

Why Teens Drink and Why They Don't Drink

We asked teens, "If you drink alcohol, what is the one main reason why you do?" The most common reasons chosen were: "I like the feeling of getting 'buzzed' and/or 'drunk'" (47%), "It helps me have fun with my friends" (25%), and "It helps me relax" (12%). More high school students than middle school students and more males than females reported the main reason they drink is they like the feeling of being "buzzed" or "drunk" (high school 49%; middle school, 36%; males, 53% and females, 41%). Figure 4-42 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level.

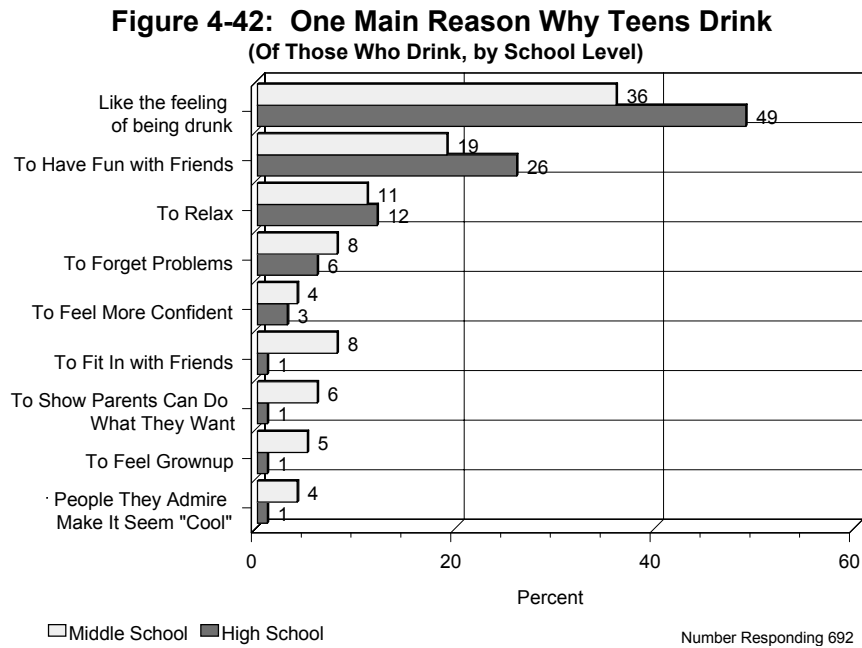
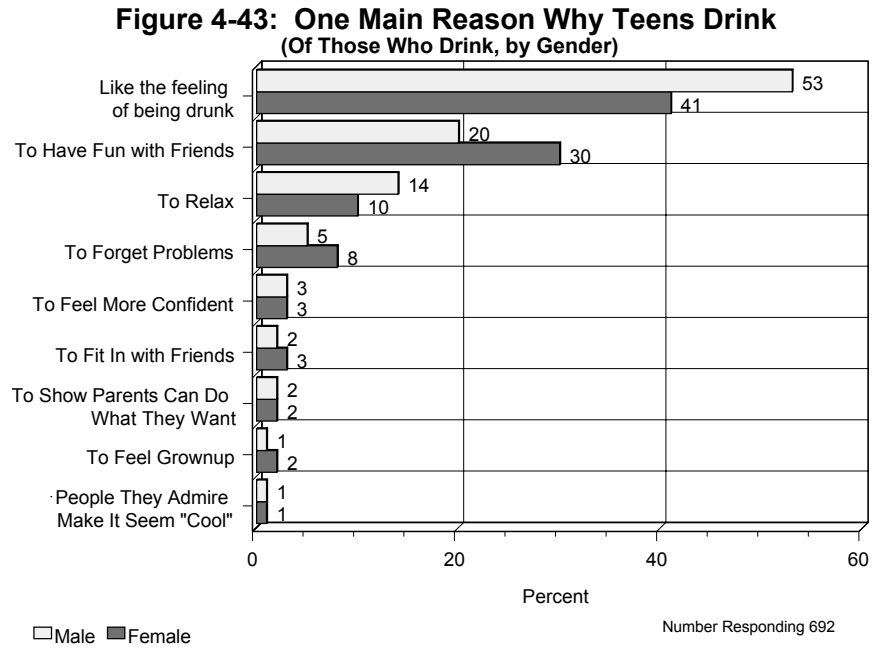


Figure 4-43 shows the breakdown by gender.



It is also good to know why teens say they *don't* drink. We asked teens, *"If you don't drink alcohol, what is the one main reason why you don't?"* The three most frequent responses were: *"I don't want to mess up my body"* (34%), *"I don't need it to make me happy"* (20%), and *"My school, athletic or work performance would suffer"* (16%). 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, 25%). More high school students (26%) than middle school students (15%) said they don't drink because they don't need it to make them happy. Figure 4-44 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level.

Figure 4-44: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Drink
(Of Those Who Don't Drink, by School Level)

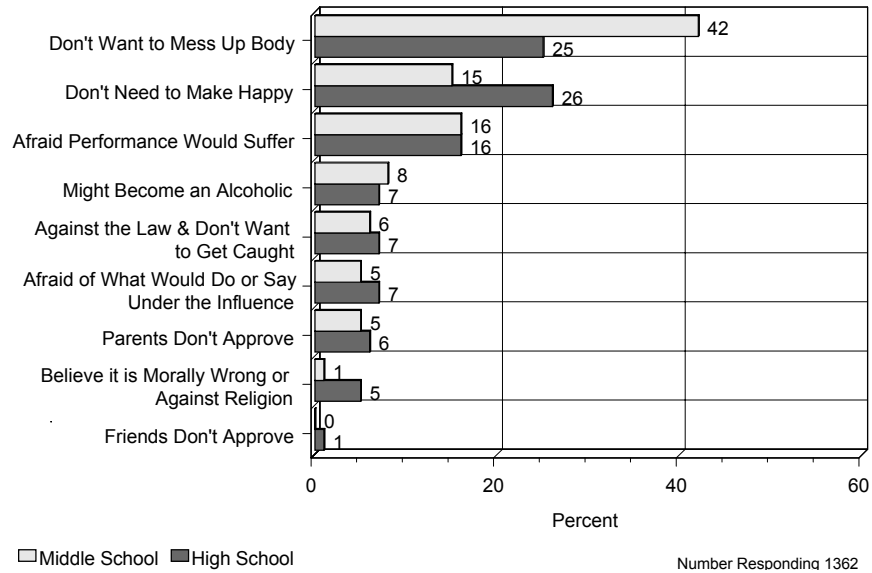
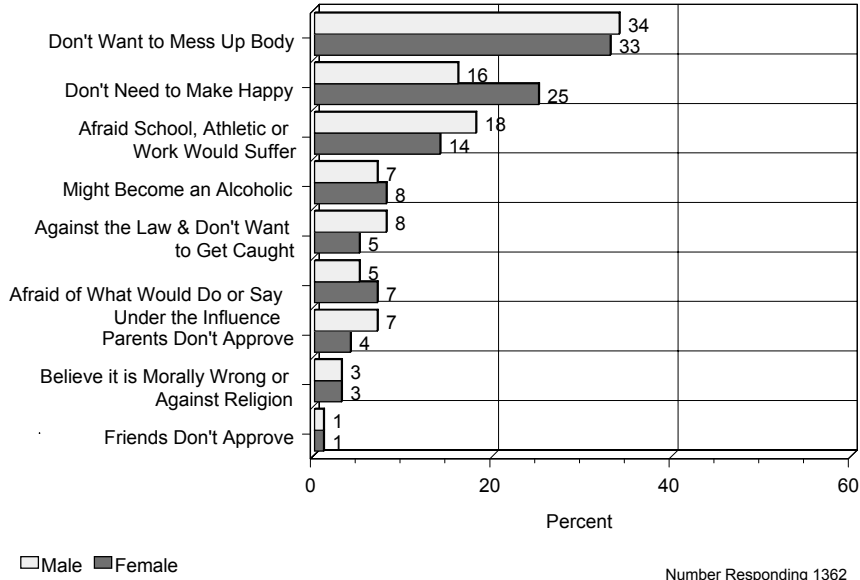


Figure 4-45 shows more females than males report they don't drink because they don't need it to make them happy (females, 25% and males, 16%). There are no major differences in other responses.

Figure 4-45: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Drink
(Of Those Who Don't Drink, by Gender)



Parents' Role in Teen Drinking

Studies have found that parents can play a large role in teens' decisions about drinking alcohol (Ary et al., 1999; Ary & Duncan, 1999; Flannery & Williams, 1999; Flannery, Williams & Vazsonyi, 1999). Research has also suggested parental monitoring can be an important factor in preventing adolescent problem behavior (Ary & Duncan, 1999; Flannery & Williams, 1999; Rodgers, 1999). As Figure 4-46 shows, teens who feel strongly that their parents would not approve of teens their age may be less likely to drink. Of those who feel strongly that their parents would not approve, 14% 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, 38% drink monthly or more often. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values appear to influence both females' and males' levels of monthly drinking.

