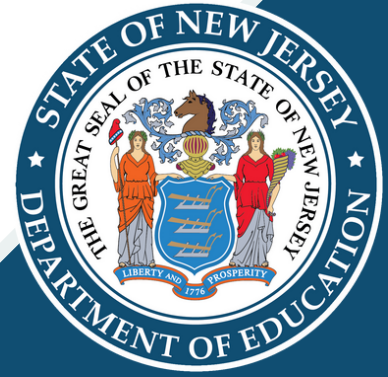


# 2023

# NEW JERSEY STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY



New Jersey Department of Education  
Division of Educational Services  
Office of Student Support Services

## Introduction

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The New Jersey Student Health Survey (NJSHS) was administered to a sample of public high school students during the fall of 2023 by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR) at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University. The NJSHS is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) national Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/>) that provides information about health behaviors, conditions, and experiences that contribute to the leading causes of mortality, morbidity, and social problems among youths and adults.

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## Methodology

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The 2023 NJ Student Health Survey has been conducted biannually since 1999. Survey procedures were designed to protect the privacy of all students by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. Overall, 44% of sampled schools (17 out of 39) agreed to participate and 83% of sampled students (1,035 out of 1,239) completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 36% (44% school rate x 83% student rate = 36% overall rate).

In 2019, the CDC adopted a nonresponse bias analysis to determine data representativeness for data weighting. Prior to 2019, the CDC used a minimum of 60% combined participation rate to weight data collected as part of the YRBSS. A nonresponse bias analysis was performed on the 2023 data and the CDC concluded that there were no statistically significant biases and that the data could be considered representative of the New Jersey student population. The subsequent weighting procedure includes two components: (a) an adjustment for school and student probability of selection; and (b) an adjustment to provide demographic comparability of the sample to the overall New Jersey student population.

The weighted results are representative of all public-school students in grade nine through twelve in New Jersey and, therefore, permit the comparison of findings related to priority health-risk behaviors in the current survey to results from prior surveys. In addition to the 2023 NJSHS, a weighted sample was obtained for the NJSHS data in 2001, 2005, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2019 and 2021. The study was also conducted in 2015 and 2017 with response rates lower than necessary for study findings to be considered representative of the population of the state.

## Profile of Participating Students

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The purpose of applying weights to data is to produce results that can be considered representative of the full population being studied. The tables below depicts demographic figures for the sample of high school students before and after the weighting process.

Sex	Sample (n)	Sample (%)	Weighted (%)
Female	519	50.9%	52.7%
Male	501	49.1%	47.3%

Grade	Sample (n)	Sample (%)	Weighted (%)
9 <sup>th</sup>	290	28.5%	25.8%
10 <sup>th</sup>	258	25.3%	26.0%
11 <sup>th</sup>	226	22.2%	24.2%
12 <sup>th</sup>	244	23.9%	24.1%

Age	Sample (n)	Sample (%)	Weighted (%)
13 Years Old or Younger	8	0.8%	0.7%
14 Years Old	227	22.2%	19.7%
15 Years Old	252	24.7%	25.2%
16 Years Old	235	23.0%	24.7%
17 Years Old	248	24.3%	24.5%
18 Years Old or Older	51	5.0%	5.2%

Race/Ethnicity	Sample (n)	Sample (%)	Weighted (%)
Asian	72	7.1%	10.8%
Black	104	10.3%	12.8%
Hispanic/Latino	450	44.4%	31.2%
White	328	32.4%	42.5%
All Other Races	8	0.8%	0.3%
Multiple Races	50	4.9%	2.3%






### How to Interpret These Fact Sheets

This report presents data as a series of fact sheets for nine health topics. All percentages in the report are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point. Each fact sheet frames the findings in three ways:

**Highlights** are overall statistics that refer to either the full population of New Jersey students or a non-demographic sub-group of those students.

**Demographic Subgroups** depict selected overall statistics by gender, race/ethnicity and grade level and are designed to analyze differences across groups. Race/ethnicity only includes the four predominant groups in NJ (Asian, Black, Hispanic and White) as all other races make up a small percentage of students and results have a large standard error would be difficult to interpret. **Trend Analysis** tables depict overall New Jersey statistics across survey years to show differences across time. (For some tables and charts, percentages may add up to 99% or 101% due to rounding.)

For **Trend Analysis** tables, a statistical analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2013-2023 to determine which differences across survey years were statistically significant. Weighted data was not provided in 2015 and 2017 so results from those years are excluded. For questions not asked in all years, the trend analysis was performed from 2023 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked. For example, if a question was not asked in 2019, the analysis would only be from 2021 to 2023. A dash (--) is used if CDC did not conduct analysis on a particular item. The trends are identified by the following symbols shown below.

Increase in a negative behavior	Decrease in a negative behavior	Increase in a positive behavior	Decrease in a positive behavior	No change in behavior	Trend not reported by CDC
					—

## Alcohol Use

Alcohol is used by more young people across the country than tobacco or illicit drugs.<sup>(1)</sup> 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.<sup>(2)</sup> 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.<sup>(3)</sup>




### 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
<b>Ever Used Alcohol in Lifetime</b> <i>indicated they never consumed alcohol when asked age they had first drink of alcohol</i>	68%	–	–	49%	Trend not reported by CDC —
<b>Current Alcohol Use</b> <i>had at least one drink of alcohol (past 30 days)</i>	39%	30%	26%	27%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Current Binge Drinking</b> <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 
<b>Alcohol Use Before Age 13</b> <i>had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 13</i>	15%	13%	12%	13%	No change in behavior 

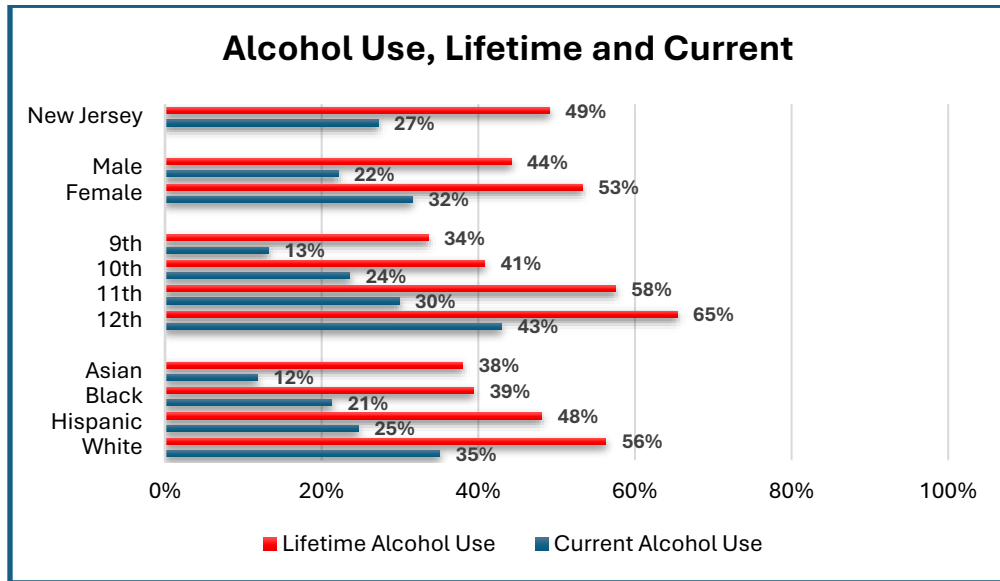
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Attended School under the influence of Alcohol or Drugs</b> <i>attended school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs (such as marijuana or cocaine, one or more times during the past 12 months)</i>	15%	11%	10%	<b>9%</b>	Decrease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

## Cigarette Use

Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States and accounts for more than 480,000 deaths each year in the United States.<sup>(1)</sup> Smoking and smokeless tobacco use are initiated and established primarily during adolescence while nearly nine out of ten smokers started smoking by age 18.<sup>(2,3)</sup> Cigarette smoking increases risk for heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), acute respiratory illness, stroke, and cancers of the bladder, blood, cervix, colon, larynx, liver, lung, oral cavity, pancreas, pharynx, and stomach.<sup>(3,4)</sup> In addition, as compared to nonsmokers, cigarette smokers are more likely to drink alcohol, use marijuana and cocaine, engage in risky sexual behaviors, engage in physical fighting, carry a weapon and attempt suicide.<sup>(3)</sup>




### 2023 Results


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

- About 1-in-8 of New Jersey students (13%) reported ever smoking a cigarette in their life.
- Only 3% of students currently have smoked cigarettes on just one or more of the past 30 days.
- Frequent (smoking 20 of the past 30 days) or daily (smoking all of the past 30 days) was rare among NJ high schools with less than 0.5% of students doing so.
- Only 3% of NJ students reported smoking cigarettes before the age of 13 .

