuana peaks in grade 12 (14%).

**Figure 4-59: Teens Who Use Marijuana**  
(Weekly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



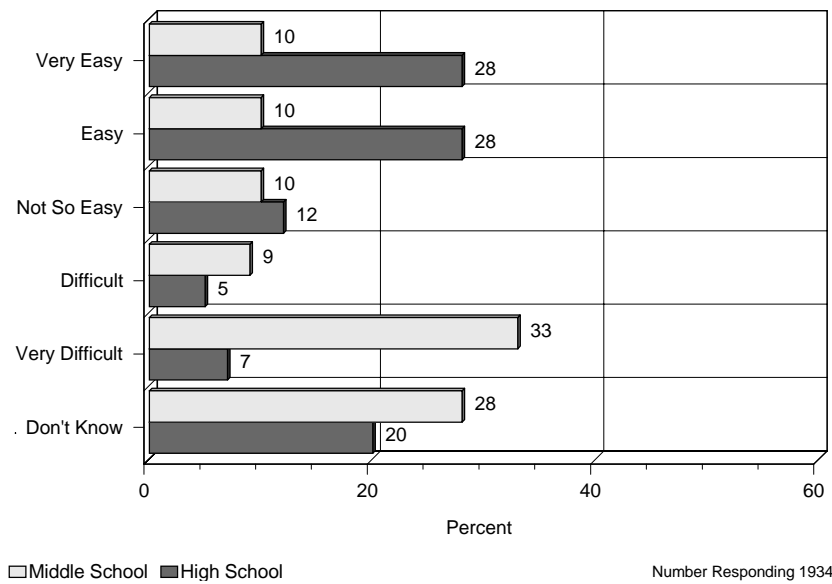
**Obtainability.** Overall, as Figure 4-60 shows, 43% of students tell us it is "very easy" or "easy" to obtain marijuana. Figure 4-61 shows there is a large difference between middle school, where only 20% believe it is "very easy" or "easy" to get marijuana, and high school, where 56% believe it is. One third of middle school students (33%) believe it is "very difficult" to obtain marijuana; only 7% of high school students think so. In middle school, 28% of students don't know how obtainable marijuana is, while in high school, 20% of students don't know.

**Figure 4-60: Obtainability of Marijuana**



Number Responding 1934

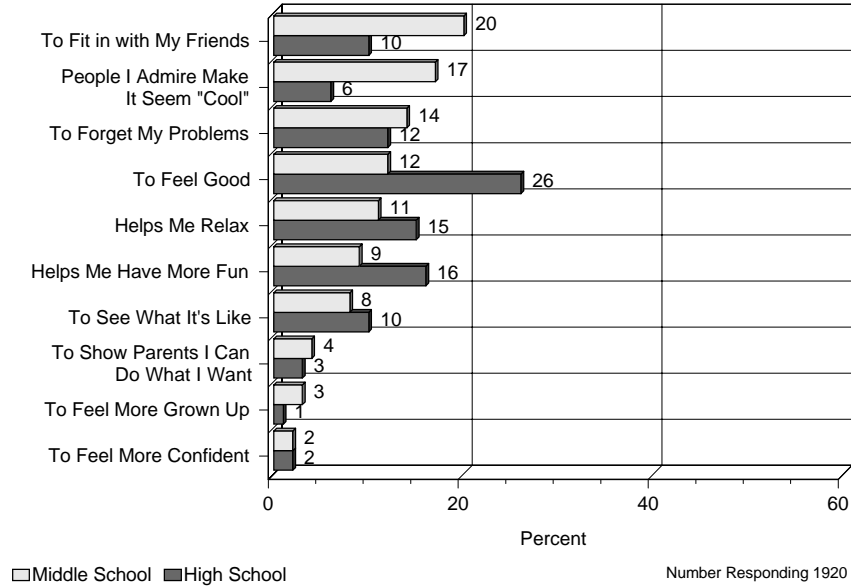
**Figure 4-61: Obtainability of Marijuana (By School Level)**



