

Marijuana Use and Perceptions

AMONG BOULDER COUNTY YOUTH

Boulder County High School Student Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results ¹



BOULDER COUNTY
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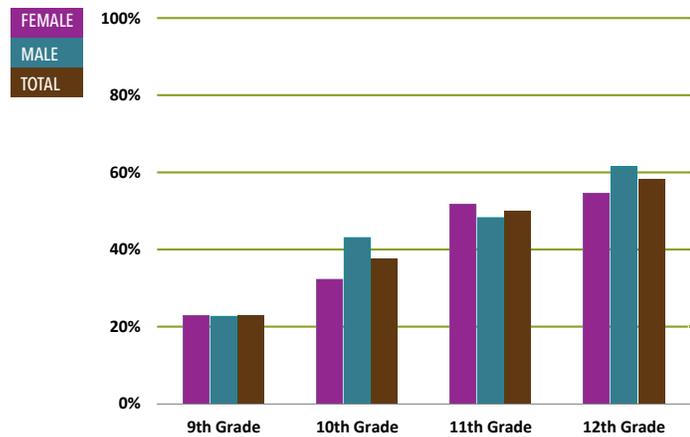
Ever Used Marijuana

More than 4 in 10 Boulder County high school students (41.8%), representing approximately 7,004 students, had ever used marijuana.

- Prevalence rates for students ever using marijuana were higher among males than females; Hispanic than white non-Hispanic; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning students than heterosexual students.
- Those who ever used marijuana increased with each grade level.
- 7.8% of Boulder County high school students had tried marijuana before age 13, representing approximately 1,307 students.

Ever used marijuana

BOULDER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, YRBS, 2011



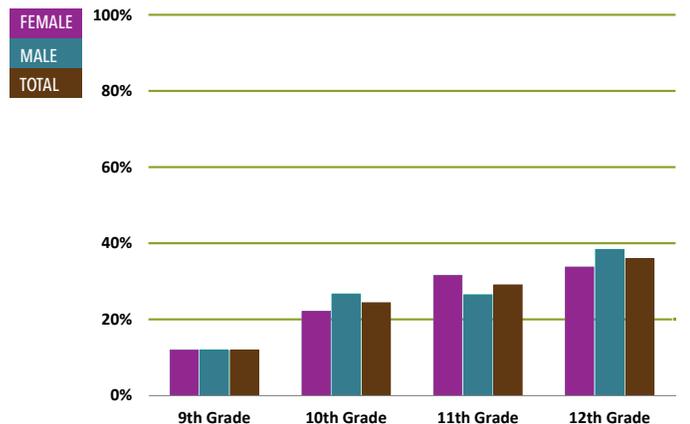
Currently Used Marijuana

Over one quarter of Boulder County high school students (25.1%), representing approximately 4,206 students, were current marijuana users, having used marijuana at least once in the 30 days prior to the survey.

- Prevalence rates for current marijuana use were higher among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning students than heterosexual students. Total prevalence rates for current marijuana use did not differ by gender or race/ethnicity.
- Current marijuana use increased between 9th and 12th grade, such that the rate among 12th graders (36.0%) was nearly triple the rate (11.9%) among 9th graders.
- Current marijuana use among female Boulder County high school students (24.6%) was higher than among their female peers in Colorado (20.1%) and the United States (20.1%), while male rates did not differ.

Currently used marijuana*

BOULDER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, YRBS, 2011



* Used marijuana 1 or more times during the 30 days prior to the survey

¹ The combined student population of Boulder County's two school districts (Boulder Valley School District and St. Vrain Valley School District) high schools surveyed in the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) was 16,757. YRBS data are weighted to represent all students in grades 9-12 at participating high schools, not merely those students who took the survey. Youth data in this document represent prevalence rates and come from the 2011 YRBS unless otherwise cited. Boulder County YRBS data are available at www.BoulderCountyYRBS.org.

