

Alcohol Use

Alcohol is used by more young people across the country than tobacco or illicit drugs.⁽¹⁾ Heavy alcohol drinking and binge drinking among youth is associated with risky sexual behaviors, being a victim of dating violence, and use of cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, and other illegal drugs.⁽²⁾ Persons who begin drinking alcohol before the age of 15 years are three times as likely to report alcohol dependence or abuse as those who first drank alcohol at age 21 or older.⁽³⁾




2023 Results


The following are findings related to alcohol use among NJ students for 2023:

- About half of New Jersey students (49%) reported ever drinking some alcohol in their life.
- About a quarter of students (27%) currently have used alcohol in the past 30 days.
- 13% of students began drinking alcohol before the age of 13.
- Current binge drinking – defined as 5+ drinks in a row over a few hours for male students and 4+ drinks for female students – was reported by 13% of students.
- Use of alcohol or other illegal drugs while attending school was reported by 9% of students.

Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for alcohol use among New Jersey youth is mixed, as lifetime use rates fell from 68% to 49% and current rates declined from 38% to 27%. (The decline in lifetime alcohol is not statistically confirmed by CDC but is presented here as the percentage of students who report never having drunk alcohol when asked at what age they had their first drink.) Current binge drinking (down from 15% in 2019 to 13% in 2023) and alcohol use before the age of 13 (down from 15% to 13% in the past 10 years) also declined in the past 10 years but the changes are not statistically significant.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
Ever Used Alcohol in Lifetime <i>indicated they never consumed alcohol when asked age they had first drink of alcohol</i>	68%	–	–	49%	Trend not reported by CDC —
Current Alcohol Use <i>had at least one drink of alcohol (past 30 days)</i>	39%	30%	26%	27%	Decrease in negative behavior 
Current Binge Drinking <i>had 5+ drinks (male) or 4+ drinks (female) in a row within a couple of hours (past 30 days)</i>	–	15%	15%	13%	No change in behavior 
Alcohol Use Before Age 13 <i>had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13</i>	15%	13%	12%	13%	No change in behavior 

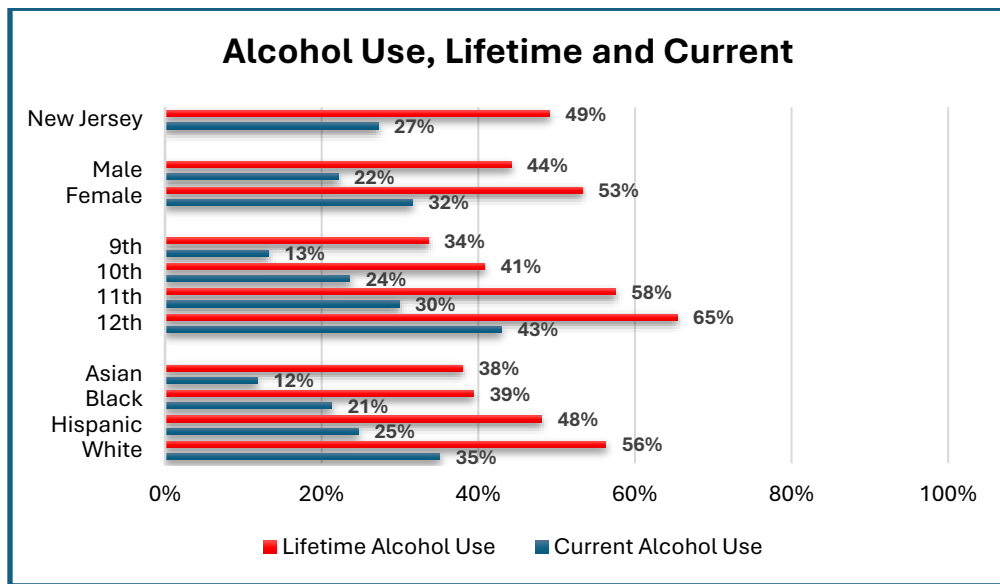
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
Attended School under the influence of Alcohol or Drugs <i>attended school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs (such as marijuana or cocaine, one or more times during the past 12 months)</i>	15%	11%	10%	9%	Decrease in negative behavior 

Note: Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2013 to 2023 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2021 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.

Demographic Breakdown

Lifetime and current use of alcohol was reported by 49% and 27% of NJ high school students respectively.

- **Gender** – Females were more likely than males to have reported alcohol use in their lifetime (53% to 44%) or current use of alcohol (32% vs 22%).
- **Grade** – Alcohol use increased significantly with grade level, as twelfth graders were about twice as likely to have used alcohol than ninth graders in their lifetime (65% to 34%) and three times more likely to have used alcohol recently (43% to 13%).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Alcohol use was greatest among Whites (56% lifetime and 35% currently) than among all other racial and ethnic groups while Asians had the lowest lifetime use (38%) and recent use (12%). Hispanics (48% lifetime and 25% currently) were slightly more likely than Blacks (39% lifetime and 21% currently) to have used alcohol.



Resources

- ReachNJ -- Facing Addiction Taskforce: 1-844-ReachNJ (New Jersey's 24/7 Addiction Helpline), <https://nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/>
- Substance Abuse Prevention Parent Education Program: <http://drugfreenj.org/child-break/15-minute-child-break/>
- Parent-To-Parent: <http://www.parent2parentnj.org/index.php>
- New Jersey Prevention Network: <https://www.njpn.org>