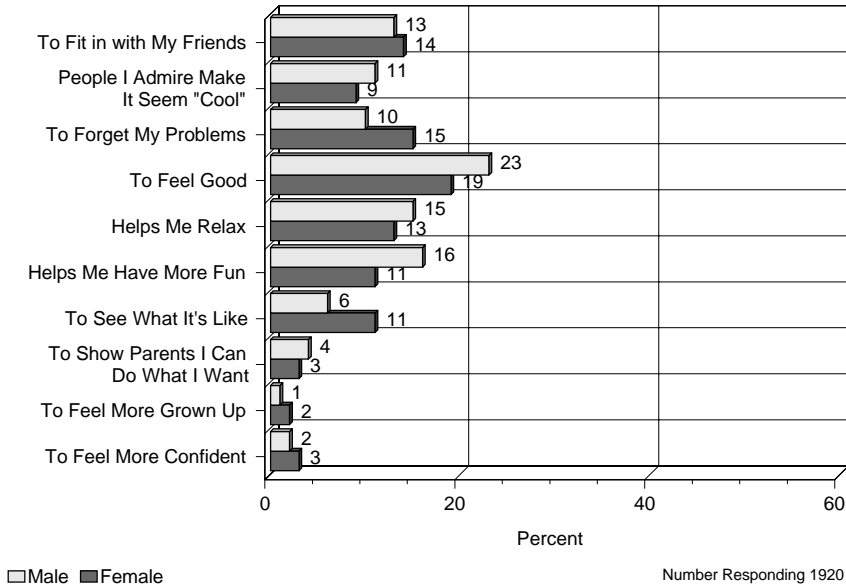
Number Responding 1934

Why Teens Do and Don't Use Marijuana. We asked teens "What do you think is the *one main reason why teens your age use marijuana?*" The most common reason chosen was "It helps them feel good." (21%). Figure 4-62 shows the breakdown of responses by school level. Figure 4-63 shows the breakdown by gender.