Trends in Marijuana Use

Current marijuana use remained steady among Boulder County high school students from 2003 to 2011, while current alcohol use decreased by 8 percentage points, and current cigarette use decreased by 5 percentage points.

Perception of Marijuana Risk

Boulder County high school students' low perception of risk of marijuana use correlates with use.

- Over half of Boulder County high school students (53.1%) believed it was wrong for someone their age to smoke marijuana.
- Over 4 in 5 (84.3%) believed their parents felt it was wrong for them to smoke marijuana.
- About half of Boulder County high school students (51.9%) believed that regularly smoking marijuana poses a moderate or great risk; less than half did not believe that marijuana poses a risk.
- Students perceived marijuana as less risky than alcohol and cigarettes. Students who perceive marijuana as a risk may still use marijuana.
- Perception of marijuana as being risky was lower for female than male students and among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning students than heterosexual students.
- Perception of marijuana as being risky decreased with each grade level from 9th through 11th grade.

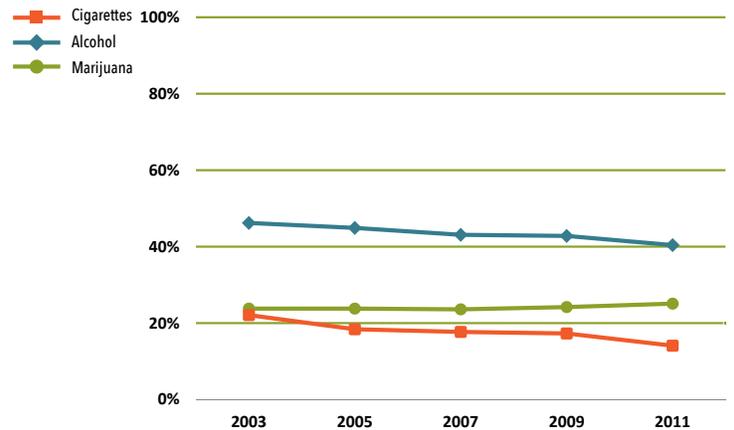
Trends in Perception of Marijuana Risk

The perception of marijuana as being risky decreased from 64.3% in 2005 to 51.9% in 2011 among Boulder County high school students. In 2011, students perceived marijuana to be less risky than in previous years.

- Adolescents who perceive marijuana to be less harmful are more likely to use marijuana.
- The prevalence of ever using marijuana was 3 times higher among Boulder County high school students who didn't see marijuana as risky compared to students who saw marijuana as risky.
- The rate of smoking marijuana before age 13 was 5 times higher among Boulder County high school students who did not perceive marijuana as being risky compared to those who perceive marijuana as being risky. It was nearly 5 times higher among students who reported that their parents did not disapprove compared to those who reported that their parents disapproved.

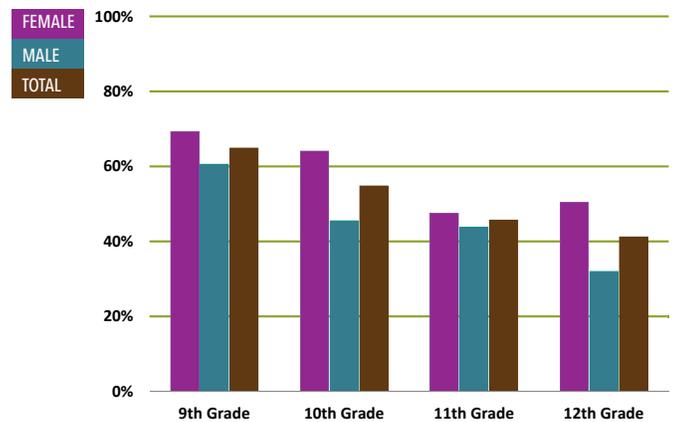
Current alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette use

BOULDER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, YRBS, 2003-2011



Belief that smoking marijuana regularly poses a moderate to great risk

BOULDER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, YRBS, 2011



Perceived risk of alcohol, marijuana, and cigarette

