



Whose Kids?...Our Kids!

Dover School District

Teen Use of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs

Recently, the Dover School District, Strafford County UNH Cooperative Extension and community members joined together to learn more about the youth in our community by conducting the Teen Assessment Project (TAP).

Approximately 83% of the students were surveyed in the Dover School District. In all, information from 1635 surveys was used for this newsletter.

		<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
218	7th graders	109	109
227	8th graders	120	107
355	9th graders	180	175
313	10th graders	161	152
287	11th graders	141	146
235	12th graders	112	123

"Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" is a parent newsletter series of the Teen Assessment Project (TAP), a program of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension. Support for this project was provided by grants received from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, Jeffrey Gutin Fund and the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Program. The Teen Assessment Project (TAP) originated at the University of Wisconsin at Madison under the direction of Stephen A. Small, Ph.D. TAP in Strafford County is under the direction of Christine Bozak, UNH Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Educator in cooperation with Charlotte W. Cross, UNH Cooperative Extension, Youth Development Specialist. For more information about TAP call Charlotte W. Cross at (603) 862-2495 or e-mail at charlotte.cross@unh.edu.

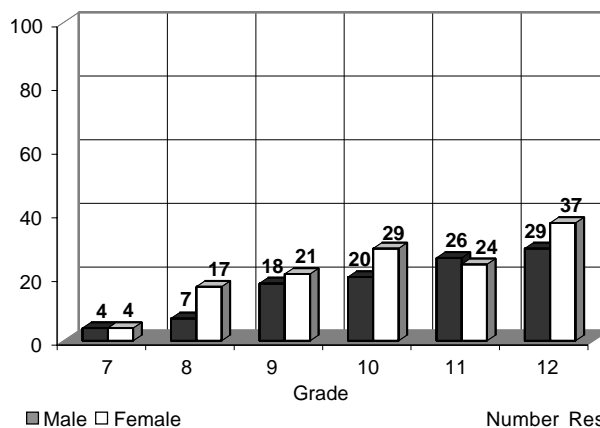
This issue of WHOSE KIDS?...OUR KIDS! looks at the topic of alcohol and other drugs. How often do teens drink and use drugs? Is this part of growing up? Should we be concerned?

Today's teenagers hear mixed messages about drinking alcohol and using other drugs. One minute they hear the simple message, "Just say NO!" or they hear "Don't Drink and Drive." Television commercials, magazine ads, and billboards have a different message. These state that drinking is "fun," "sexy," "romantic," "adult," or "macho." On top of this, teens know adults who use alcohol or pills to relax, to get rid of stress, or to socialize.

Alcohol and Drug Use Among Local Teens

About 1 in 6 males (18%) and 1 in 4 females (23%) smoke cigarettes monthly in grades 7-12. Smoking increases from the middle school years to the high school years. Far more high school boys smoke regularly as compared to middle school boys (5%, middle school; 22%, high school). The same is true for girls. In middle school, only 1 in 10 females (10%) smoke, but in high school, 1 out of 4 girls (27%) smoke.

Teens Who Smoke Tobacco
(Once or More per Month)



Warning Signs of Teenage Alcohol or Drug Abuse

When can you tell a teen has gone beyond trying out drinking or drugs? There are signs that show that a teenager may be abusing, or often using, alcohol or other drugs. The following warning signs show a teen may frequently be drinking or using a drug:

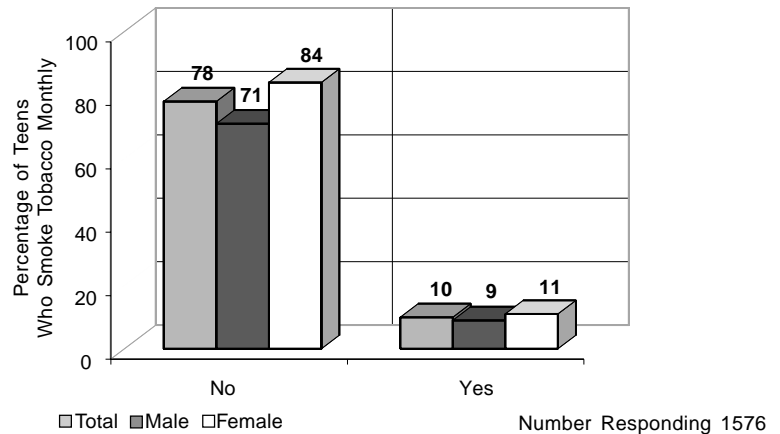
- missing work
- not saying where he or she is going
- lying about where he or she has been
- stopping activities the teen used to enjoy and not filling the time with other fun activities
- getting angry easily and often
- borrowing money from parents or friends
- can't explain loss of money or valuables
- sniffing, running nose; losing appetite; dilated or red eyes
- associating with a new group of friends, often with those who use drugs
- hiding things that would show alcohol or drug use.