**Figure 4-62: One Main Reason Why Teens Use Marijuana (By School Level)**

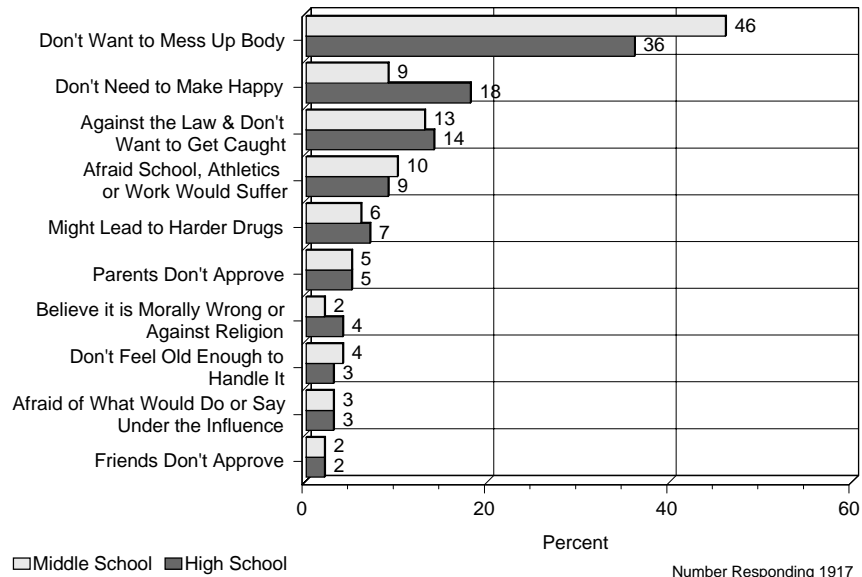


**Figure 4-63: One Main Reason Why Teens Use Marijuana (By Gender)**

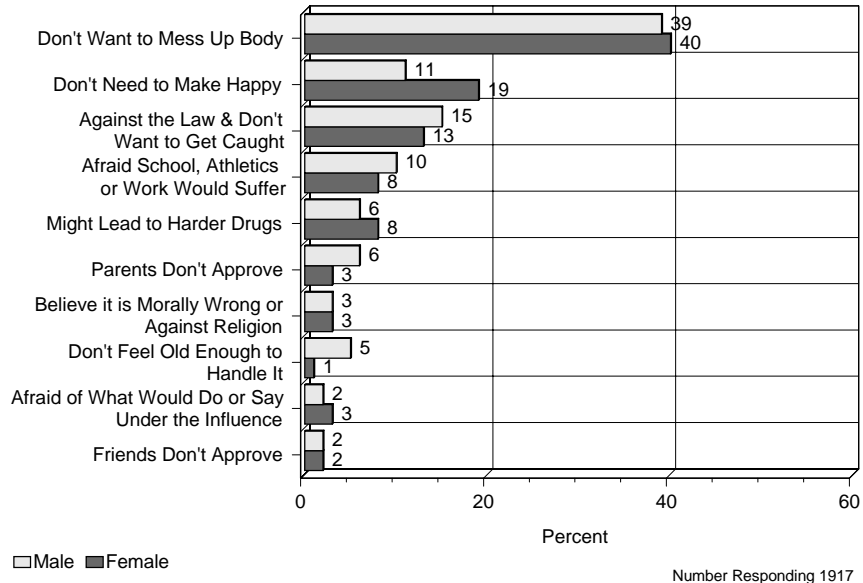


It is also useful to know why teens don't use marijuana. We asked teens "What do you think is the **one main reason** why teens your age don't use marijuana?" Overall, 40% of local teens indicated they felt teens their age did not use marijuana because "They don't want to mess up their bodies." Others said teens did not use marijuana because "They don't need it to make them happy." (15%) and "It's against the law and they're afraid they might get caught." (14%). Figure 4-64 shows the breakdown of responses by school level and Figure 4-65 shows the breakdown by gender.

**Figure 4-64: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Use Marijuana (By School Level)**

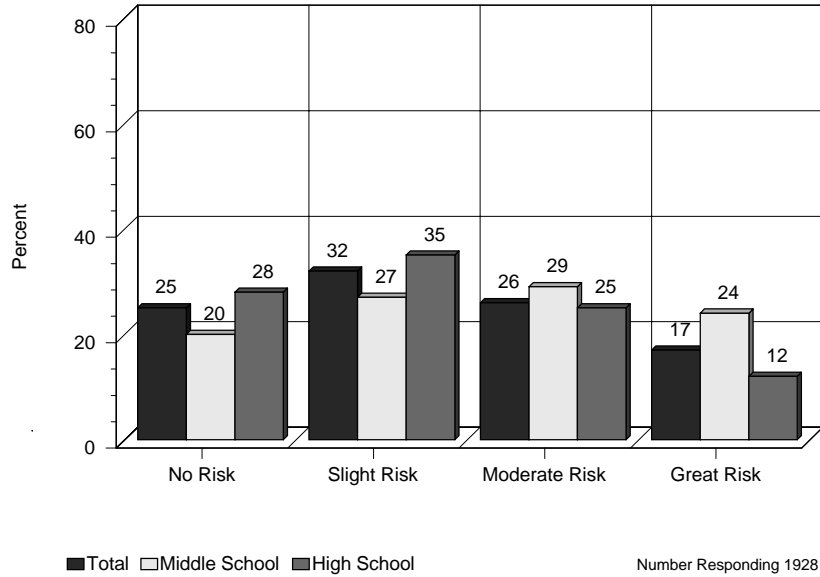


**Figure 4-65: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Use Marijuana (By Gender)**



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?" Fifty-seven percent (57%) of students responded they felt this experimentation with marijuana carried "no" or "slight risk" (middle school, 47%; high school, 63%). Figure 4-66 shows responses broken down by school level. Figure 4-67 shows responses broken down by gender.