Figure 4-46: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Levels of Monthly Teen Drinking (By Gender)

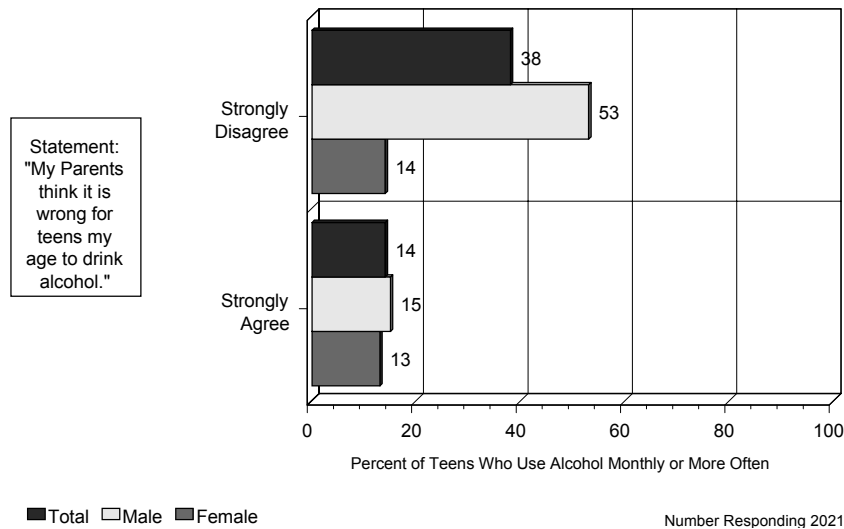
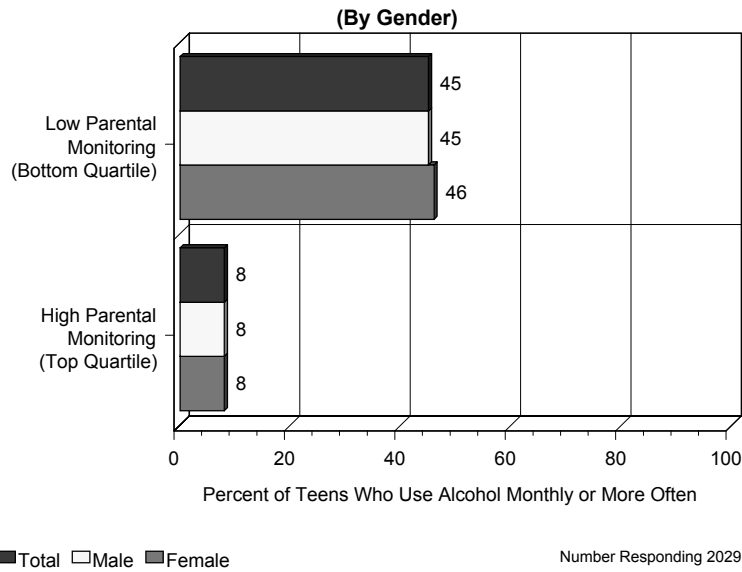


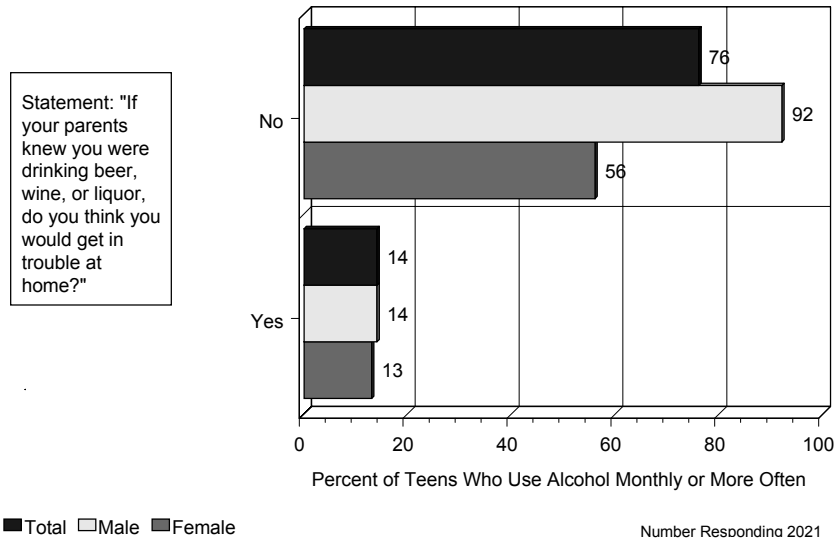
Figure 4-47 shows parental monitoring is an important reason why local teens do not drink. Parental monitoring refers to parents' supervision and awareness of their child's activities (see Chapter 7 pp. 129-130). Forty-six percent (46%) of females with low monitoring drink alcohol on a monthly or more 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 45% of the males with low monitoring drank monthly or more often.

Figure 4-47: Relationship Between Parental Monitoring and Levels of Monthly Teen Drinking



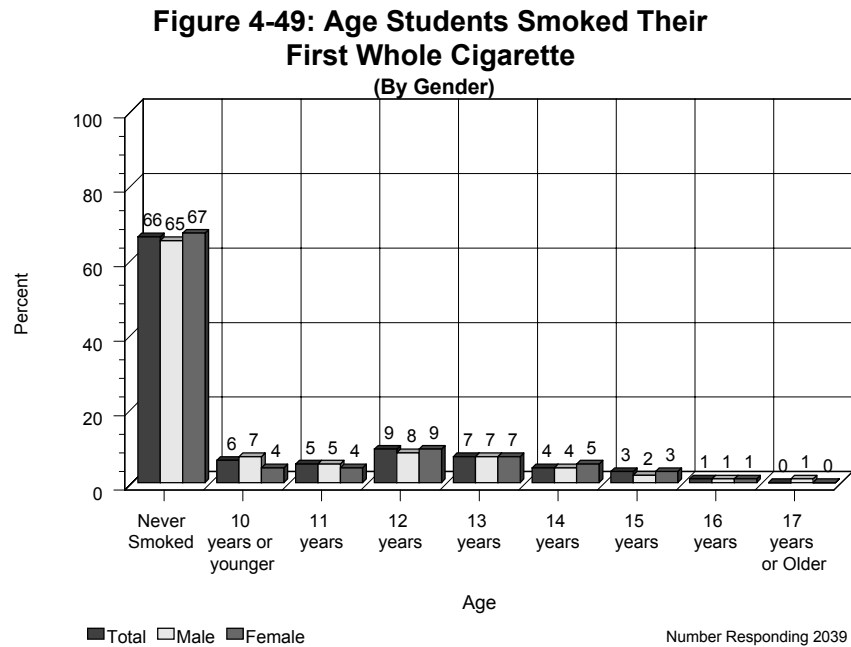
Another strong factor in influencing local teen drinking is whether or not teens believe they will get in trouble at home if they drink. As Figure 4-48 shows, both males and females are much less likely to drink alcohol on a monthly or more often basis if they believe their drinking will get them in trouble at home (76% vs. 14%).

Figure 4-48: Relationship Between Monthly Teen Drinking and Thinking They Will Get In Trouble At Home (By Gender)



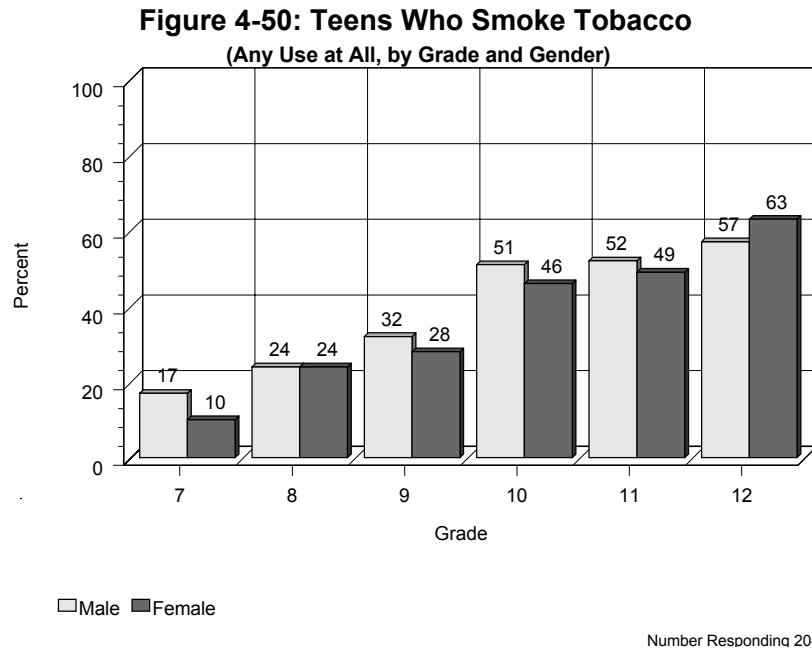
Tobacco Use

Smoking tobacco is one of the most harmful risk factors affecting a person's health. Studies have found teens who smoke cigarettes are more likely to use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs (Merrill et al., 1999; Lewinsohn et al., 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. Figure 4-49 shows the age students smoked their first whole cigarette.