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for cigarette use among New Jersey youth is generally positive. Lifetime use of cigarettes fell from 34% to 13% and current use declined from 13% to 3%. (The lifetime cigarette use decline is not statistically confirmed by CDC.) Frequent and daily cigarette use also declined significantly in the past 10 years – both falling from about 4-5% to under 0.5%. Cigarette use before the age of 13 declined from 5% in 2019 to 3% in 2023, though the change is not statistically significant.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Lifetime Cigarette Use</b> <i>smoked a cigarette, even one or two puffs, on any day in their life.</i>	34%	—	—	13%	Trend not reported by CDC —
<b>Current Cigarette Use</b> <i>smoked a cigarette on 1+ days in past 30 days</i>	13%	4%	4%	3%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Frequent Cigarette Use</b> <i>smoked a cigarette on 20+ days in past 30 days</i>	5%	1%	1%	<0.5%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Daily Cigarette Use</b> <i>smoked on all 30 days in the past 30 days</i>	4%	1%	1%	<0.5%	Decrease in negative behavior 

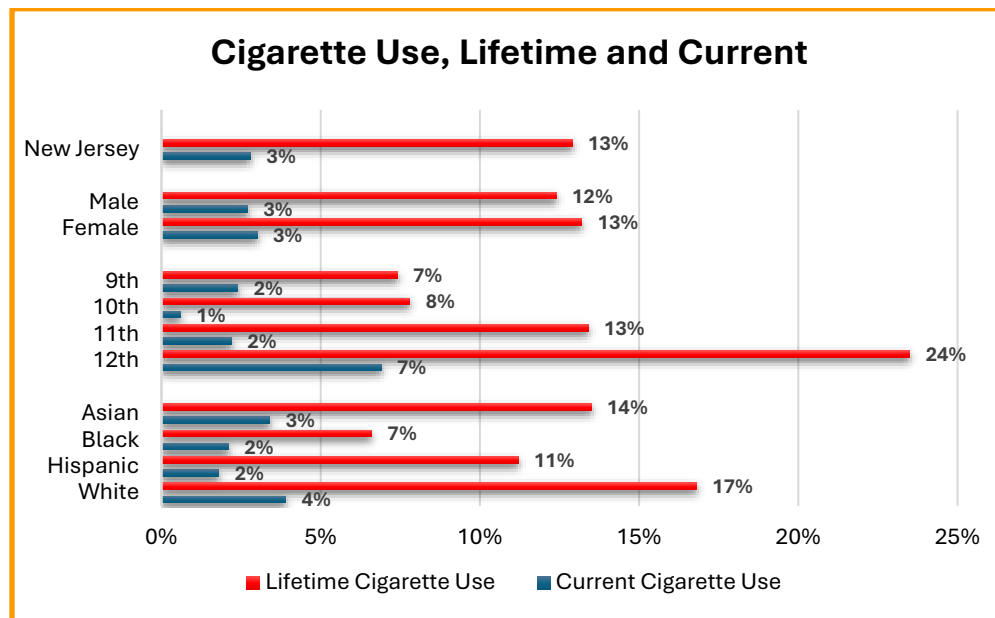
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Cigarette Use Before Age 13</b> <i>smoked their first cigarette before the age of 13</i>	6%	5%	4%	3%	No change in behavior 

**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 cigarette use was reported by 13% and 3% of NJ high school students respectively.

- **Gender** – Females and males were equally likely to have reported cigarette use in their lifetime (13% and 12%, respectively) or current cigarette use (3% each).
- **Grade** – Cigarette use was highest amongst 12th graders (24% lifetime and 7% current) who were about twice as likely as students in lower grades to have used cigarettes. Only 13% of students in 11<sup>th</sup> grade have smoked in their lifetime and this falls to 8% and 7% for students in 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. Current use of cigarettes was just 1-2% for students in grades 9 to 11.
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Lifetime cigarette use was greatest among White students (17%) than Asian (14%), Hispanic (11%) or Black (7%) students. Current use of cigarettes was under 5% for White students (4%) as well as Asian (3%), Black and Hispanic (2% each) students.



### Resources

- ReachNJ - Facing Addiction Taskforce: 1-844-ReachNJ (New Jersey's 24/7 Addiction Helpline), <https://nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/>
- New Jersey Prevention Network: <https://www.njpn.org>
- Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: <https://drugfree.org/>

- Parent-To-Parent: <http://www.parent2parentnj.org/index.php>
- FDA's Youth Tobacco Prevention Plan:  
<https://www.fda.gov/tobacco-products/youth-and-tobacco/fdas-youth-tobacco-prevention-plan>

## Electronic Vapor

Despite downward trends in cigarette smoking among youths, a dramatic increase in electronic vapor product use has led to an increase in overall tobacco product use for high school students.<sup>(1)</sup> Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 36%<sup>(2)</sup> had ever used an electronic vapor product while 18% currently used an electronic vapor product.<sup>(3)</sup> 5% of students nationwide use electronic vapor products daily.<sup>(2)</sup>



### 2023 Results





The following are findings related to electronic vapor product use among NJ students for 2023:

- About a third of New Jersey students (31%) reported ever using an e-vapor in their life.
- About one-in-five students (18%) currently have used e-vapor products in the past 30 days.
- Frequent e-vapor product use – that is use on 20 of the past 30 days – was engaged in by 5% of NJ students.
- Daily e-vapor product use – that is use on all of the past 30 days – was reported by 4% of NJ students.
- About one-in-eight NJ students (13%) purchased e-vapor products themselves in some store, supermarket or gas station.
- Considering smoking cigarettes and/or e-vaping, about one-in-five students engaged (19%) in either or both on at least one of the past 30 days.

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for electronic vapor use among New Jersey youth is positive. Lifetime use declined from 45% to 31% in 2019 to 2023 and current use fell from 28% to 18%. Frequent and daily e-vapor use remained fairly consistent, with rates at about 5% and 4% respectively in 2023 and highest rates of 7% and 5% respectively in 2021.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Ever used E-Vapor product</b> <i>have ever used an e-vapor product (including e-cigarettes, vapes, vape pens, e-cigars, e-hookahs, hookah pens, and mods [such as JUUL, SMOK, Suorin, Vuse, and blu])</i>	—	45%	36%	<b>31%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Current E-Vapor Use</b> <i>have used e-vapor product on 1+ days in past 30 days</i>	—	28%	22%	<b>18%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Frequent E-Vapor Use</b> <i>used e-vapor products frequently (on 20 or more days during the 30 days)</i>	—	6%	7%	5%	No change in behavior 
<b>Daily E-Vapor Use</b> <i>used e-vapor product on all 30 days in the past 30 days</i>	—	4%	5%	4%	No change in behavior 
<b>Purchased E-Vapor Products Themselves</b> <i>buying e-vapor product themselves in a convenience store, supermarket, discount store, or gas station in the past 30 days</i>	—	—	31%	13%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Currently Smokes Cigarettes or Used E-Vapor</b> <i>smoked a cigarette or used e-vapor product on at least 1 of the past 30 days</i>	—	28%	22%	19%	Decrease in negative behavior 

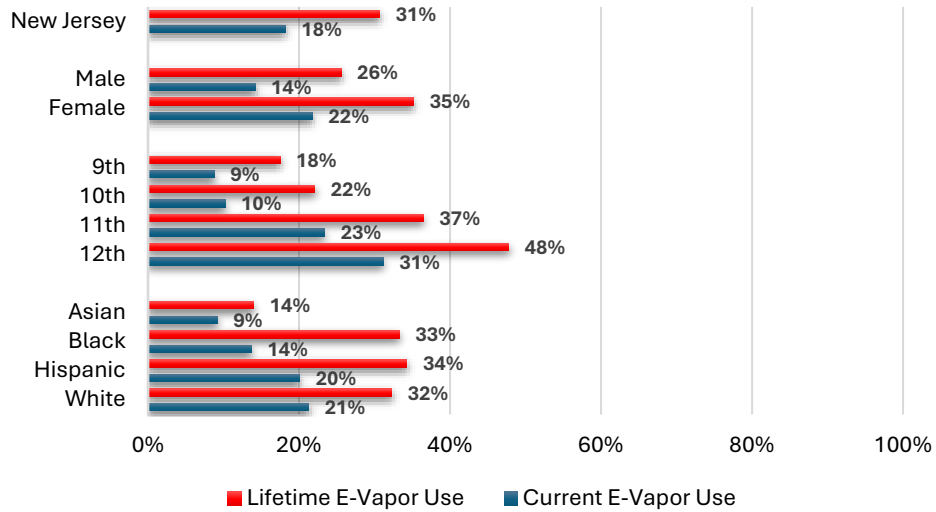
**Note:** Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2013 to 2023 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2021 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.