**Figure 4-66: Perceived Risk: Try Marijuana Once or Twice (By School Level)**



**Figure 4-67: Perceived Risk: Try Marijuana Once or Twice (By Gender)**

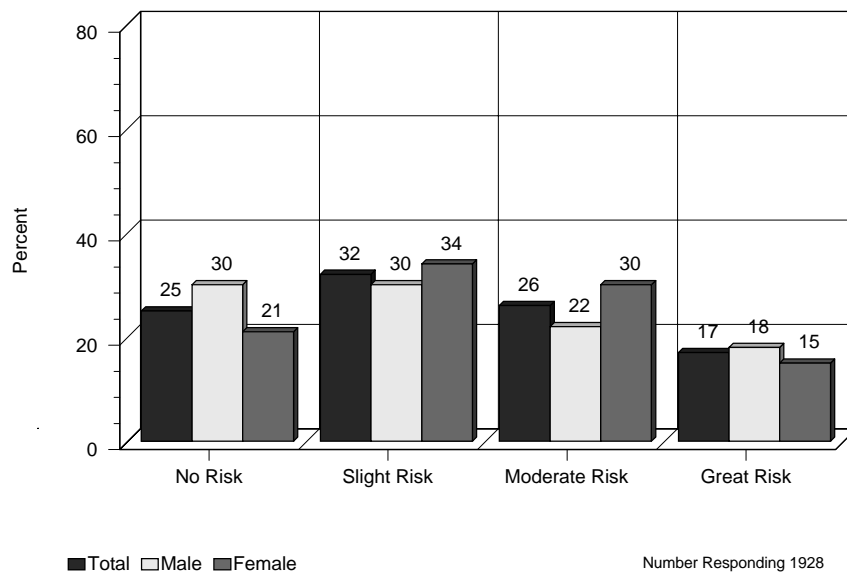
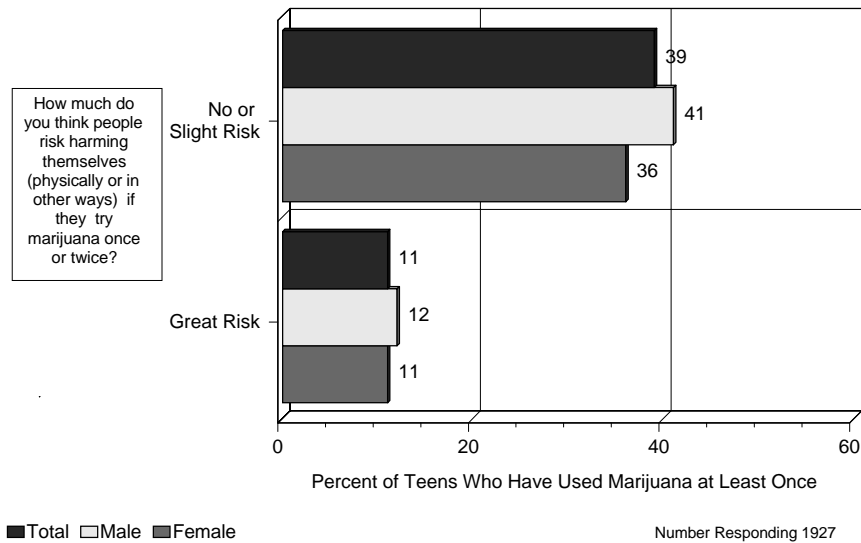


Figure 4-68 shows 39% of those who consider trying marijuana once or twice to be of “no” or “slight risk” have used marijuana at least once. Of those who consider this to be of “great risk,” 11% report using marijuana at least once.

**Figure 4-68: 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 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 20% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 17% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students surveyed think trying marijuana carries a great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 19% of local 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 12% of local 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 9% of local 12<sup>th</sup> 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 4-69 shows 20% consider regular use of marijuana to be of "no" or "slight risk."