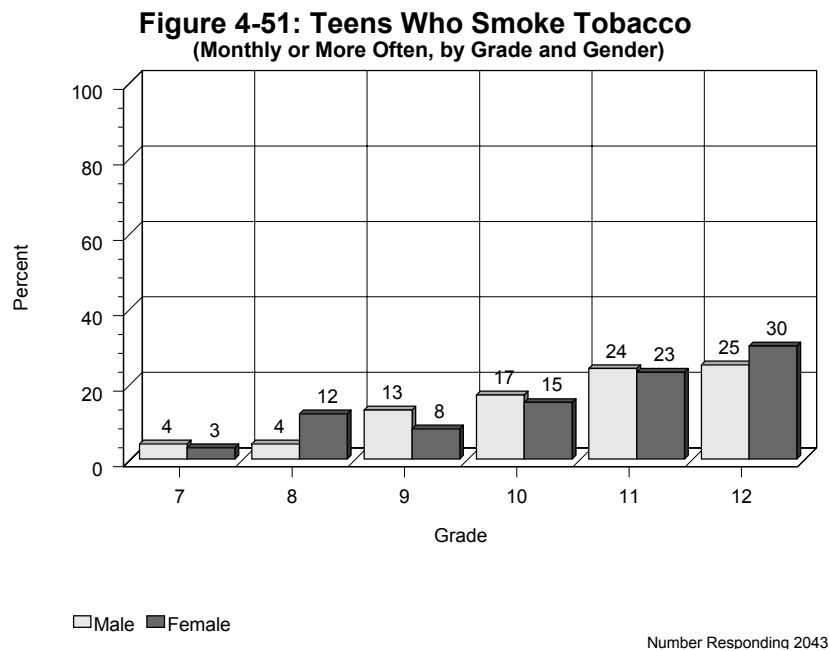


A recent study by the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey found nationally, 70.2% (N.H., 69.1%) of high school youth (*grades 9-12*) have tried cigarette smoking (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998). New Hampshire ranks 20th out of the 33 states surveyed by the CDC.

Figure 4-50 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, 57% of males and 63% of females have smoked tobacco at least once in their lives.

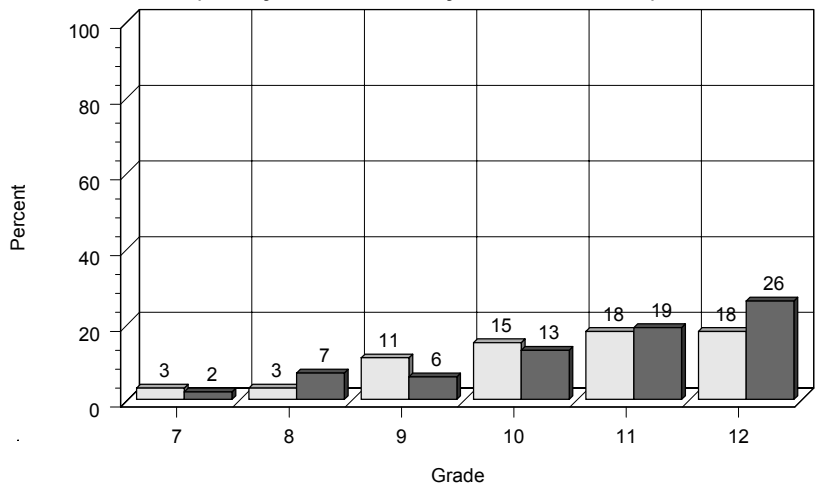


Thirteen percent (13%) of local teens reported smoking tobacco monthly or more often (middle school, 6%, high school, 18%, male, 13% and female 14%). Figure 4-51 shows the monthly use of smoking tobacco, on the basis of gender and grade level.



Eleven percent (11%) of students surveyed report they smoke weekly or more often. Figure 4-52 shows in the 12th grade, 26% of females and 18% 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 than are middle school students (middle school, 4% and high school, 15%). Weekly tobacco smoking by males dramatically increases between middle school (3%) and high school (15%); tobacco smoking by females also increases substantially (middle school females, 5% and high school females, 15%).

Figure 4-52: Teens Who Smoke Tobacco
(Weekly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



□ Male ■ Female

Number Responding 2043

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 4-53 shows all responses broken down by school level. Figure 4-54 shows responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-53: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day (By School Level)

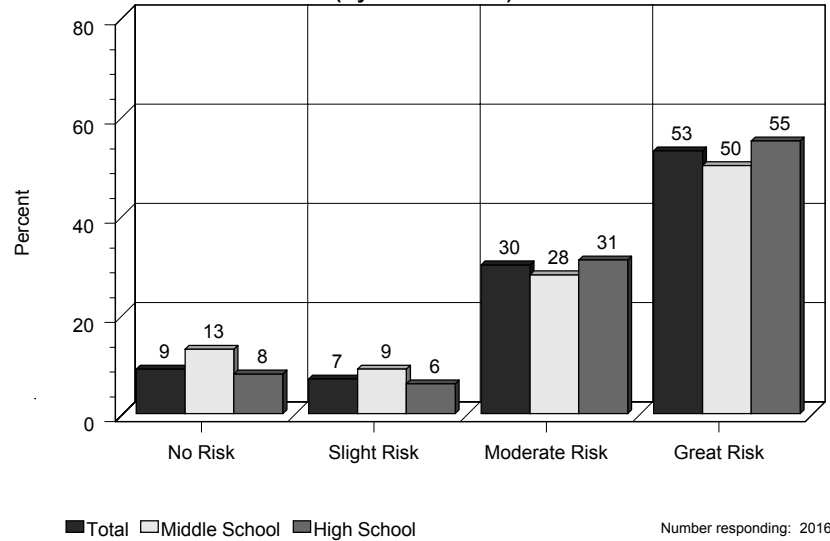


Figure 4-54: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day (By Gender)

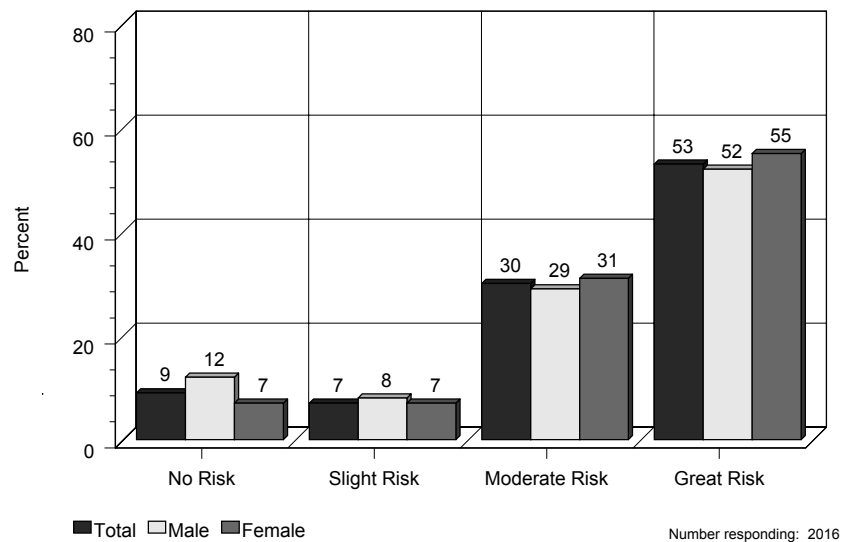
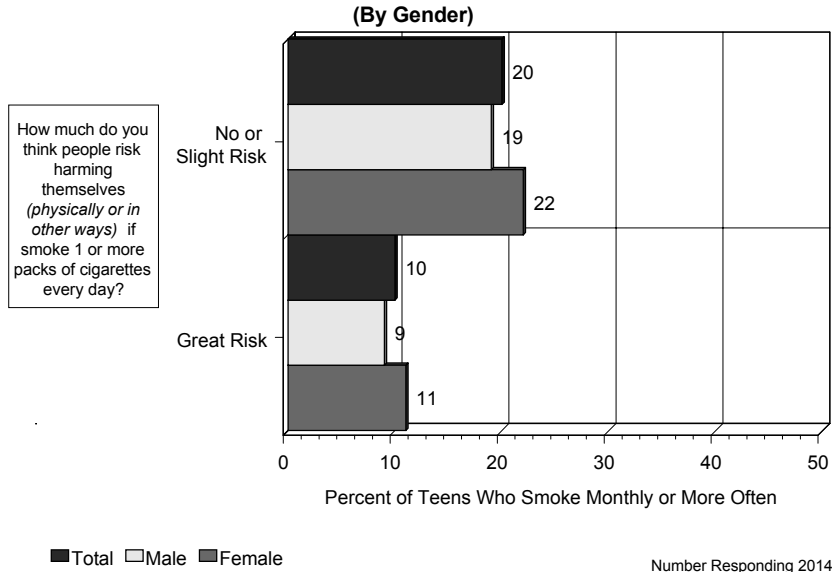


Figure 4-55 shows the perceived risk of smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day verses smoking monthly or more often. Twenty percent (20%) of those who consider smoking to be of “no” or “slight” risk smoke monthly or more often. Of those who consider smoking to be of great risk, 10% smoke monthly or more often.