Source: *National Institute on Drug Abuse*

Clearly, teens who think they will get in trouble at home are much less likely to smoke on a monthly basis.

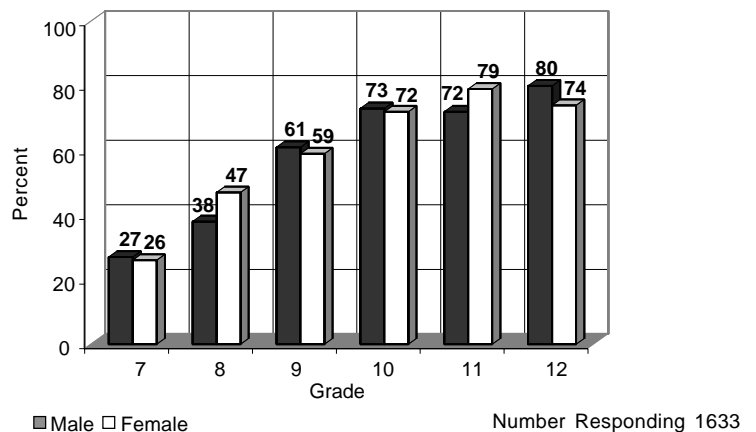
“If your parents knew you were smoking cigarettes, do you think you would get in trouble at home?”

Relationship Between Teens' Level of Smoking and Thinking They'll Be in Trouble at Home



Our survey shows more local teens are using alcohol than their parents may expect. The following chart shows many youth have tried alcohol (beer, wine, or hard liquor) even in middle school. The number of youth who have tried alcohol generally increases with age.

Ever Used Alcohol



Ways Parents Can Help

- **Encouraging teenager’s abilities and interests.**

Parents need to encourage their teens in activities that develop interests and skills. These activities should help teens feel good about themselves without the use of alcohol or drugs. Hobbies, school events, sports, and volunteer work may keep youth from using alcohol and drugs out of boredom.

- **Helping your teen or pre-teen deal with peer pressure.**

Parents can help their teens say no to alcohol/drugs without “losing face.” Here are some things teens can say: “I don’t like the way it (beer, cigarettes) tastes,” or “I’d rather sit here and watch you guys get stupid.”

- **Permitting white lies.**

“My mom’s going to give me a driving lesson this afternoon.” In a pinch, your teen can “blame” you. “If I don’t drink, I’ll get to use my dad’s car on Friday nights.” Many times, a simple “no thanks” or “not today” will do.

- **Knowing the facts about alcohol and other drugs.**

Parents should know the effects of alcohol/drugs on the body and on driving, and the risks of alcohol/drug abuse.

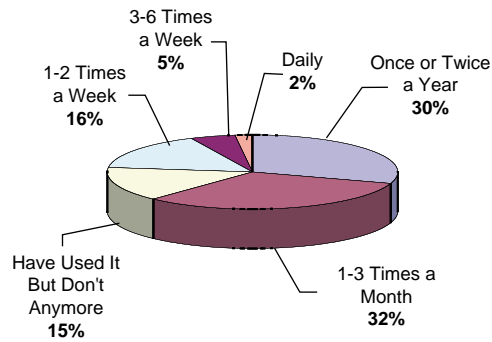
- **Creating strong family ties.**

Strong family ties can help protect against alcohol/drug problems in young people. Family activities (for example, sports, movies, or family meetings) along with open discussions and flexible rules can be particularly helpful. Really listening to your teen, even when you don’t agree, will strengthen the ties between you.