**Figure 4-69: Perceived Risk: Smoke Marijuana Regularly (By School Level)**

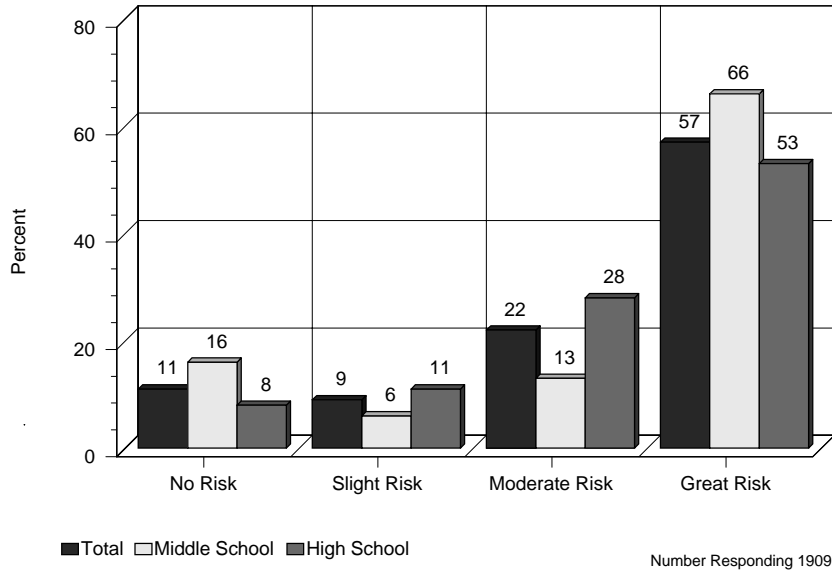
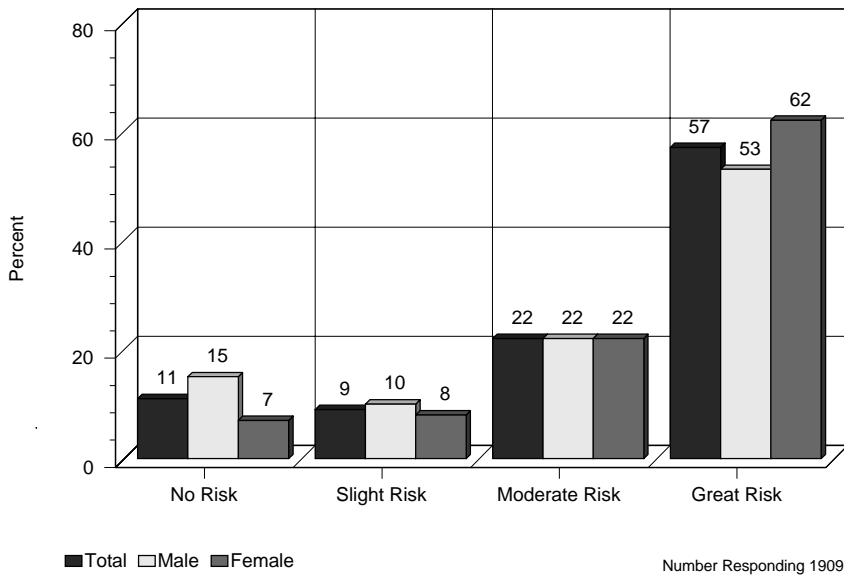


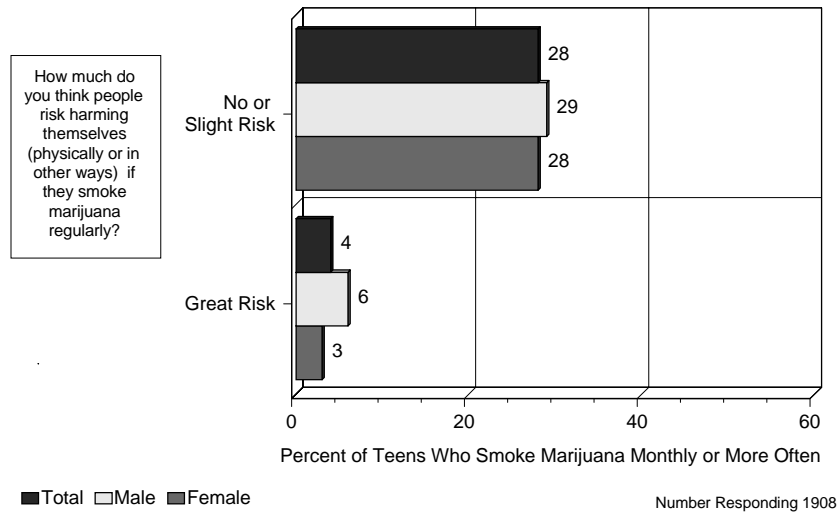
Figure 4-70 shows the responses broken down by gender.

**Figure 4-70: 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 4-71 shows 28% of those who consider smoking marijuana regularly to be of "no" or "slight risk" smoke monthly or more often. Only 4% of those who consider smoking to be of great risk use marijuana monthly or more often.

**Figure 4-71: 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 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 66% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 59% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students think regular marijuana smoking carries a great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 61% of local 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 52% of local 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 46% of local 12<sup>th</sup> 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. Ten percent (10%) of local teens reported having used inhalants at some time in the past (middle school, 11%; high school, 8%).

We asked students "If you have used inhalants, how old were you the first time you used inhalants?" As Figure 4-72 shows, the average reported age at which youth first experimented with inhalants is 12.