Figure 4-55: Perceived Risk: Smoke One or More Packs of Cigarettes a Day and Monthly Teen Smoking

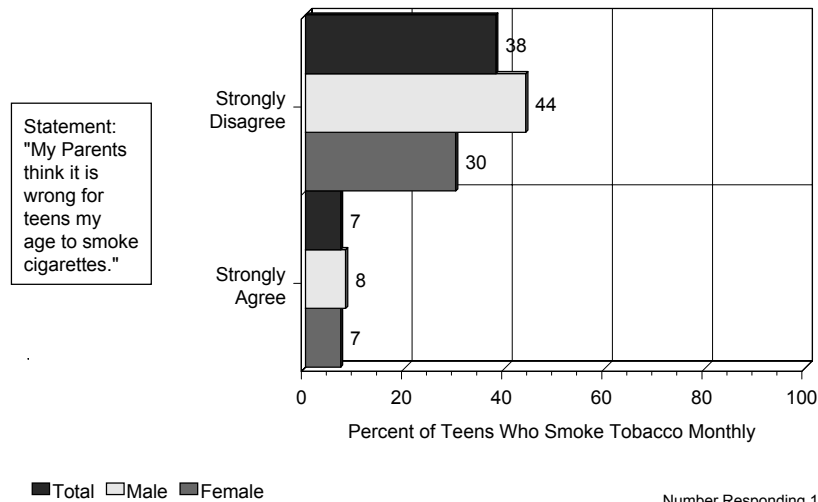


The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 54% of 8th grade students, 62% of 10th grade students and 71% of 12th grade students surveyed think smoking one or two packs of cigarettes daily carries a great risk (Johnson, O'Malley and Bachman, 1999). TAP found 51% of local 8th grade students, 53% of local 10th grade students and 60% of local 12th grade students said they felt doing so has great risk.

Parents' Role in Teen Tobacco Smoking

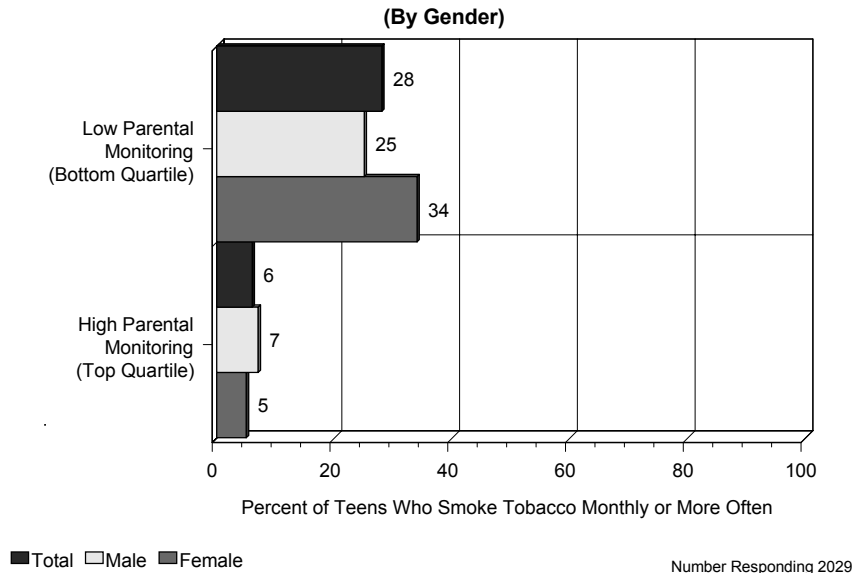
As with alcohol, parents are influential in teens' decisions about tobacco smoking. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about tobacco smoking may influence their decision to smoke or not smoke. As Figure 4-56 shows, teens who strongly feel their parents think it's wrong for teens their age to smoke cigarettes are much less likely to smoke. Of those who strongly agree their parents think it's wrong, 7% 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, 38% smoke monthly or more often. Teens' perceptions of their parents' values about smoking have an effect upon both females' and males' levels of monthly smoking.

Figure 4-56: Relationship Between Teens' Perceptions of Parental Values and Levels of Monthly Teen Tobacco Smoking (By Gender)



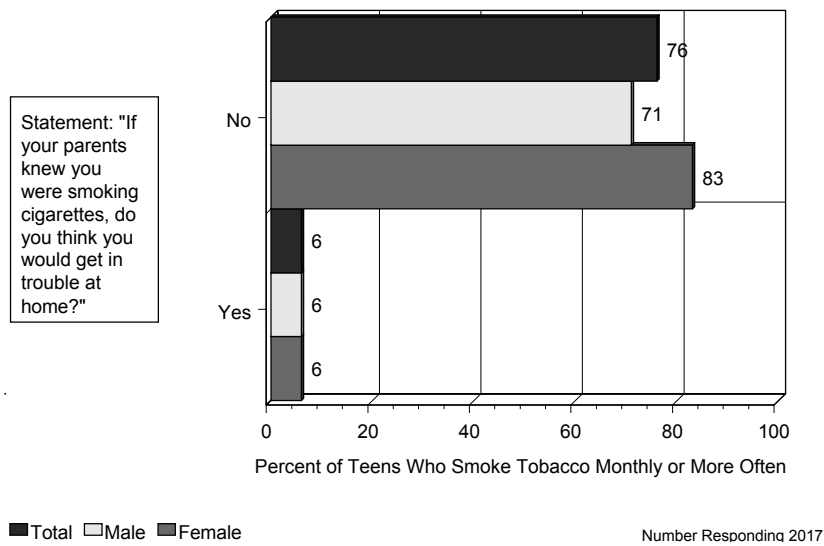
Parental monitoring also positively affects levels of teen tobacco smoking. Figure 4-57 shows teens with a high level of parental monitoring are less likely to smoke tobacco monthly (6%) than are teens with a low level of parental monitoring (28%). Higher levels of parental monitoring show a greater effect on monthly smoking levels for females than for males (a difference of 29% for females vs. an 18% difference for males).

Figure 4-57: 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 4-58 shows the responses of students to the question, “If your parents knew you were smoking cigarettes, do you think you would get in trouble at home?” Males who did not think they would get in trouble at home were far more likely (71%) to smoke tobacco on a monthly basis than were those who did think they would be in trouble (6%). Females were also much more likely to smoke monthly if they thought they would not get in trouble (not get in trouble, 83%; get in trouble, 6%).

Figure 4:58: 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 reported substance used by local youth when considering "any use at all" with 29% of all students reporting having used marijuana at some time (middle school, 10% and high school, 42%). Figure 4-59 shows the breakdown for any marijuana use at all by gender and grade level.

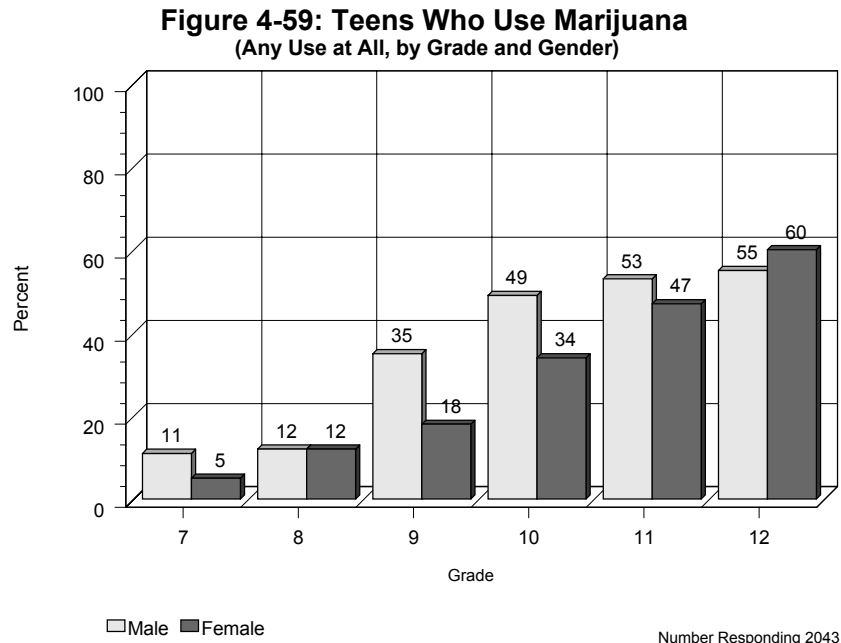
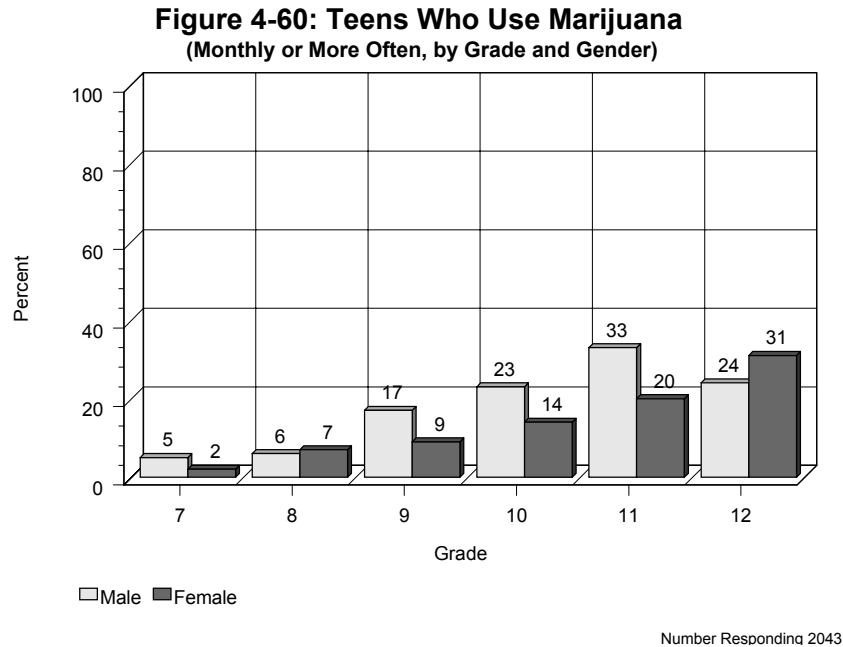


