

Youth abuse alcohol and marijuana

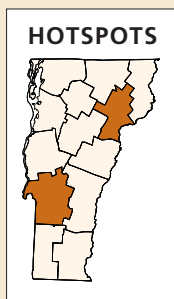
Called Vermont's greatest health challenge by leaders in the field, alarmingly high use of alcohol and marijuana threatens not only the health, but also the self-esteem, behavior, employability and general well-being of future adults in the state.

Vermont ranks highest in the nation for illicit drug dependence or abuse in the past year in both the 12 to 17 and 18 to 25 age groups.

the FACTS

Underage drinking

- Twenty-two percent of Vermonters between ages 12 and 17 drank alcohol in the last 30 days, ranking the state fourth in the nation for this behavior. Vermont ranks number one for the 73% of its residents ages 18 to 25 who report the same. Underage drinking occurs at the highest rates in Caledonia and Rutland counties.³⁹
- Vermont mirrors the national average for student binge drinking. Nearly one in four high school students consumed five or more consecutive alcoholic drinks on one or more of the past 30 days.
- Alcohol was a major factor in 56% of all motor vehicle deaths involving people between ages 15 and 20, ranking Vermont the highest in the nation.⁴⁰ And in 2005, 22% of the state's students, grades eight to 12, reported riding with a driver who had been drinking.⁴¹



Youth marijuana use

- Vermont leads the nation for the highest percentage of youth (ages 12 to 17) who initiate the use of marijuana. Among the state's students in grades eight to 12, 25% have used marijuana in the past 30 days, compared to a national average of 22%. Use is concentrated in Rutland, Windham, Bennington and Orleans counties.⁴² For all ages, Vermont's proportion of current marijuana users is second only to Washington, D.C.⁴³
- Vermont ranks highest in the nation for illicit drug dependence or abuse in the past year in both the 12 to 17 and 18 to 25 age groups.^{44, 45}