### Demographic Breakdown

Lifetime and current use of electronic vapor products was reported by 31% and 18% of NJ high school students respectively.

- **Gender** – Females were more likely than males to have reported e-vapor use in their lifetime (35% vs 26%) or currently (22% vs 14%).
- **Grade** – About half of 12th graders (48%) have used e-vapor products compared to a third of 11th graders (37%) and one-in-five 10th (22%) and 9th graders (18%). Current use was also greatest amongst students in grades 12 (31%) and 11 (25%) as compared to those in grades 10 (10%) and 9 (9%).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Hispanics (34%), Blacks (33%) and Whites (32%) all reported lifetime use of e-vapor products at much higher rates than Asian students (14%). Current use of e-vapor was much higher among Whites (21%) and Hispanics (20%) than Black (14%) or Asian (9%) students.

## Electronic Vapor Use, Lifetime and Current



## Resources

- ReachNJ -- Facing Addiction Taskforce: 1-844-ReachNJ (New Jersey's 24/7 Addiction Helpline), <https://nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/>
- New Jersey Prevention Network: <https://www.njpn.org>
- Parent-To-Parent: <http://www.parent2parentnj.org/index.php>
- Rutgers -- SECD Lab: <https://www.secdlab.org/>
- Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: <https://drugfree.org/>

## Drug Use

Among youth in the United States, illicit drug use is associated with heavy alcohol and tobacco use,<sup>(1)</sup> violence, delinquency, and suicide.<sup>(3)</sup> All school districts prohibit illegal drug possession or use by students on school property.<sup>(2)</sup> Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 2.5% had used any form of cocaine, 1.3% had used heroin, 1.8% had used methamphetamines, 2.9% had used ecstasy one or more times during their life, and 12.2% had misused prescription opioids.<sup>(4)</sup>



### 2023 Results








In addition to prior reporting on alcohol and marijuana use, students were asked whether they used any of nine other substances at any point at least once in their lifetime. The prevalence of lifetime use for these substances, from highest to lowest, was as follows:

- 6% of students reported use of **prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription** (including such drugs as Oxycontin, Adderall, Xanax, etc.). Only 2% of students used prescription drugs without a prescription in the past 30 days.
- 5% of students used **Inhalants** (such as sniffing glue or aerosol spray).
- 3% of students used **over-the-counter drugs** for the purpose of getting high.
- 2% of students used **ecstasy**.
- 2% of students used **steroids** shots or pills without a doctor's prescription.
- 1% of students used **heroin** or **cocaine**.
- Less than 0.5% of students used **methamphetamines** or **injected an illegal drug**.

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for substance use among New Jersey youth is positive. The percentage of students who reported ever having used eight of the nine substances has declined about half or more since 2013, including prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription (from 12% to 6%), use of inhalants (from 10% to 5%), use of over-the-counter drugs to get high (from 7% to 3%), ecstasy (from 7% to 2%), cocaine (from 5% to 1%), methamphetamines (from 3% to <0.5%), heroin (from 2% to 1%), as well as the injection of any illegal drug (from 2% to <0.5%). The use of steroids (from just over 2% to just under 2%) also declined in this period but not as significantly.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Ever used Prescription Drugs</b> <i>have ever taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription (such as Oxycontin, Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax) one or more times during their lifetime.</i>	12%	7%	7%	6%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Current Prescription Drug Use</b> <i>took a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription (such as OxyContin,</i>	–	3%	4%	2%	No change in behavior 

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<i>Percocet, Vicodin, codeine, Adderall, Ritalin, or Xanax, one or more times during the past 30 days)</i>					
<b>Ever used Inhalants</b> <i>have ever used inhalants (sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high, one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	10%	5%	4%	5%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Ever used over-the-counter drugs to get high</b> <i>have taken over-the-counter drugs to get high (one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	7%	4%	4%	3%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Ever used Steroids</b> <i>have ever taken steroid pills or shots without a doctor's prescription (one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	2%	2%	1%	2%	No change in behavior 
<b>Ever used Ecstasy</b> <i>have ever used ecstasy (also called "MDMA" or "Molly," one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	7%	2%	2%	2%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Ever used Cocaine</b> <i>have ever used cocaine (any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase, one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	5%	2%	1%	1%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Ever used Heroin</b> <i>have ever used heroin (also called "smack," "junk," or "China White," one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	2%	1%	1%	1%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Ever used Methamphetamines</b> <i>have ever used methamphetamines (also called "speed," "crystal meth," "crank," "ice," or "meth," one or more times during their lifetime)</i>	3%	1%	1%	<0.5%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Ever injected an illegal drug</b> <i>have ever injected any illegal drug (used a</i>	2%	1%	1%	<0.5%	Decrease in negative behavior

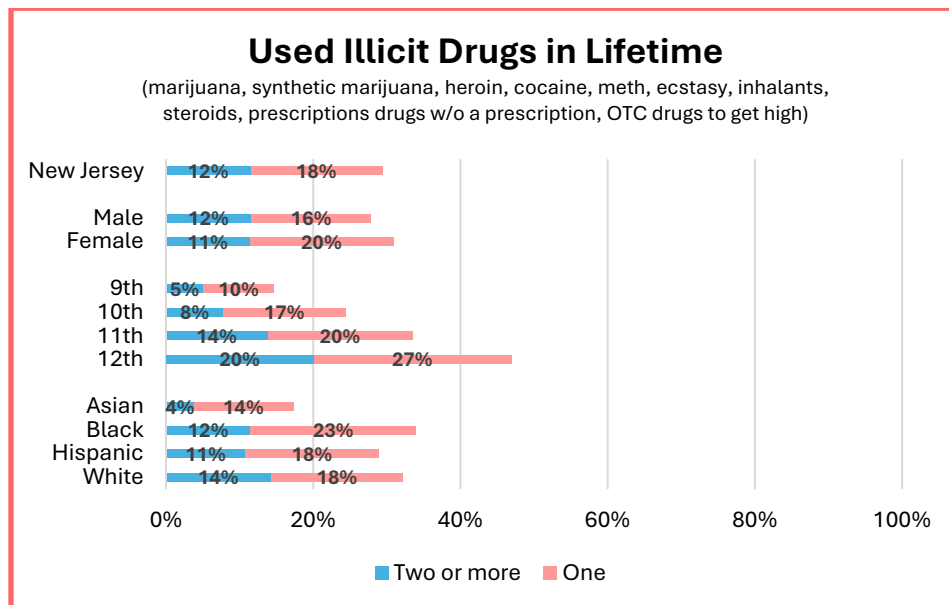
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
needle to inject any illegal drug into their body, one or more times during their lifetime)					↓

**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

The NJ YRBSS asked students to report on use of ten substances – marijuana, synthetic marijuana, heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, ecstasy, inhalants, steroids, prescription drugs without a prescription, and over-the-counter drugs to get high – at any point in their lives. Overall, 70% of students have not used any substances, 18% used one substance only, and 12% used multiple substances.

- **Gender** – Females (31%) were slightly more likely than males (28%) to have used one or more of these 10 substances in their life.
- **Grade** – Those in 12<sup>th</sup> grade were much more likely to have used any of the 10 substances (42%) than those in 11<sup>th</sup> (34%), 10<sup>th</sup> (25%) or 9<sup>th</sup> (15%) grades. Multiple substance use was also more prevalent at the higher grades – from 20%, 14%, 8% and 5% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade respectively.
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Black students (35%) were more likely than White (32%) or Hispanic (29%) students to use at least one substance, and much more likely than Asian students (18%) to do so. White students (14%) were most likely to use multiple substances (14%) than Black (12%), Hispanic (11%) or Asian (4%) students.