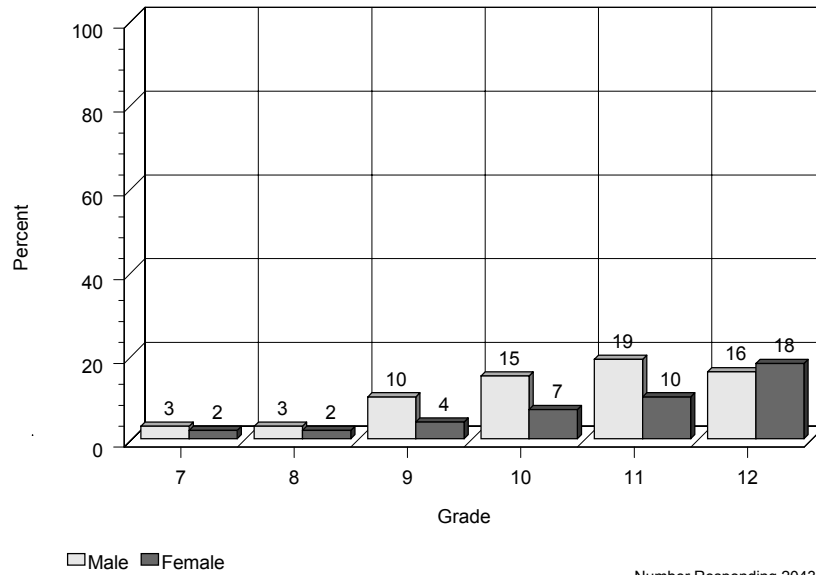
Figure 4-60 shows the breakdown of monthly marijuana use by grade and gender. Overall, 14% of all local youth reported using marijuana on a monthly or more often basis (middle school, 5% and high school, 20%).



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 4-61 shows weekly marijuana use by grade and gender. Eight percent (8%) of all students reported using marijuana at least once a week (middle school 2% and high school 12%). That makes the prevalence of weekly marijuana use (8%) slightly higher than weekly use of alcohol (7%). The rate for males' weekly use dramatically increased between middle school and high school (middle school males, 3% and high school males, 15%). The rate for females also increased dramatically (middle school, 2% and high school, 9%). For males, weekly marijuana use peaks in grade 11 (19%). Females' weekly use of marijuana peaks in grade 12 (18%).

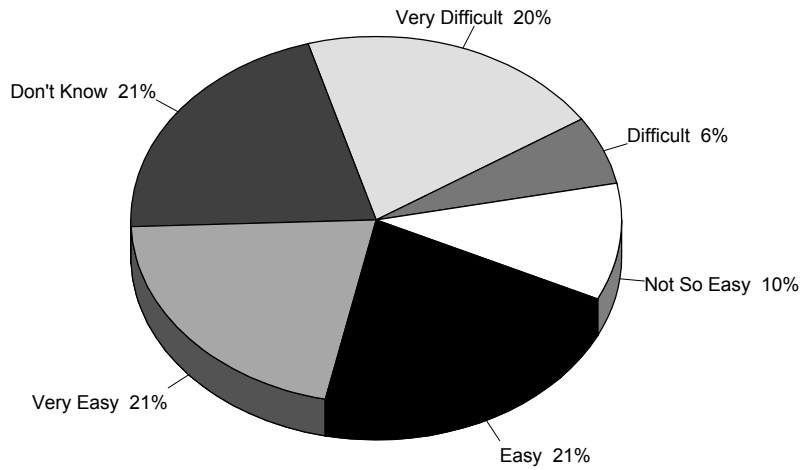
Figure 4-61: Teens Who Use Marijuana
(Weekly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



Obtainability of Marijuana

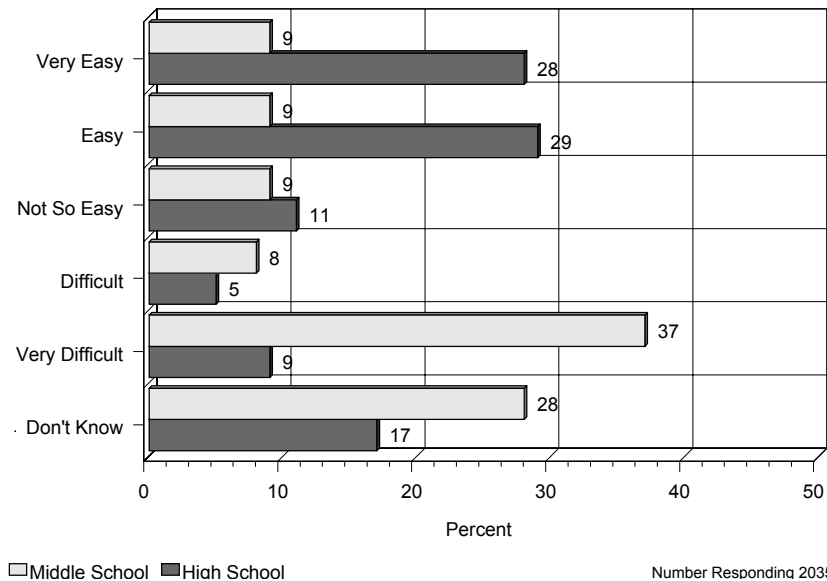
Overall, as Figure 4-62 shows, 42% of students tell us it was "very easy" or "easy" to obtain marijuana. Figure 4-63 shows there is a large difference between middle school, where only 18% believe it is "very easy" or "easy" to get marijuana, and high school, where 57% believe it is. In middle school 28% of students don't know how obtainable marijuana is, while in high school, 17% of students don't know.

Figure 4-62: Obtainability of Marijuana



Number Responding 2035

Figure 4-63: Obtainability of Marijuana (By School Level)



Number Responding 2035

Why Teens Do and Don't Use Marijuana

We asked teens *"What is the one main reason you use marijuana?"* Overall, the three most common reasons chosen were: *"I like the feeling of getting 'buzzed' and/or 'high'"* (57%), *"It helps me have more fun with my friends"* (18%) and *"It helps me relax"* (13%). Figure 4-64 shows the breakdown of all responses by school level. Figure 4-65 shows all responses by gender.

Figure 4-64: One Main Reason Why Teens Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Use Marijuana, by School Level)

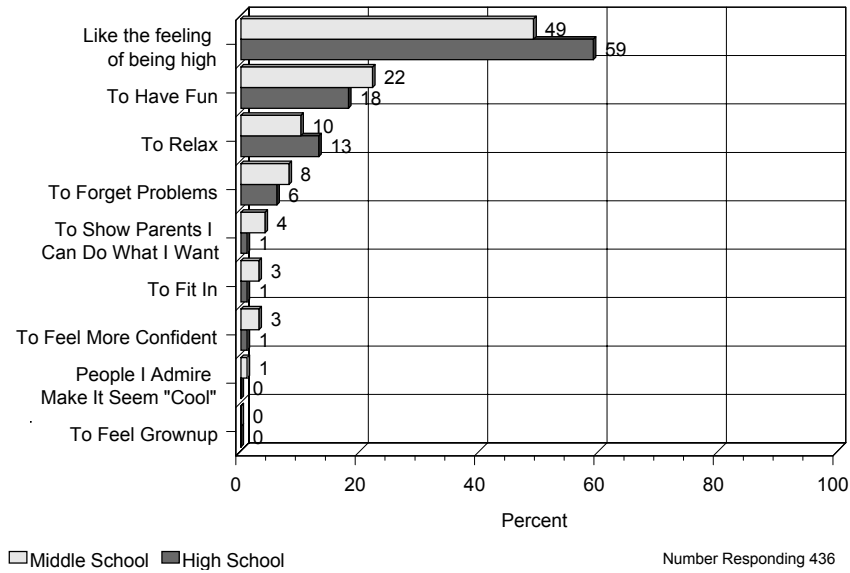
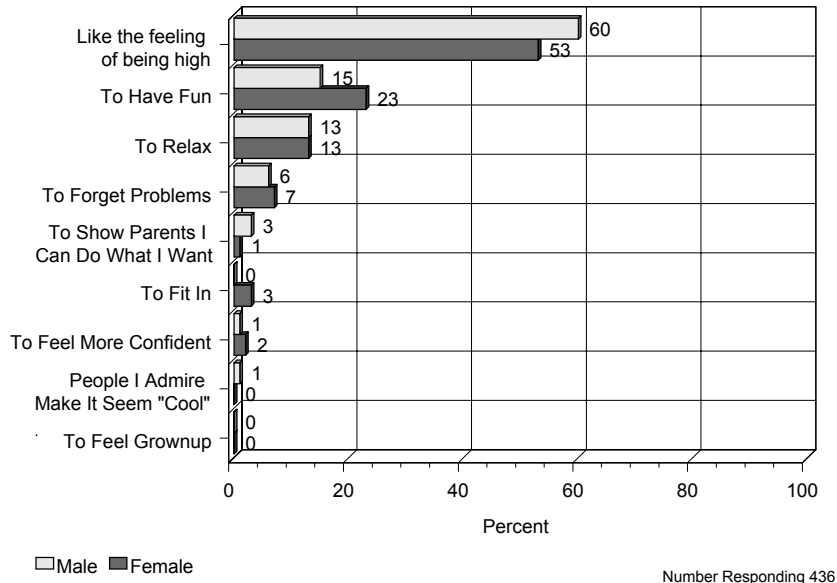


Figure 4-65: One Main Reason Why Teens Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Use Marijuana, by Gender)



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 you don't?" Overall, 43% of local teens responded they did not use marijuana because "I don't want to mess up my body." 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 might suffer"(14%). Figure 4-66 shows the breakdown of responses by school level and Figure 4-67 shows the breakdown by gender.