**Figure 4-72: Age Students First Experimented with Inhalants (By Gender)**

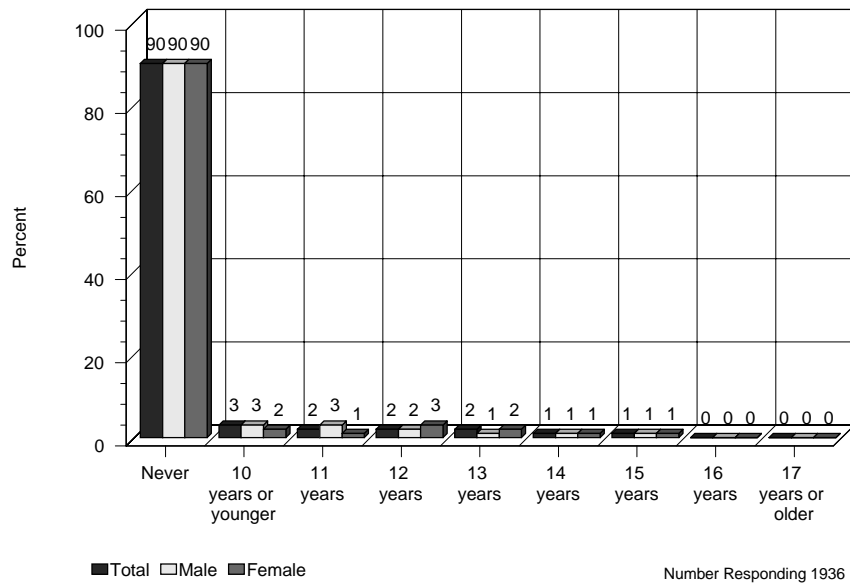
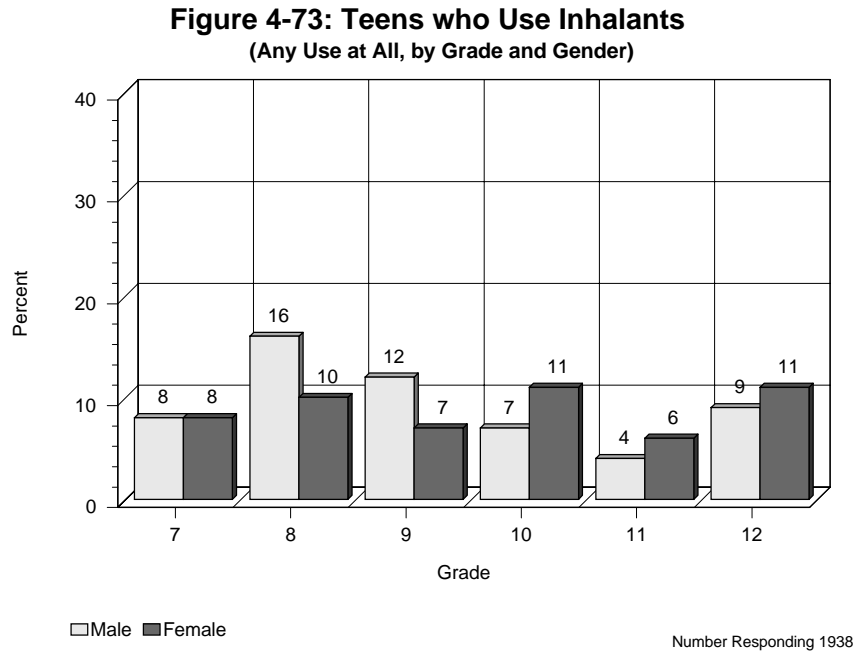