## Resources

- ReachNJ -- Facing Addiction Taskforce: 1-844-ReachNJ (New Jersey's 24/7 Addiction Helpline), <https://nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/>
- New Jersey Prevention Network: <https://www.njpn.org>
- Parent-To-Parent: <http://www.parent2parentnj.org/index.php>
- Rutgers -- SECD Lab: <https://www.secdlab.org/>
- Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: <https://drugfree.org/>

## Marijuana Use

Nationwide, marijuana remains the most widely used federally illegal drug.<sup>(1)</sup> The percentage of high school students who view marijuana use as risky is decreasing.<sup>(2)</sup> Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 27.8% had ever used marijuana, 15.8% currently used marijuana (one or more times in the 30 days before the survey), and 4.9% tried marijuana for the first time before age 13.<sup>(3)</sup>





### 2023 Results

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

- About a quarter of New Jersey students (25%) reported ever using marijuana in their life.
- About one-in-seven students (14%) currently have used marijuana in the past 30 days.
- 2% of students began using marijuana before the age of 13.
- About one-in-ten students (9%) have used of synthetic marijuana in their life.
- Current use of e-vapor products with marijuana in the past 30 days was at 9%.

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for marijuana use among New Jersey youth is positive, as lifetime rates fell from 39% to 25% from 2019 to 2023 and current use rates declined from 21% to 14%. Early use of marijuana, before the age of 13, also decreased from 5% to 2%. Use of e-vapor products with marijuana has also declined from 13% to 9% from 2019 to 2023; however, students reporting lifetime use of synthetic marijuana remained at 9% in 2019 and 2023.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Ever used Marijuana</b> <i>have ever used marijuana in their lifetime</i>	39%	33%	30%	25%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Current Marijuana Use</b> <i>have used marijuana on 1+ days in the past 30 days</i>	21%	20%	17%	14%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Marijuana Use Before Age 13</b> <i>used marijuana before the age of 13</i>	5%	3%	3%	2%	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Current E-Vapor Product Use with Marijuana</b> <i>used marijuana only, or tobacco and marijuana, or flavoring and marijuana in an electronic vapor product they used in the past 30 days</i>	—	13%	10%	9%	Trend not reported by CDC —
<b>Ever Used Synthetic Marijuana</b> <i>percentage of students who used synthetic</i>	—	9%	7%	9%	No change in behavior 

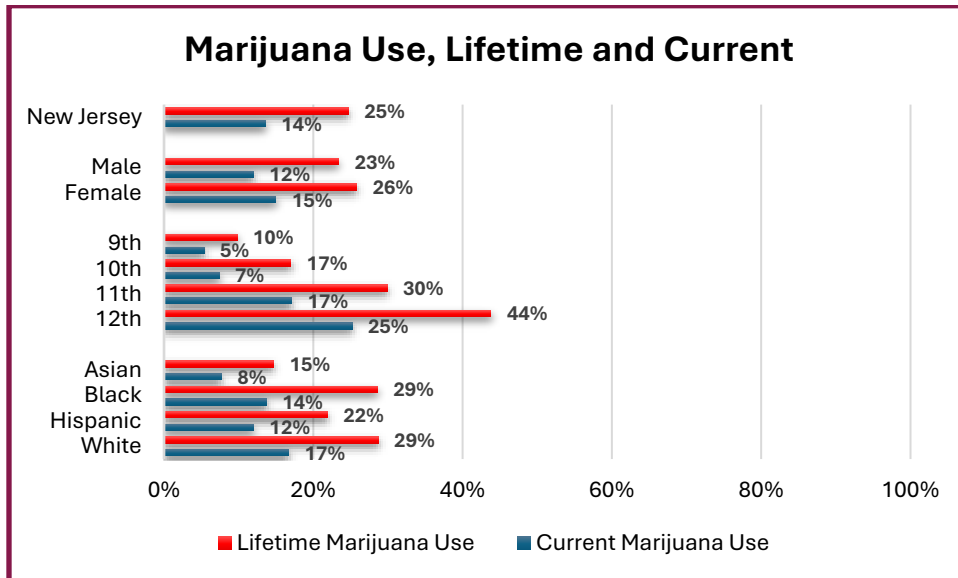
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<i>marijuana (also called Spice, fake weed, K2, or Black Mamba) one or more times during their life</i>					

**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 marijuana was reported by 25% and 14% of NJ high school students respectively.

- **Gender** – There were few differences between gender regarding marijuana use with females slightly more likely than males to have reported marijuana use in their lifetime (26% vs 23%, respectively) or current use of marijuana (15% vs 12%).
- **Grade** – Lifetime and current use of marijuana was most likely among 12<sup>th</sup> graders (44% and 25%, respectively) and 11<sup>th</sup> graders (30% and 17%, respectively) than 9<sup>th</sup> (10% and 5%, respectively) or 10<sup>th</sup> graders (17% and 7%, respectively).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Black (29%) and White (29%) students were more likely than Hispanics (22%) or Asian (15%) students to have used marijuana in their lifetime. Current use of marijuana was more prevalent amongst White students (17%) than Black (14%), Hispanic (12%) or Asian (8%) students.



## Resources

- ReachNJ -- Facing Addiction Taskforce: 1-844-ReachNJ (New Jersey's 24/7 Addiction Helpline), <https://nj.gov/humanservices/reachnj/>
- New Jersey Prevention Network: <https://www.njpn.org>
- Parent-To-Parent: <http://www.parent2parentnj.org/index.php>
- Partnership for Drug-Free Kids: <https://drugfree.org/>
- Resource Manual For Intervention And Referral Services (I&RS): <https://www.nj.gov/education/students/irs/>
- Substance Abuse Prevention Parent Education Program: <http://drugfreenj.org/child-break/15-minute-child-break/>

## Sexual Behavior

Nationwide, early initiation of sexual intercourse is associated with having a greater number of lifetime sexual partners, increased risk of STDs and pregnancy, and decreased condom usage.<sup>(1)</sup> Prevalence estimates suggest that young people aged 15–24 years acquire half of all new STDs.<sup>(2)</sup> Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 30% had sexual intercourse during their life, 6% had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life, and 20.7% had sexual intercourse with at least one person during the three months before the survey.<sup>(3)</sup> The percentage of sexually active students who used a condom during last sexual intercourse has been declining since 2003 (63% - 52%).<sup>(4)</sup>

### 2023 Results

The following are findings related to various issues related to sexual behavior among NJ students for 2023:







- Less than one-in-five NJ students were currently sexually active (17%) as defined by having sexual intercourse in the past three months.
- 5% of students have had sex with 4 or more partners in their lives.
- Sexual intercourse before the age of 13 was reported by 3% of students.
- Among students who were sexually active in the past 3 months, almost two-thirds reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse (62%).

Other findings in these areas include the following:

- 6% of students reported having an HIV test and 3% report testing for an STD.
- Among currently sexually active students, 23% used birth control pills; an IUD (such as Mirena or ParaGard) or implant (such as Implanon or Nexplanon); or a shot (such as Depo-Provera), patch (such as OrthoEvra), or birth control ring (such as NuvaRing) before their last sexual intercourse with an opposite-sex partner to prevent pregnancy.
- Among currently sexually active students, 11% of students did not use any method to prevent pregnancy during their last sexual intercourse.
- The survey included a question asking students if they identify as transgender and another question asking students how they describe their sexual identity. A student is considered Heterosexual/Cisgender if they answered they were not transgender and that they described themselves as heterosexual (straight). All others were identified as LGBTQ+ and include students who answered that they are transgender or are not sure if they are transgender or those who describe themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning, or some other way. Among New Jersey high school students, 76% are classified as Heterosexual/Cisgender and 24% as LGBTQ+.