Continued on page 4

About 1 in 3 students (30%) who said they use alcohol only drink a couple of times a year. Almost 3 out of 4 of the students (73%) in middle school have either never tried alcohol or are not currently drinking. The same holds true for 2 in 5 (39%) high school youth.

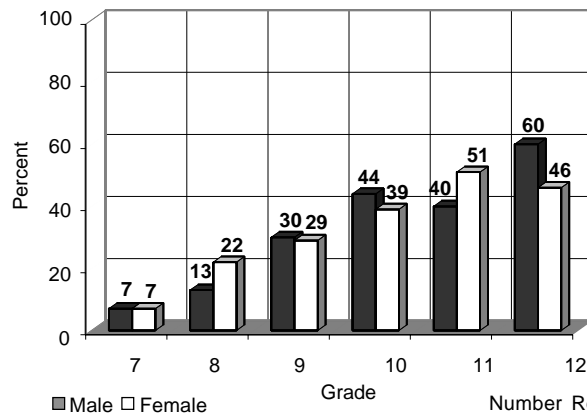
Frequency of Alcohol Use
(Of Those Who Drink)



Number Responding 991

How many teens drink every day? This is an important question. Drinking every day is serious and will hurt a teen’s school work, personal relationships, emotional development, and health. Of the local teens who drink, only a few (2%) drink every day. Overall, 16% of middle school youth drink alcohol once or more per week. This increases to 24% in the high school years. Those who drink once or more per month, on average, includes 36% of middle school youth and 58% of high school youth. During the past year, 80% of middle school students and 86% of high school students report drinking at least once.

Teens Who Use Alcohol
(Once or More per Month)



Number Responding 1633

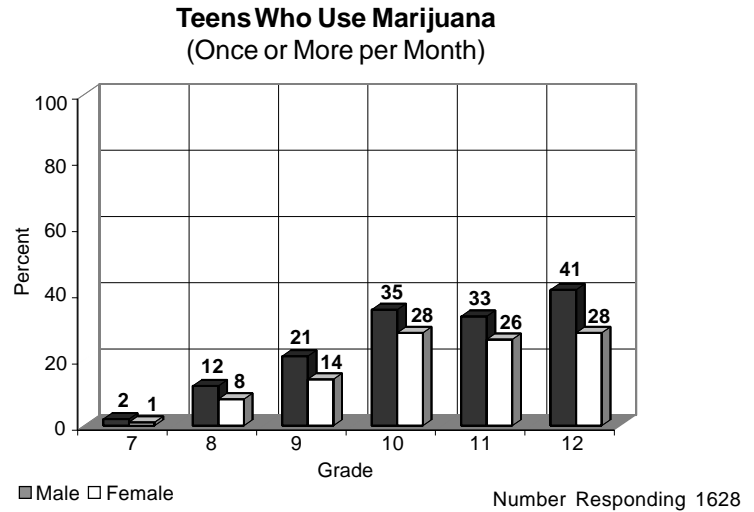
Binge drinking is when teens have 5 or more drinks in a row at one time. In response to a question about binge drinking in the past month, about 1 in 7 middle school students (15%) reported they binge drank at least one time in the past month. This rose to 41% by the high school years.