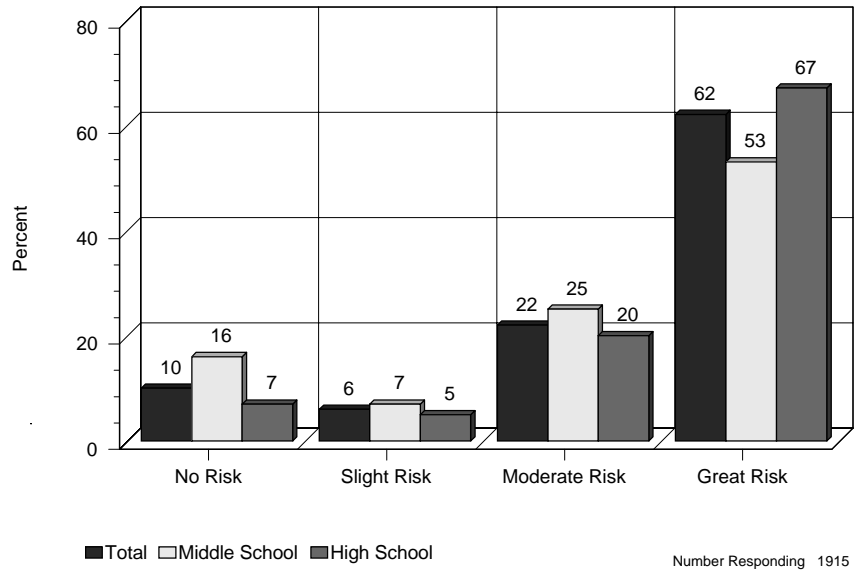
Figure 4-73 shows the breakdown for any inhalant use at all, by grade level and gender. One percent (1%) of local youth reported using inhalants monthly or more often (middle school 2%; high school, 1%).



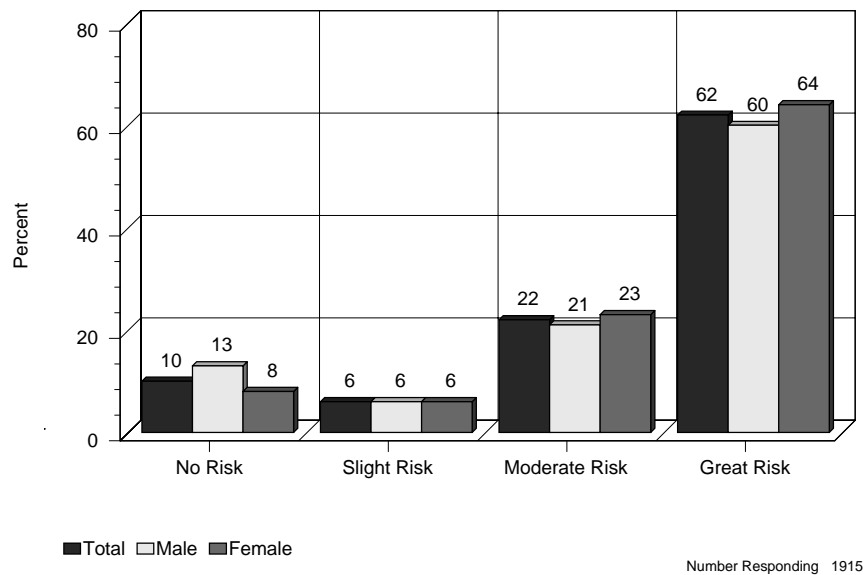
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (1998) found 16.0% (N.H. 24.7%) of the nation's high school youth (*grades 9-12*) have sniffed or inhaled intoxicating substances at least once in their lifetime. New Hampshire ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> out of 33 states surveyed (Centers for Disease Control and 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 4-74 shows that 16% of local youth feel that doing so has "no" or "slight risk" (middle school, 23%; high school, 12%). More high school students (67%) than middle school students (53%) feel using inhalants carries "great risk." Figure 4-75 shows the responses broken down by gender.