## Trend Summary

The 10-year trend related to sexual behavior issues among New Jersey youth is generally positive. The percentage of students who were currently sexually active declined from 29% to 17% from 2013 to 2023. Likewise, sex with more than four partners in one’s life (12% to 5%) and sex before the age of 13 (5% to 3%) both declined in this 10-year period. The use of condoms before one’s last sexual encounter increased slightly from 59% to 62%, though the change was not significant.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Sexual Intercourse Before the Age of 13</b> <i>had sexual intercourse for the first time before the age of 13</i>	5%	3%	2%	<b>3%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Sexual Intercourse with Multiple Partners</b> <i>had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during their life</i>	12%	7%	4%	<b>5%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Currently Having Sexual Intercourse</b> <i>had sexual intercourse with at least one person in the past 3 months.</i>	29%	24%	18%	<b>17%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Used a Condom</b> <i>among students who had sex in the past 3 months, used a condom during their last sexual intercourse</i>	59%	63%	52%	<b>62%</b>	No change in behavior 
<b>HIV</b> <i>were ever tested for human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)</i>	9%	8%	3%	<b>6%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Sexually Transmitted Disease</b> <i>were tested for a sexually transmitted disease (STD) other than HIV, such as chlamydia or gonorrhea</i>	—	7%	4%	<b>3%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 

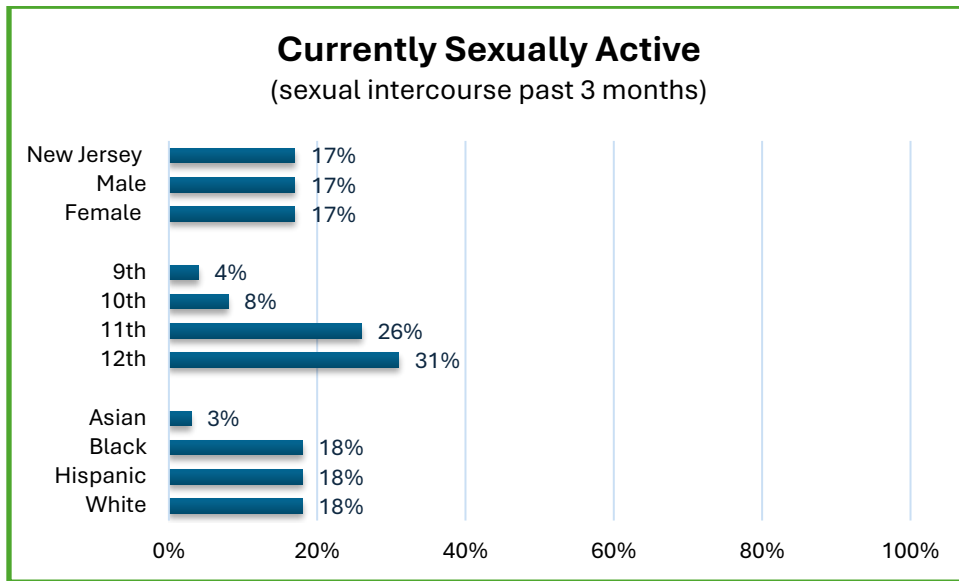
**Note:** Trend analysis was performed by the CDC on data from 2013 to 2023 to determine which differences across years were statistically significant. For questions not asked in all survey years, the trend analysis was performed from 2021 back to the last consecutive year in which the question was asked.

## Demographic Breakdown

Under one-in-five NJ high school students (17%) were currently sexually active and have had sex in the past 3 months.

- **Gender** – Males and females (17% each) were equally likely to have had sex in the past 3 months.
- **Grade** – Current sexual activity increases by grade as those in 12<sup>th</sup> (31%) and 11<sup>th</sup> (26%) grades were more likely than those in 10<sup>th</sup> (8%) and 9<sup>th</sup> (4%) grades to have had sex in the past 3 months.

- **Race/Ethnicity** – Whites, Black and Hispanics were equally likely to have had sex in the past 3 months (18%) but only 3% of Asians reported current sexual activity.



**Resources**

- New Jersey Resources for Instruction:  
<https://www.nj.gov/education/safety/wellness/prevention/curr.shtml>
- ETR Resource Center for Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (ReCAPP):  
<http://recapp.etr.org/recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.home>
- RAND Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities:  
<https://www.rand.org/topics/teen-pregnancy.html>

## Violence/Bullying/Suicide/Mental Health

Adolescents who experience violence are at increased risk of behavioral and mental health difficulties, including future violence perpetration and victimization, smoking, substance use, obesity, high-risk sexual behavior, depression, academic difficulties, school dropout, and suicide.<sup>(1)</sup> Bullying victimization is associated with depression, suicidal ideation, self-injury, suicide attempts, school absenteeism or dropping out, and psychological distress.<sup>(2)</sup> Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people ages 10-14 and 20-34 in the United States.<sup>(3)</sup>

### 2023 Results

The following are findings related to various issues related to mental health, bullying, violence and suicide among NJ students for 2023:

- In the past year, 15% of NJ high school students reported they were electronically bullied on some social media platforms or through texting
- On at least one of the past 30 days, 7% of students skipped school because they felt unsafe either at school or on the way to school.
- In the past year, more than a third of NJ students (36%) felt sad or hopeless either always or most of the time for at least 2 weeks causing them to stop some or all of their usual activities.
- About one-in-seven students seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months (14%) while 11% made an actual plan for suicide and 5% reported attempting suicide in that period.
- One-in-five students (20%) did something to purposely hurt themselves (like cutting or burning) in the past 12 months without wanting to die.
- More than a quarter of students (27%) described their mental health in the past 30 days as being “not good” either always or most of the time.







Other findings in these areas include the following:

- Among students who visited a doctor, 23% reported their doctor or nurse discussed ways to deal with feelings of hopelessness or sadness.
- 23% of students gambled on a sports team, gambled when playing cards or a dice game, played one of their state's lottery games, gambled on the Internet, or bet on a game of personal skill such as pool or a video game at least once in the past 12 months.
- Among students who reported having felt sad or hopeless for 2 weeks or more at time in the past year, only 25% indicated they can get the kind of help they need most of the time or always.
- 10% of students indicated that someone forced them to do sexual things that they did not want to do in the past 12 months one or more times – 15% of females and 4% of males.
- Among the 56% of students who dated in the past 12 months, 12% indicated that someone they were dating or going out with physically hurt them on purpose one or more times. This was similar for both males and females who were dating.

## Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend related to violence/bullying/suicide/mental health issues among New Jersey youth is mixed, though largely unchanged. The percentage of students who reported being electronically bullied remained consistent at 15% from 2013 to 2023 while students who skipped school because they felt unsafe moved from 6% in 2013 to 7% in 2023. There was little change in the percentage of students who considered suicide (14% in 2013 and 2023) or those who made a plan for suicide (12% vs 11% in 2013 and 2023). Students reporting having made a suicide attempt though declined from 10% to 5% in that 10-year period.

The percentage of students who reported feeling sad/hopeless increased from 29% to 36% in the 10-year period, though the 2023 percentage represented a decrease from 42% in 2021. Likewise, students who reported their mental health was “not good” fell from 33% to 27% in the past two survey years of 2021 and 2023. The percentage of students who indicated they harmed themselves increased slightly from 18% to 20% across 2013 and 2023.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Felt Sad or Hopeless</b> <i>ever felt sad/hopeless almost every day for &gt;=2 weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities during the last 12 months</i>	29%	36%	42%	<b>36%</b>	Increase in a negative behavior 
<b>Considered Suicide</b> <i>seriously considered attempting suicide during the last 12 months</i>	14%	15%	20%	<b>14%</b>	No change in behavior 
<b>Made Plan for Suicide</b> <i>made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the last 12 months</i>	12%	12%	13%	<b>11%</b>	No change in behavior 
<b>Attempted Suicide</b> <i>actually attempted suicide</i>	10%	6%	10%	<b>5%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Purposely Hurt Themselves</b> <i>did something to purposely hurt themselves without wanting to die (such as cutting or burning) one of more times in last 12 months</i>	18%	14%	22%	<b>20%</b>	No change in behavior 
<b>Skipped School because they Felt Unsafe</b> <i>did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least 1 day during the last 30 days</i>	6%	8%	11%	<b>7%</b>	No change in behavior 