Figure 4-66: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Don't Use Marijuana, by School Level)

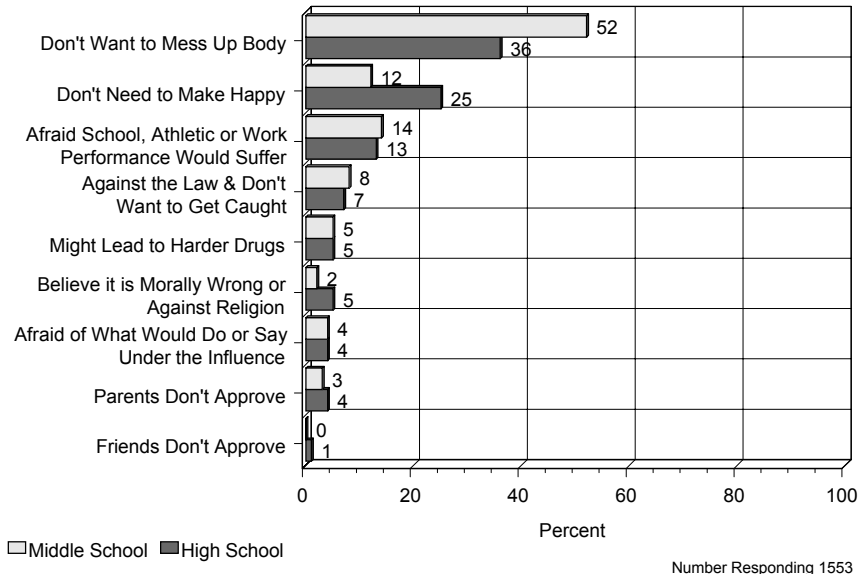
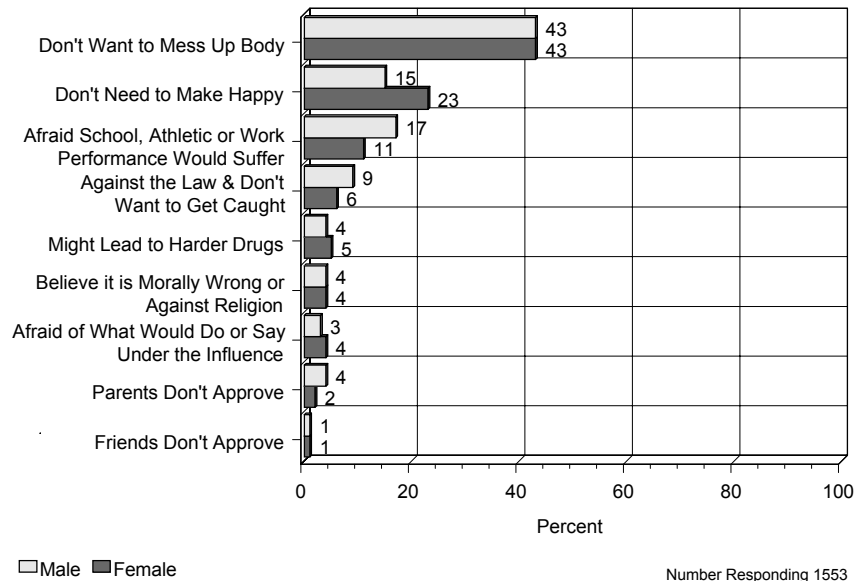


Figure 4-67: One Main Reason Why Teens Don't Use Marijuana
(Of Those Who Don't Use Marijuana, by Gender)



Perceived Risk of Marijuana Use

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 4-68 reveals 66% of students responded they felt this experimentation with marijuana carried "no" or "slight risk" (middle school, 52% and high school, 75%). Figure 4-69 shows all responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-68: Perceived Risk: Try Marijuana Once or Twice (By School Level)

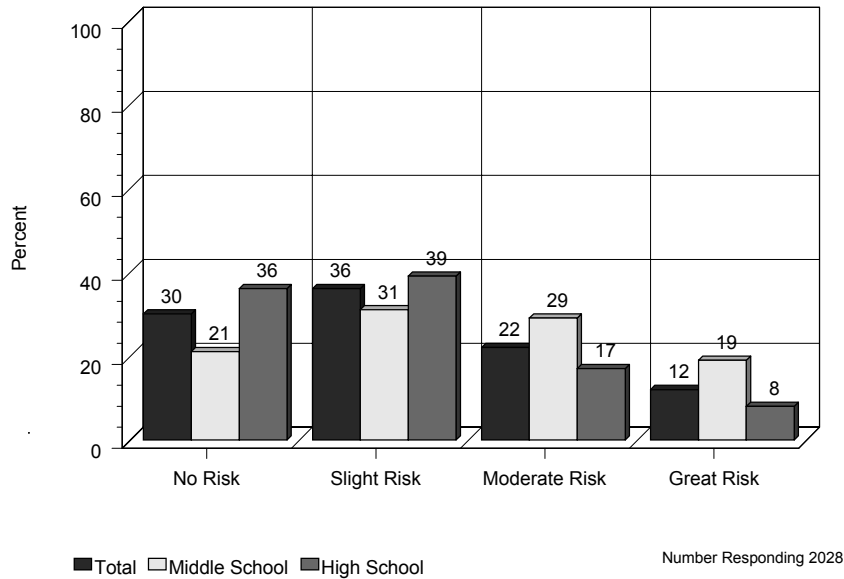


Figure 4-69: Perceived Risk: Try Marijuana Once or Twice (By Gender)

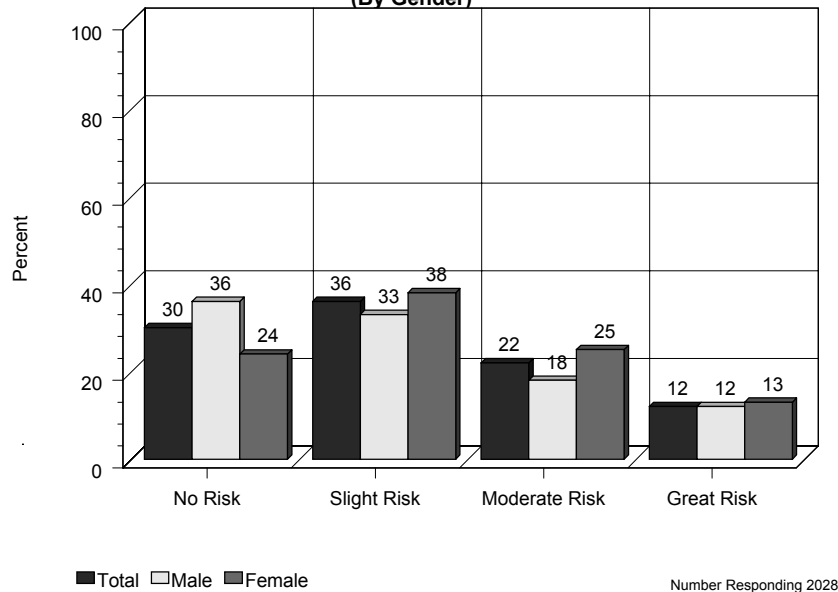
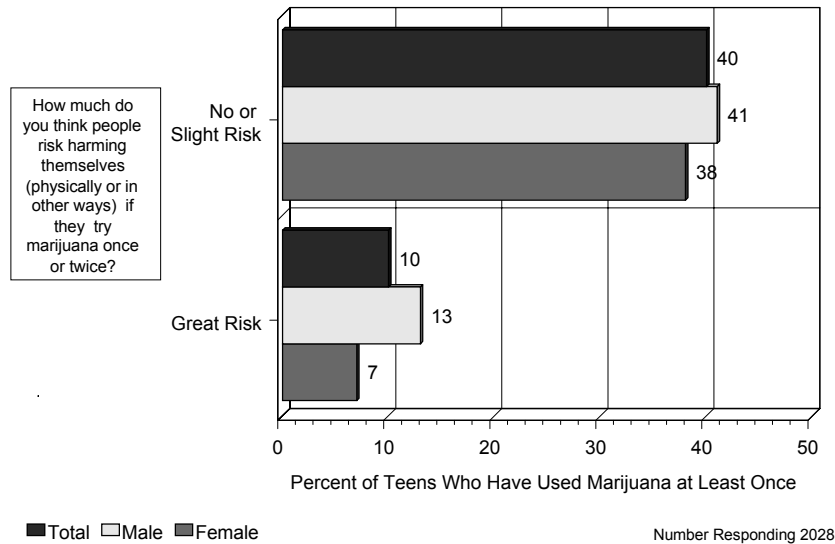


Figure 4-70 shows 40% of those who consider trying marijuana once or twice to be of no or slight risk smoke monthly or more often. Of those who consider this to be of great risk, 10% report using marijuana at least once.