Continued from page 3

Ways Parents Can Help

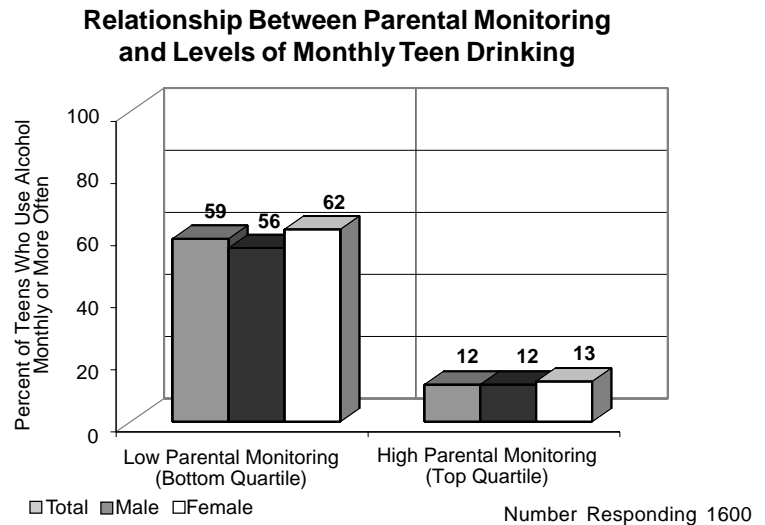
- **Keeping calm.**
Parents shouldn't get too alarmed. Most teens will use alcohol once in a while and experiment with some other drugs. This doesn't mean parents should accept such use. Still, parents shouldn't overreact. Don't assume your child is an alcoholic or drug addict. Parents should worry if a teenager is involved in frequent, heavy, or very early use of alcohol or other drugs (see "Warning Signs" section of this issue).
- **Guiding and limiting.**
Prevention of alcohol and drug abuse can begin at home. Parents need to guide their youngsters and set clear and reasonable rules. To do this, parents should:
 - clearly state rules about alcohol and drugs (for example, tell teens not to drink and drive)
 - calmly talk about alcohol/drug use before problems start (for example, use news reports of alcohol related accidents to discuss the harmful outcomes of drinking)
 - encourage teens to be healthy (for example, eat nutritious foods, exercise, and drive safely).
- **Making a contract.**
Many families have found it helpful to sit down together. They write up a parent-teen "contract" for no drinking and driving. In the contract, teens agree not to ride in a car when the driver has been drinking. They agree to call their parents for a ride if they or the driver of the car has been drinking. Parents agree to pick up their teens and not discuss the event that night. Discussion is saved for the next morning.

Use of marijuana is lower than alcohol use for both middle and high school youth. Overall, 1 in 13 (6%) middle school youth and 1 in 4 (27%) high school youth use marijuana monthly or more often.



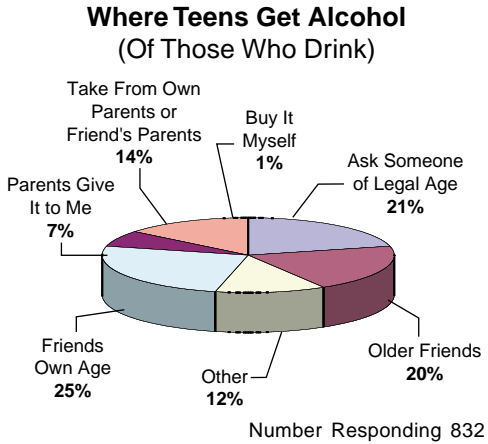
Alcohol and marijuana are used by local teens more than any other drugs. Most people believe alcohol is not as harmful as other drugs. Still, more Americans die each year from alcohol-related illnesses and accidents than from the use of all illegal drugs combined. Motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol are the leading cause of death for 15- to 19-year-olds.

What role does parental monitoring play in lowering the levels of teen drinking? Parental monitoring is important in preventing adolescent problem behavior. Parental monitoring means parents supervise their children or know where they are and what they're doing. Higher levels of parental monitoring are related to lower levels of alcohol drinking in youth. Young people who are closely supervised rarely drink on a monthly basis.



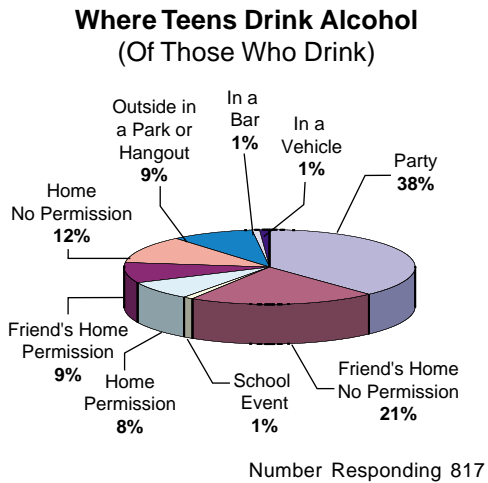
Where do teenagers get their alcohol?