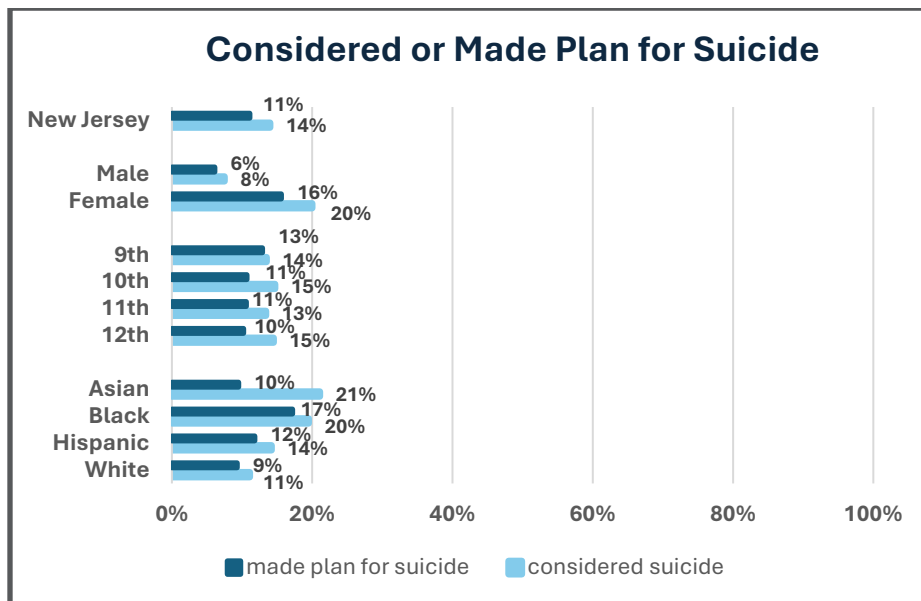
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Electronically Bullied</b> <i>ever bullied through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media during the last 12 months</i>	15%	14%	15%	15%	No change in behavior ●
<b>Mental Health Not Good</b> <i>reported mental health was not good most of the time or always (including stress, anxiety, and depression) during the past 30 days</i>			33%	27%	Trend not reported by CDC —

**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

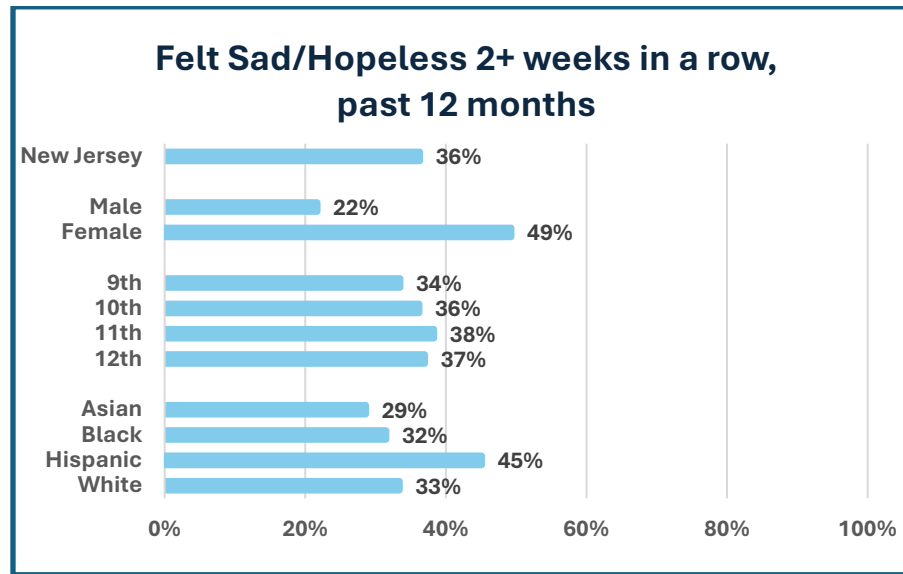
More than one-in-ten NJ high school students indicated they had either considered suicide (14%) or made a suicide plan (11%) in the past 12 months.

- **Gender** – Females were more than twice as likely as males to have either considered suicide (20% vs 8%) or to have made a suicide plan (16% vs 6%).
- **Grade** – There were very slight grade differences with regard to suicide consideration or planning.
- **Race/Ethnicity** –Asian (21%) and Black (20%) students were most likely to have considered suicide while Black students (17%) were most likely to have made a suicide plan.



More than one third of NJ high school students indicated they had felt sad or hopeless for two weeks in a row or more in the past 12 months.

- **Gender** – Females were more than twice as likely as males to have reported feeling sad/hopeless (49% vs 22%).
- **Grade** – There were very slight grade differences regarding feeling sad/hopeless with those in 11<sup>th</sup> grade (38%) having the highest rate and those in 9<sup>th</sup> grade (34%) with the lowest.
- **Race/Ethnicity** –Hispanic students (45%) were most likely to have felt sad/hopeless for two or more weeks in a row compared to much lower rates for Asian (29%), Blacks (32%) or Whites (33%).



### Resources

- Suicide Prevention Hotline: Call or Text 988
- NJ Hopeline: Call or Text 855-654-6735, <https://njhopeline.com>
- Prevent Suicide New Jersey: <https://preventsuicidenj.org/>
- American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP): <https://afsp.org>
- Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC): <https://www.sprc.org/states/new-jersey>
- Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide (SPTS): <https://sptsusa.org>

## Physical Activity / Dietary Behavior

Participation in regular physical activity among young people can help build and maintain healthy bones and muscles, maintain body weight and reduce body fat, reduce feelings of depression and anxiety, and promote psychological well-being.<sup>(1)</sup> Over time, regular physical activity decreases the risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, some types of cancer and premature death.<sup>(1)</sup> The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that youth ages 13-18 get 8 to 10 hours of sleep per day.<sup>(2)</sup> Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 77.3% did not get the recommended 8 to 10 hours of sleep on school nights.<sup>(3)</sup>

### 2023 Results

The following are findings related to various issues related to physical health and dietary behaviors among NJ students for 2023:

- Almost three-in-ten NJ high school students (29%) were classified as obese (12%) or overweight (17%).
- Three-in-ten students also described themselves as very or slightly overweight (32%).
- About one-in-ten students drank at least one glass of soda a day, every day for the past 7 days (9%).
- 5% of students drank an energy drink (like Red Bull or Jolt) once a day or more for the past 7 days.
- Only 28% of students had breakfast every day for the past 7 days.
- Over three-quarters of students have two glasses of water a day (78%).
- In the past 30 days, only 3% of students reported going hungry always or most of the time because there was no or little food in their home.
- In the past 7 days, 13% of students did not spend 1 day participating in any physical activity that lasted at least 60 minutes.









Other findings in these areas include the following:

- In the 12 months, 14% of NJ high school students reported having had a concussion from playing a sport or being physically active.
- 84% of students spent three or more hours of screen time (in front of a TV, computer, smartphone, or other electronic device watching shows or videos, playing games, accessing the Internet, or using social media, not counting time spent doing schoolwork, on an average school day.
- 80% of students saw a dentist (for a check-up, exam, teeth cleaning, or other dental work) during the past 12 months while only 1% have never been to a dentist in their lives.
- 22% of students got 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night.
- 1% of students reported an unstable housing situation in the past 30 days.
- 19% of students have been told by a doctor or medical professional that they have asthma.

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend related to physical health and dietary behavior issues among New Jersey youth is mixed, though largely unchanged. The percentage of students who were overweight/obese increased from 23% to 29% from 2013 to 2023 while obesity increased from 9% to 12%. Student self-perception of being slightly or very overweight did not change – remaining at 30% to 32%. Drinking a glass of soda a day went down slightly from 12% to 9% in this period; having one or more energy drinks a day like Red Bull or Jolt increased from 2% to

5%; and drinking two glasses of water or more increased from 74% to 78%. Eating breakfast daily decreased from 40% to 28%. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who indicated they went hungry because of a lack of food in the home declined slightly from 5% to 3%. There was little change in those showing a lack of physical activity with 13% of students not once engaging in 60 minutes of physical activity over the past 7 days compared to 12% in 2013.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Overweight</b> <i>were overweight (&gt;=85<sup>th</sup> percentile of BMI based on sex and age-specific reference data from the 2000 CDC growth charts)</i>	14%	15%	16%	17%	No change in behavior 
<b>Obesity</b> <i>were obese (&gt;=95<sup>th</sup> percentile of BMI based on sex and age-specific reference data from the 2000 CDC growth charts)</i>	9%	12%	14%	12%	Increase in a negative behavior 
<b>Describe Themselves as Overweight</b> <i>Percentage of students who described themselves as slightly or very overweight</i>		30%	31%	32%	No change in behavior 
<b>Drink Soda</b> <i>drank a can, bottle or glass of soda one or more times per day, such as Coke, Pepsi, or Sprite, not counting diet soda, during the past 7 days</i>	12%	10%	10%	9%	No change in behavior 
<b>Drink Energy Drink</b> <i>drank a can, bottle, or glass of an energy drink (such as Red Bull or Jolt, not counting diet energy drinks or sports drinks such as Gatorade or PowerAde, one or more times per day during the 7 days)</i>	2%	2%	5%	5%	Increase in a negative behavior 
<b>Eat Breakfast</b> <i>ate breakfast on all of the past 7 days</i>	40%	33%	27%	28%	Decrease in a positive behavior 
<b>Drink Water</b> <i>drank a bottle or glass of plain water two or more times per day</i>	–	74%	74%	78%	Increase in positive behavior 
<b>Not Physically Active</b> <i>did not participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on at least 1 day did not increase their heart rate and made them breathe hard some of the time during the past 7 days</i>	12%	15%	14%	13%	No change in behavior 