Figure 4-70: 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, O'Malley and Bachman, 1999). TAP found 19% of local 8th grade students, 8% of local 10th grade students and 4% 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 4-71 shows 24% consider regular use of marijuana to be of "no" or "slight" risk by school level.

Figure 4-71: Perceived Risk: Smoke Marijuana Regularly (By School Level)

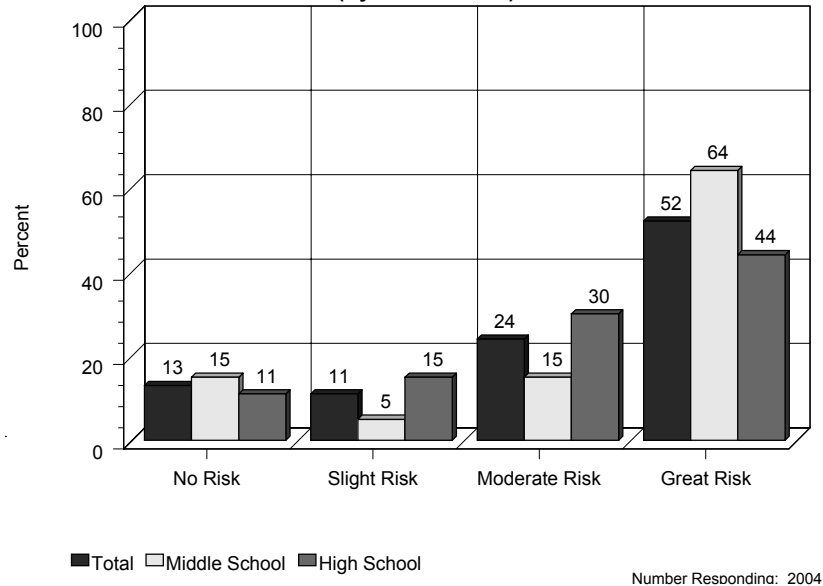
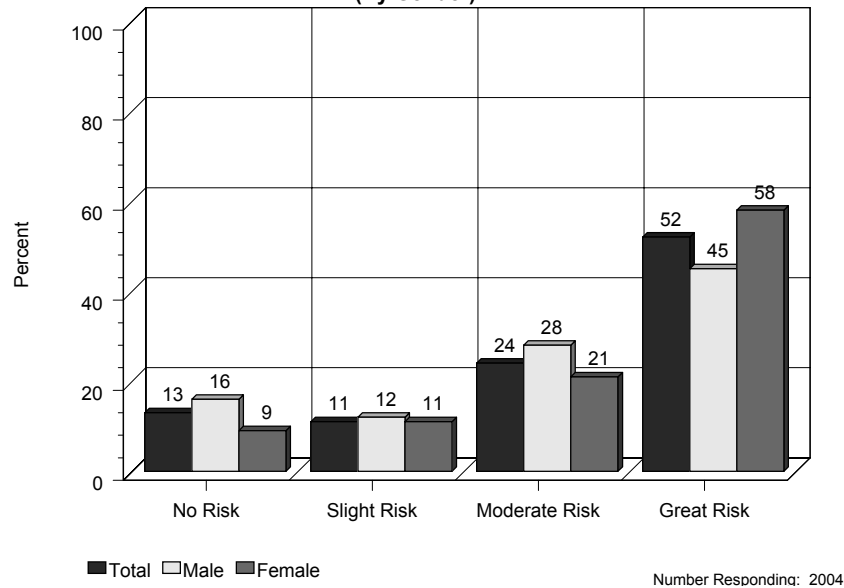


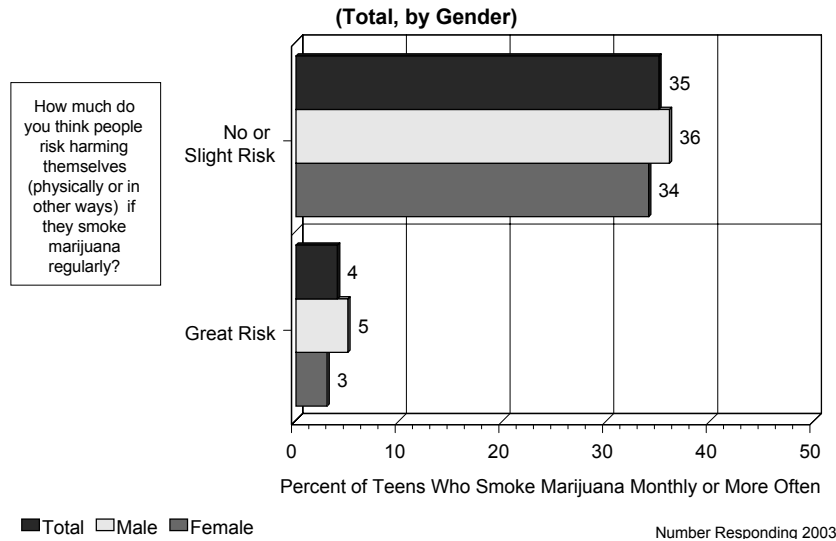
Figure 4-72 shows the responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-72: 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 4-73 shows 35% 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 4-73: Relationship Between Teens' Perceived Risk of Smoking Marijuana Regularly vs. Teens' Monthly Use of Marijuana

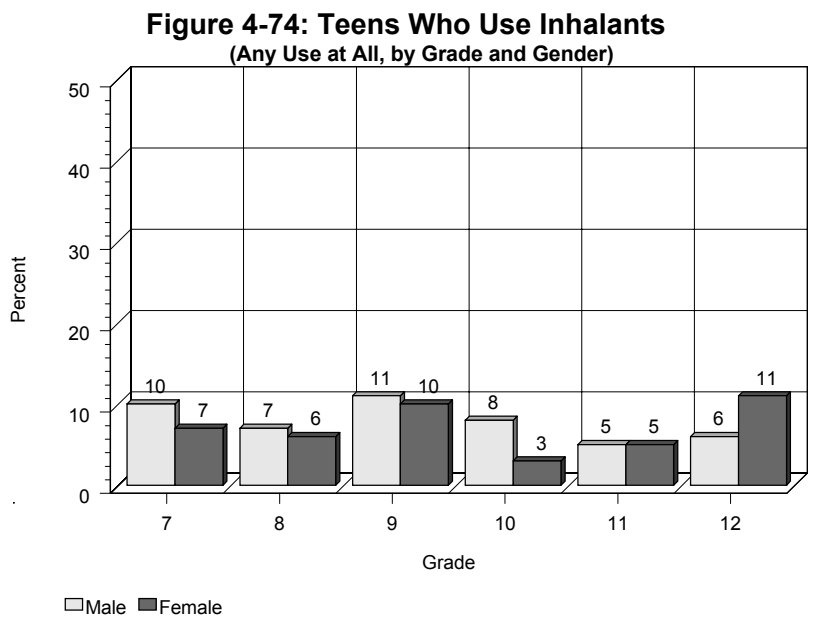


The Monitoring the Future Study conducted in 1998 found 73% of 8th grade students, 66% of 10th grade students and 59% of 12th grade students think regular marijuana smoking carries a great risk. (Johnson, O'Malley and Bachman, 1999). TAP found 64% of local 8th grade students, 43% of local 10th grade students and 34% of local 12th grade students said they felt doing so has great risk.

Inhalants

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. Eight percent (8%) of local teens reported having used inhalants at some time in the past (middle school, 8% and high school, 8%). Figure 4-74 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?" Ninety-two percent (92%) of those responding said they had never used inhalants. Of middle school students who reported they *have used* inhalants, 44% of said the first time was at 10 years of age or younger (males, 49% and females, 35%). Of high school students who have used inhalants, 82% said they first used inhalants at age 14 or younger (males, 85% and females, 79%).



Number Responding 2041

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 of Inhalant Use

We asked local students, "How much do you think people risk harming themselves (physically or in other ways) if they use inhalants?" Figure 4-75 shows that 21% of local youth feel doing so has "no" or "slight risk" (middle school, 29%, high school, 17%). More high school students (60%) than middle school students (45%) feel using inhalants carries "great risk." Figure 4-76 shows the responses broken down by gender.