One-quarter (25%) of local youth get alcohol from friends their own age.



Where do teenagers drink alcohol?

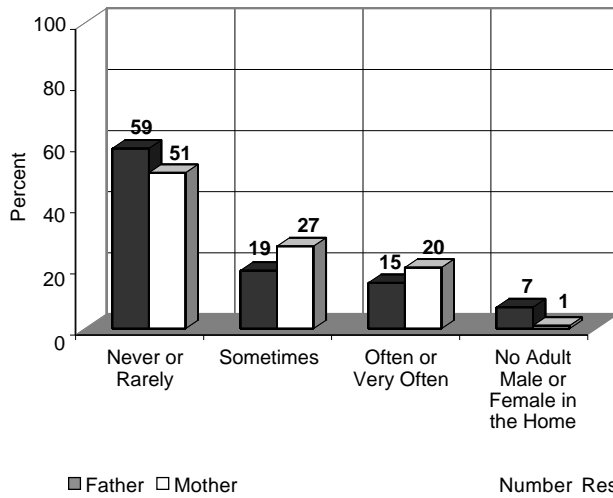
When asked where they drank alcohol, more kids said they drank at parties than any other place. Others said they drank at their homes or their friends' homes with or without permission.



Parent-Teen Communication

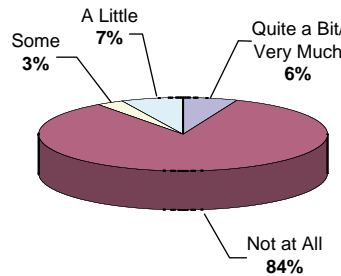
Many parents express concern over possible problem drinking and drug abuse among teens. But, they don't always discuss their views and concerns with their children. Or, parents may wait until a problem actually arises before bringing up the topic at all. Our survey of local youth shows many have rarely or never talked with their mothers or fathers about the risks of drinking or taking drugs.

“To what extent have you spoken with your mother or father about the risks of drinking or taking drugs?”



Most local teens aren't worried about family alcohol or drug abuse. Still, 1 student in 6 (16%) shows some level of concern. If youth have already started to drink or use drugs themselves, they may not worry quite as much about their parents' drinking or drug use.

“How much do you worry about your parent(s) drinking too much or using drugs?”



Number Responding 1628

Would You Like To Get Involved?

If you are interested in getting involved with others in the community to address teen issues, please call Christine Bozak or Thomas Linehan at 749-4445 at Strafford County Cooperative Extension, or Dana Mitchell at 742-4646.

Further Reading

- Pollack, W. (2000). **Real Boys' Voices**. New York: Random House.
- Pruitt, D.B. (1999). **Your Adolescent**. American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. New York: Harper Resources.
- Riera, M. & DiPrisco, J. (2000). **Field Guide To The American Teenager**. Cambridge, MA: Perseus.
- Schaeffer, D. (1996). **Choices and Consequences: What To Do When a Teenager Uses Alcohol/ Drugs**. Minneapolis, MN: Johnson Institute Books.
- Steinberg, L. & Levine, A. (1997). **You and Your Adolescent: A Parent's Guide for Ages 10-20**. New York: Harper & Row.
- U.S. Department of Education. (1993). **Growing Up Drug Free: A Parent's Guide to Prevention**. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

UNH Cooperative Extension Resources:

- **Publication Series:**
Living with your Teenager
- **Workshop Series:**
Family Focus: Parenting the Adolescent

Helpful Resources

Abuse

A Safe Place	436-7924
Dover Police	742-4646
National Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-422-4453
NH Division for Children, Youth and Families (DCYF)	1-800-894-5533
Sexual Assault Support Services	1-888-747-7070

Alcohol and Drug Abuse

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)	1-800-593-3330
Center for Substance Abuse Treatment	1-800-662-HELP
Drug Abuse Crisis Center	749-3034
Narcotics Anonymous	645-4777
SENH Alcohol & Drug	749-3981

