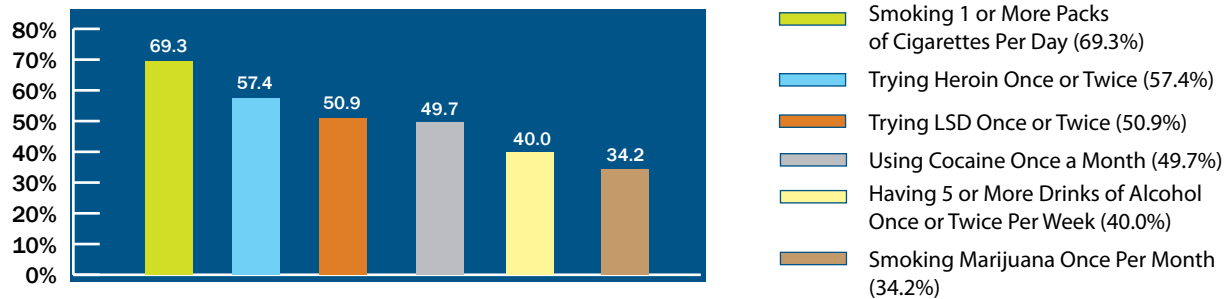




Only Four in Ten Adolescents Perceive Great Risk From Having Five or More Alcoholic Drinks Once or Twice a Week

Only 40% of youth aged 12 to 17 years old reported that they perceived great risk from drinking five or more alcoholic beverages one or two times per week, according to National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) results collected between 2007 and 2008.¹ Perceived risk² varied depending on the substance, gender, and age. Smoking one or more packs of cigarettes per day was perceived by the highest percentage of adolescents as the substance associated with great risk (69.3%), followed by trying heroin once or twice (57.4%), trying LSD once or twice (50.9%), using cocaine once per month (49.7%), and smoking marijuana once per month (34.2%). While female adolescents were more likely than males to perceive great risk from smoking cigarettes (73.3% vs. 65.4%), drinking alcohol (43.5% vs. 36.6%), and smoking marijuana (36.4% vs. 32.1%), male adolescents were more likely than females to perceive great risk from trying heroin (58.3% vs. 56.4%). Male and female adolescents had similar risk perceptions associated with using cocaine and trying LSD. Of particular concern is that the percentage of adolescents associating great risk with drinking alcohol or using marijuana decreased with age, making initiation of their use increasingly likely as adolescents mature.

Percentage of Adolescents Aged 12 to 17 Perceiving Great Risk From Substance Use, by Substance: 2007 – 2008



Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Office of Applied Studies. (November 23, 2009). *The NSDUH Report: Perceptions of Risk from Substance Use among Adolescents*. Rockville, MD.

Notes:

- ¹ Data obtained from a representative sample of the population (44,979 persons aged 12 to 17) and collected through questionnaires administered via face-to-face interviews. The survey is sponsored by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- ² Survey response choices included: (1) no risk, (2) slight risk, (3) moderate risk, and (4) great risk. Risk was defined as "how much they think people risk harming themselves physically and in other ways when they use cigarettes, alcohol, and illicit drugs."

Prepared by the Center for Health and Justice (CHJ) at TASC. CHJ works to build, enhance, and sustain strong and vibrant communities by promoting policies and practices that stop the cycle of drugs and crime. We conduct research and evaluations, and offer policy analysis, trainings, and technical assistance in the fields of health and justice. For more information, visit us online at www.centerforhealthandjustice.org.

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