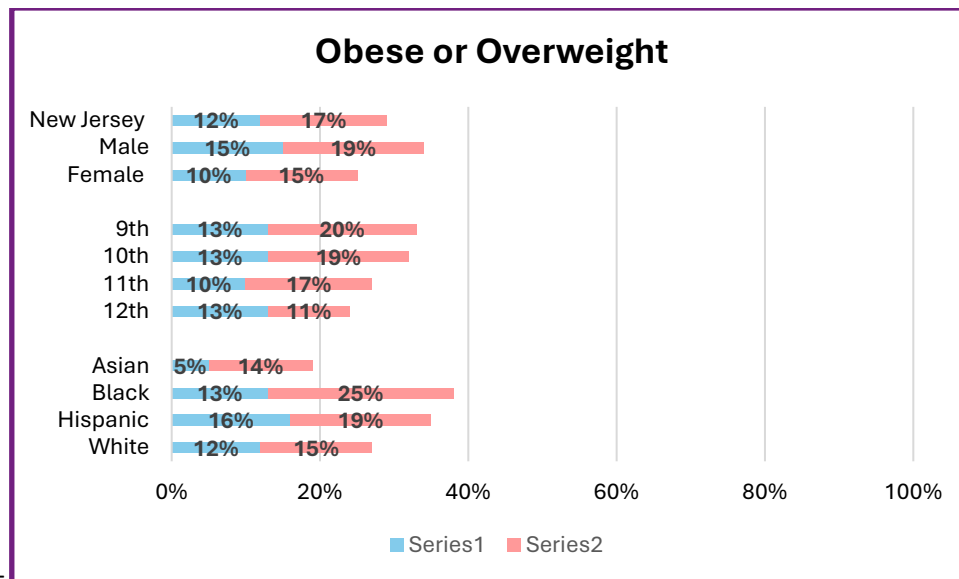
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Went Hungry</b> <i>most of time or always went hungry because there was not enough food in their home (during the last 30 days)</i>	5%	5%	4%	3%	No change in behavior ●
<b>Adequate Sleep</b> <i>got 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night</i>	27%	16%	23%	22%	No change in 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

Almost three-in-ten NJ high school students (29%) were classified as either obese (12%) or overweight (17%).

- **Gender** – Males (34%) were more likely than females (25%) to be classified as obese/overweight.
- **Grade** – Those in 9<sup>th</sup> (33%) and 10<sup>th</sup> (32%) grades have the highest rates of being obese/overweight as compared to those in 11<sup>th</sup> (27%) or 12<sup>th</sup> (24%) grades. However, about the same percentage of students were classified as obese in all grades (13% in grades 9, 10 and 12 and 10% in grade 11).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Black (38%) and Hispanic (35%) students were more likely than White (27%) and Asian (19%) students to be classified as obese/overweight.



### Resources

- New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance: <http://www.njahperd.org/>
- State Obesity Fact Sheets-National Initiative for Children’s Healthcare Quality (NICHQ): <https://www.nichq.org/>
- New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association: <https://www.njsiaa.org/>
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation-Promotes Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>

## Vehicle Safety

Motor vehicle crashes are one of the leading causes of death among youth aged 15 to 19 in the United States<sup>(1)</sup> and alcohol use is associated with 19% of all traffic fatalities among drivers 16 to 20 years of age.<sup>(2)</sup> Among high school students nationwide in 2021, 39.9% did not always wear a seat belt while 14.1% rode with a driver who had been drinking in the 30 days before the survey.<sup>(3)</sup>




### 2023 Results

The following are findings related to vehicle safety among NJ students for 2023:

- Half of New Jersey students (50%) indicated they did not always wear a seatbelt when driving in a vehicle with someone else.
- About one-in-eight students (13%) have driven in a car/vehicle in the past 30 days with a driver who had been drinking alcohol.
- Among students who have driven a car/vehicle in the past 30 days, 2% used alcohol prior to driving.
- Among students who have driven a car/vehicle in the past 30 days, 35% have texted/emailed while driving.

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for vehicle safety issues among New Jersey youth is positive. Among student drivers, the percentage of students who have used alcohol prior to driving decreased from 9% to 2% and the percentage of students who texted/emailed when driving declined from 36% in 2013 to 29%-31% in 2019-2021 but back up to 35% in 2023. Fewer students reported driving in a vehicle with someone who had used alcohol prior to driving – down from 20% to 13%. Meanwhile, the percentage of students who reported they did not always wear a seatbelt when driving in a car/vehicle was at 50%, the same as in 2013 after slight decreases to 45-46% in prior years.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Does Not Wear a Seatbelt</b> <i>does not always wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else</i>	50%	46%	45%	<b>50%</b>	No change in behavior 
<b>Rode with a Driver Who had Used Alcohol</b> <i>in a car or other vehicle 1+ times in the past 30 days</i>	20%	12%	12%	<b>13%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 
<b>Drove a Car/Vehicle after having used Alcohol</b> <i>1+ times in the past 30 days (among students who had driven a car/vehicle in past 30 days)</i>	9%	3%	2%	<b>2%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior 

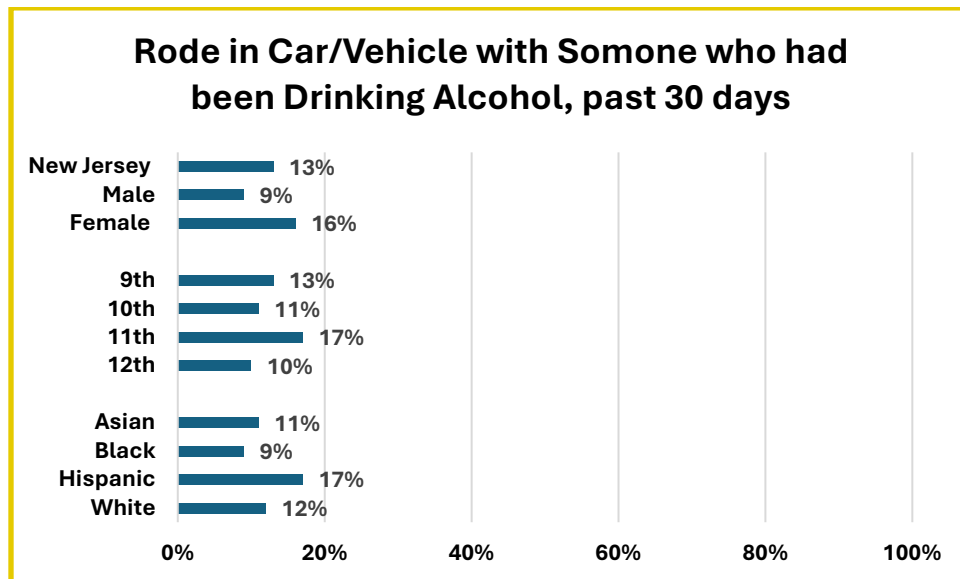
Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Texted or E-mailed while Driving a Car/Vehicle</b> <i>on at least one of the past 30 days (among students who had driven a car/vehicle in past 30 days)</i>	36%	29%	31%	<b>35%</b>	Decrease in negative behavior ↓

**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

The percentage of NJ high school students who reported driving in a car/vehicle in the past 30 days with someone who had drunk alcohol was 13%.

- **Gender** – Females were more likely than males to have reported driving with someone who had used alcohol (16% vs 9%).
- **Grade** – Those in 11<sup>th</sup> grade (17%) were most likely to have reported driving with someone who had used alcohol, compared to students in grade 9 (13%), 10 (11%) and 12 (10%).
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Hispanic students (17%) were most likely to have reported driving with someone who had used alcohol, compared to White (12%), Asian (11%) and Black (9%) students.