Counseling Services

ParentLine	1-800-640-6486
Parent to Parent of NH Family Support Network	1-800-698-5465
Seacoast Hospice/Bridges Program	749-4300
Seacoast Mental Health Center	431-6703

Crisis Hot Lines

Access Crisis Line	1-800-987-6562
Boys Town Hotline	1-800-448-3000
Nine Line	1-800-999-9999
TeenLine (confidential, for any problem)	1-800-639-6095
Youth Crisis Hotline	1-800-448-4663

Family Planning/Health Services

Avis Goodwin Community Health Center	749-2346 or 1-800-560-5970
Birthingright	436-5558 or 1-800-550-4900
Family First Health Center	422-8208
Feminist Health Center	436-7588
Options for Women	749-4441
Planned Parenthood	431-6803 or 1-800-230-PLAN

Information and Referral

American Red Cross (Dover-Strafford County Chapter)	742-3449
Big Brothers Big Sisters	778-0277
Dover Crimeline	749-6000
Help Line (also crisis intervention)	1-800-852-3388
HUB Family Support Center	749-9754
Info Link	1-888-499-2525
My Friend's Place Shelter	749-3017
NH Catholic Charities	332-7701
NH Legal Assistance	1-800-334-3135
Journeys - Pastoral Counseling Center	868-5166
Poison Control	1-800-562-8236
The Salvation Army	332-2623 or 436-2606
Seacoast Outright	431-1013
Strafford County Community Action Food Pantry (Mon - Fri 9am-1pm)	749-5160
Strafford County Human Services	742-8078
Strafford County WIC Program	332-4358

Runaway

Child & Family Services of NH Group Home	224-9313
National Runaway Switchboard	1-800-621-4000

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

AIDS Response of the Seacoast	433-5377
HIV/AIDS Testing	436-7588
NH AIDS Foundation	1-800-639-1122
NH AIDS Hotline	1-800-752-2437
STD, HIV Program	1-800-852-3345
STD Hotline	1-800-228-0245

Suicide and Depression

Hampstead Hospital	329-5311
Portsmouth Pavilion	436-0600
Strafford Guidance	742-0630 or 749-3244
Wentworth Douglass Hospital	742-5252

UNH Cooperative Extension

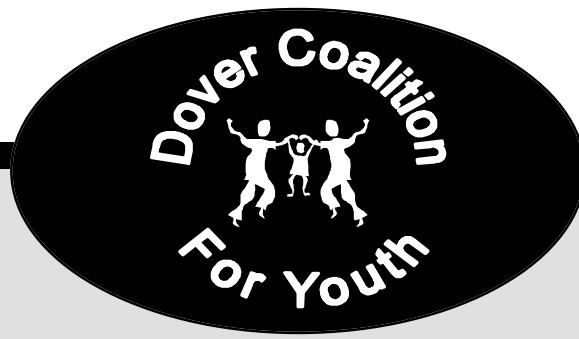
Strafford County, Family and 4-H Youth Development	749-4445
--	----------

Also see the "Self-Help Guide to Human Services in N.H." at the front of your telephone book.

This newsletter was based on a publication by Susan Silverberg, University of Wisconsin at Madison. The UNH Cooperative Extension newsletter "Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" was edited by Charlotte W. Cross, Extension Specialist, Youth Development and Mary W. Temke, Ph.D., Extension Specialist, Human Development, with technical assistance from Karen M. Watts, Program Assistant, UNH Cooperative Extension. Desktop publishing provided by UNHCE Educational Marketing & Information Office.

"Helping You Put Knowledge and Research To Work"

The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer. University of New Hampshire, U.S. Department of Agriculture and N.H. counties cooperating.



*Presents a
Community Forum on:*

**Adolescent Use of
Alcohol and Other Drugs:
*Realizing the Reality,
Recognizing the Resources***

Wednesday, March 7, 2001

7:00PM - 8:30PM

Dover Middle School
Renaissance Theatre

*The event will include personal stories about teens who
have struggled with alcohol and drug issues.
Local alcohol and drug resources will be on
hand to share information and consider directions
for prevention and treatment in Dover.*

Free and open to the public!
*Parents & Teens Are Encouraged to
Attend Together!*