**Figure 4-74: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use (By School Level)**

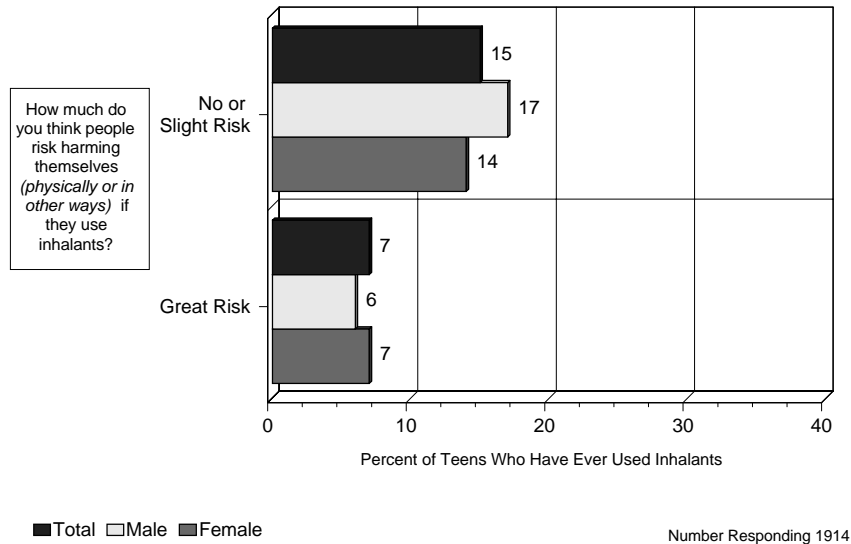


**Figure 4-75: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use (By Gender)**



TAP data indicate youth who perceive inhalant use as less risky are more likely to use inhalants. Figure 4-76 shows 15% of those who consider inhalant use to be of "no" or "slight risk" use inhalants compared with 7% who consider inhalant use to be of "great risk."

**Figure 4-76: Perceived Risk of Inhalant Use and Any Use of Inhalants (By Gender)**



The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 asked 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders about the perceived harmfulness of inhalants. Their data found 40% of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students and 48% of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students think trying inhalants once or twice carries great risk (Johnson et al., 1999). TAP found 59% of local 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, 65% of local 10<sup>th</sup> grade students and 67% of local 12<sup>th</sup> grade students said they felt doing so has great risk. Awareness of the risks of inhalant use appears to grow as teens get older for both genders.

### **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 and the use of these drugs should be acknowledged and taken seriously. The table below shows rates of use broken down by any use at all, monthly use, and weekly use by local teens. This information can also be viewed in graph form in the first section of Chapter Four, **Overall Alcohol and Drug Use**.

<b>Type of Drug</b>	<b>Any Use At All</b>	<b>Monthly Use</b>	<b>Weekly Use</b>
Hallucinogens	11%	3%	0%
Uppers	11%	4%	1%
Cocaine or crack	7%	2%	1%
Chewing Tobacco	6%	1%	0%
Downers	5%	1%	0%
Narcotics	5%	1%	0%

## Treatment for Alcohol and/or Other Drug Abuse

We asked students "Has anyone ever suggested you need help or treatment for alcohol or other drug abuse?" Figure 4-77 shows those students at each grade level who answered "yes" to this question. Note the gradual increase of yes responses with each grade level.

**Figure 4-77: Teens Told They Need Treatment for Alcohol and/or Other Drug Abuse**  
(By Grade and Gender)

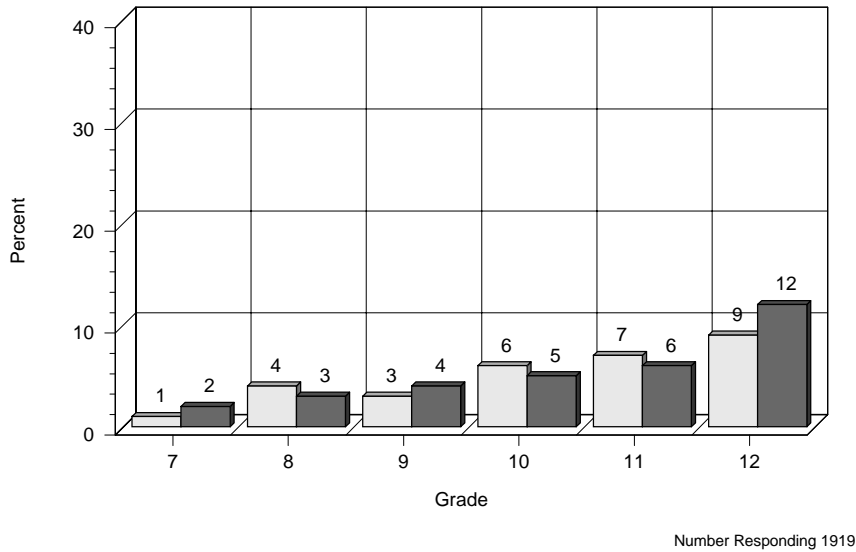


Figure 4-78 shows where students have received treatment for drug and/or alcohol abuse, for those 35 students who indicated they have received treatment in the past.

**Figure 4-78: Where Teens Received Treatment for Alcohol and/or Other Drug Abuse**  
(For Those 35 Students Who Have Received Treatment)