### Resources

- Teen Driving | NHTSA: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/teen-driving>
- NJ MVC: <https://www.state.nj.us/mvc/press/archives/2017/101817.htm>
- Teen Driver Safety Programs | NJM: <https://www.njm.com/teen-driver-safety>

## Risk Perceptions




### 2023 Results








The following are findings related to risk perceptions among NJ students for 2023:

- About half of students perceived great risk in people harming themselves if they take prescription drugs without a prescription (49%); while only a quarter or fewer saw great risk in having 5+ drinks of alcohol 1 or 2 times a week (25%); or saw great risk in using marijuana 1 or 2 times a week (20%).
- When students were asked about their friends’ attitudes about substance use, over 4-in-5 students thought their friends believe it is wrong/very wrong to take prescription drugs without a prescription (83%), while about two-thirds indicated their friends considered it was wrong/very wrong for kids to smoke (70%) or to drink daily (66%); and about half of students believed their friends thought it was wrong/very wrong for students to use marijuana (52%).
- Students were also asked about their parents’ attitudes regarding substance use. Here, about 9-in-10 students indicated their parents felt it was wrong/very wrong to take prescription drugs without a prescription (95%), to smoke cigarettes (94%), to drink alcohol daily (86%), and to use marijuana (84%).

### Trend Summary

The general 10-year trend for the risk perception questions among New Jersey youth is fairly stable, and for any item that has changed, the results are mixed. Fewer students now see great risk in having 5+ drinks 1-2 times a week (25% in 2023 compared to 39% in 2019); and friends thinking it is wrong/very wrong for students smoking has declined from 77% in 2019 to 70% in 2023. Conversely, more students indicated that their friends think it is wrong/very wrong for other kids to use marijuana – up from 41% in 2019 to 52% in 2023; and more students noted their parents think it is wrong for students to smoke cigarettes – up from 91% in 2019 to 94% in 2023. All other items showed no statistical change when asked in prior years.

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Risk of 5+ drinks 1-2 times a week</b> <i>student perceives great risk in people harming themselves if they have 5+ drinks of alcohol 1 or 2 times a week</i>	--	39%	38%	<b>25%</b>	Decrease in a positive behavior 
<b>Risk if use marijuana 1-2 times a week</b> <i>student perceives great risk in people harming themselves if they use marijuana 1 or 2 times a week</i>	--	20%	21%	<b>20%</b>	No change in behavior 
<b>Risk to use RX drugs not prescribed</b> <i>student perceives great risk in people harming themselves if they take prescription drugs without a prescription</i>	--	--	--	<b>49%</b>	--
<b>Friends attitude towards kid smoking</b> <i>student thinks their friends feel it's wrong or very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes</i>	--	77%	71%	<b>70%</b>	Decrease in a positive behavior 

Percentage of New Jersey Youth Who	2013	2019	2021	2023	Trend
<b>Friends attitude towards kid drinking alcohol daily</b> <i>student thinks their friends feel it's wrong or very wrong for them to drink alcohol nearly every day</i>	--	60%	63%	66%	No change in behavior 
<b>Friends attitudes towards kid marijuana use</b> <i>student thinks their friends feel it's wrong or very wrong for them to use marijuana</i>	--	41%	47%	52%	Increase in positive behavior 
<b>Friends attitude towards kid taking Rx drug w/o RX</b> <i>student thinks their friends feel it's wrong or very wrong for them to take a prescription drug without a prescription</i>	--	83%	83%	83%	No change in behavior 
<b>Parental attitude towards kid smoking</b> <i>student thinks their parent feels it's wrong or very wrong for them to smoke cigarettes</i>	91%	95%	94%	94%	Increase in positive behavior 
<b>Parental attitude towards kid daily alcohol drinking</b> <i>student thinks their parent feels it's wrong or very wrong for them to drink alcohol nearly every day</i>	--	85%	88%	86%	No change in behavior 
<b>Parental attitude towards kid marijuana use</b> <i>student thinks their parent feels it's wrong or very wrong for them to use marijuana</i>	--	84%	82%	84%	No change in behavior 
<b>Parental attitude towards kid taking Rx drug w/o prescription</b> <i>student thinks their parent feels it's wrong or very wrong for them to take a prescription drug without a prescription</i>	--	94%	95%	95%	No change in 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.

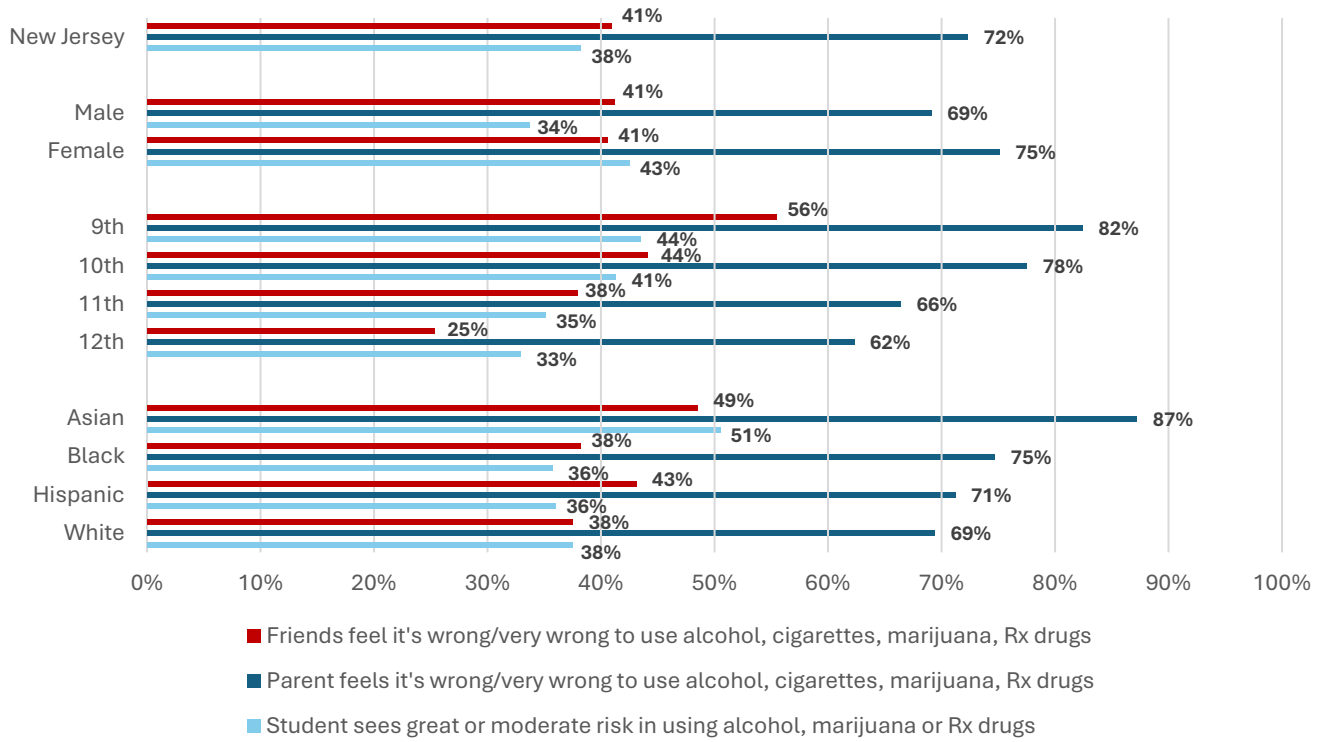
## Demographic Breakdown

The figure below combines the 11 risk perception questions into three groups related to whether (1) students feel their friends think is wrong/very wrong for other students to use alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana or prescription drugs without a prescription; (2) students see a great/moderate risk in using alcohol, marijuana or prescription drugs without a prescription; and (3) students think their parents feel it is wrong/very wrong to use each of the four substances. The condition for all group items have to be met in order for the student risk perception to be considered positive. In other words, for the first group of items related to whether students feel their friends think it is wrong/very wrong to use alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, or prescription drugs, each of the 4 items has to have a response of wrong/very wrong for the item to be considered as having a positive risk perception.

From the figure below, it is clear that students feel their parents are much more likely to think using the four substances is wrong/very wrong (72%) than what students feel about their friends use of such substances (41%). At the same time, student self-perception of the risk of using 3 of the substances (37%) is not as great as parental concern on the items.

- **Gender** – Females were more likely than males to feel other students see it as wrong to use substances than males (43% vs 34%) and to think their parents are more likely to view substance use as wrong (75% vs 69%).
- **Grade** – Students in lower grades are much more likely than those in higher grades to perceive risk in substance use and to think their parents and friends think is wrong to use substances.
- **Race/Ethnicity** – Asian students are much more likely than White, Black and Hispanic students to perceive risk in substance use and to think their parents and friends think is wrong to use substances.

## Risk Perceptions



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