Figure 4-75: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use (By School Level)

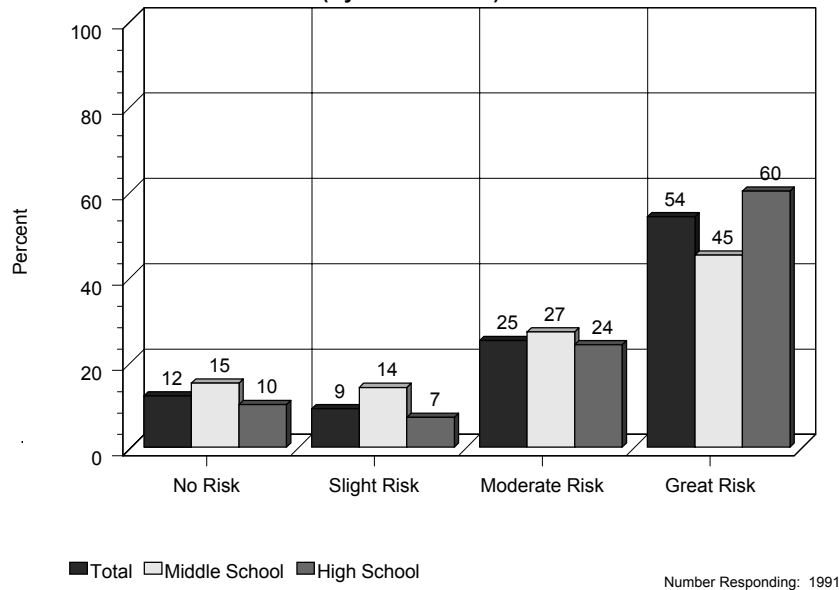
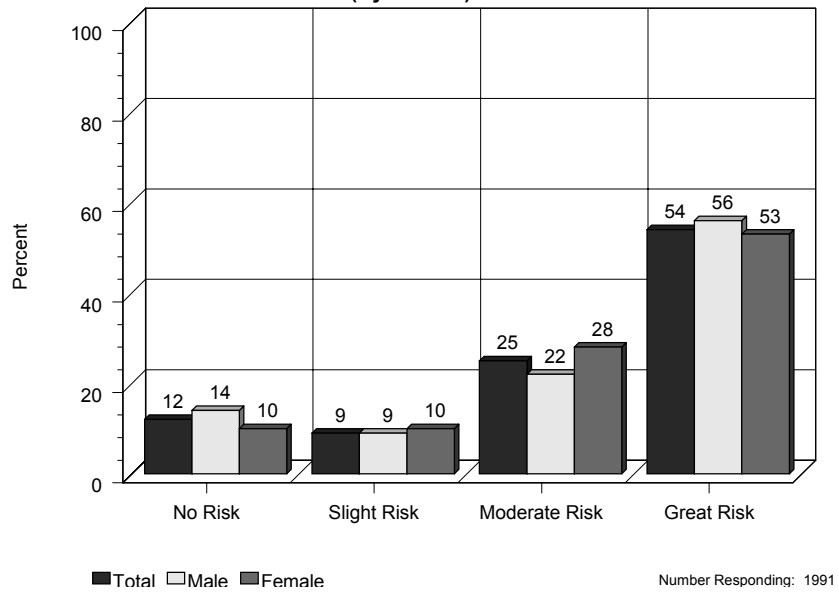
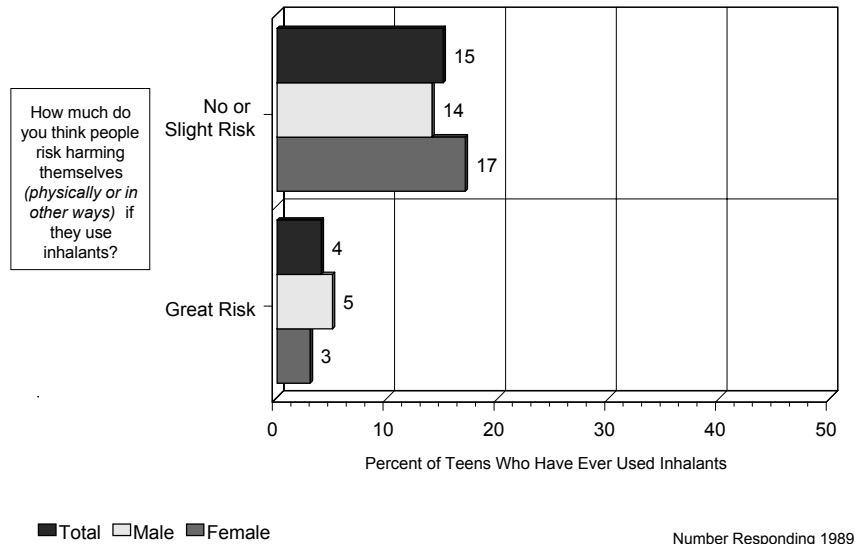


Figure 4-76: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use (By Gender)



TAP data indicate youth who perceive inhalant use as less risky are more likely to use them. Figure 4-77 shows 15% of those who consider inhalant use to be of no or slight risk use inhalants compared with 4% who consider inhalant use to be of great risk.

Figure 4-77: Perceived Risk: Inhalant Use vs. 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, O'Malley and Bachman, 1999). TAP found 50% of local 8th grade students, 58% of local 10th grade students and 63% 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.

Uppers

Uppers are also used by local teens. Thirteen percent (13%) of local teens reported having used uppers at some time in the past (middle school, 6%; high school, 18%; males, 13% and females 13%). Figure 4-78 shows the breakdown for any use at all, by grade level and gender. Four percent (4%) of local youth reported using uppers monthly or more often (middle school students 2% and high school students, 6%). Figure 4-79 shows that monthly or more use of uppers by grade level and gender.

Figure 4-78: Teens Who Use Uppers
(Any Use at All, by Grade and Gender)

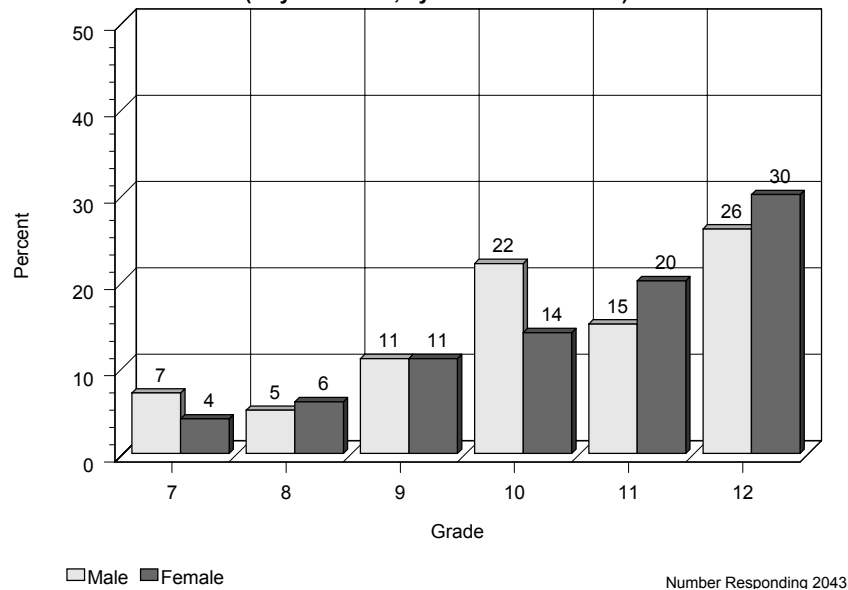
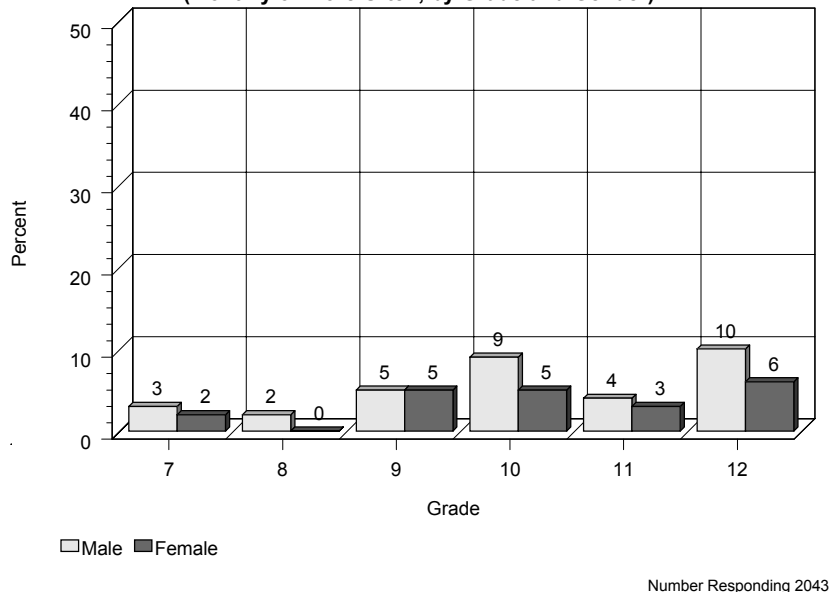


Figure 4-79: Teens Who Use Uppers
(Monthly or More Often, by Grade and Gender)



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 their use should be acknowledged. The table below shows rates of use at any time, monthly use, and weekly use by local teens. Figures 4-4 (p.14), 4-5 and 4-6 (p.15) also have this information in chart form. Figures 4-7 (p. 16), 4-8 and 4-9 (p.17) 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	9%	3%	1%
Downers	7%	2%	1%
Chewing Tobacco	6%	2%	1%
Cocaine	6%	2%	1%
Narcotics	3%	2%	1%