

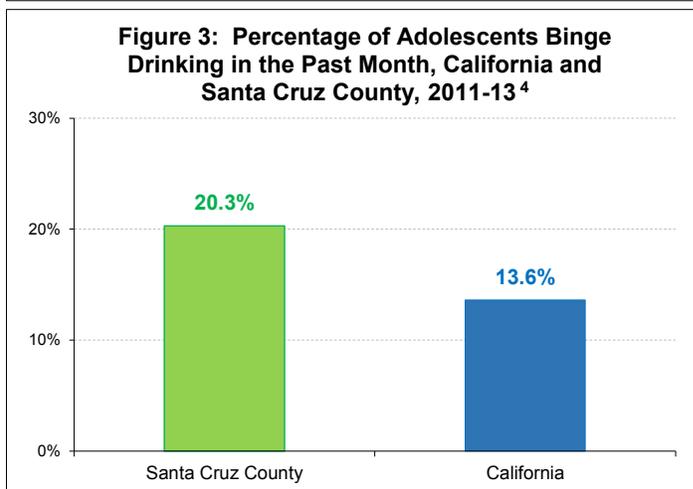
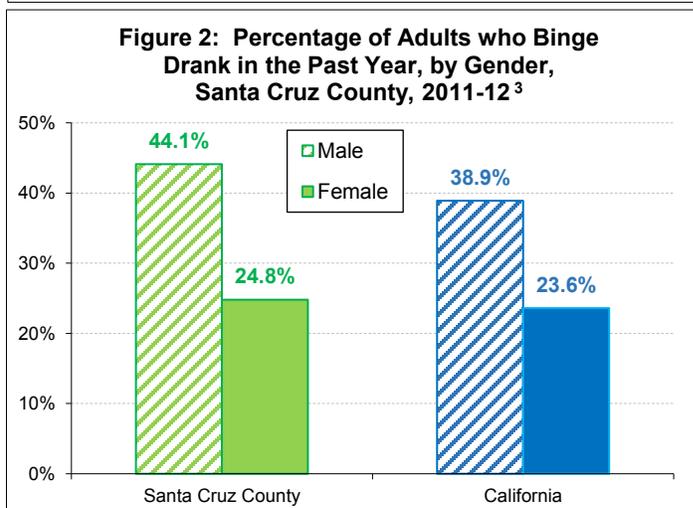
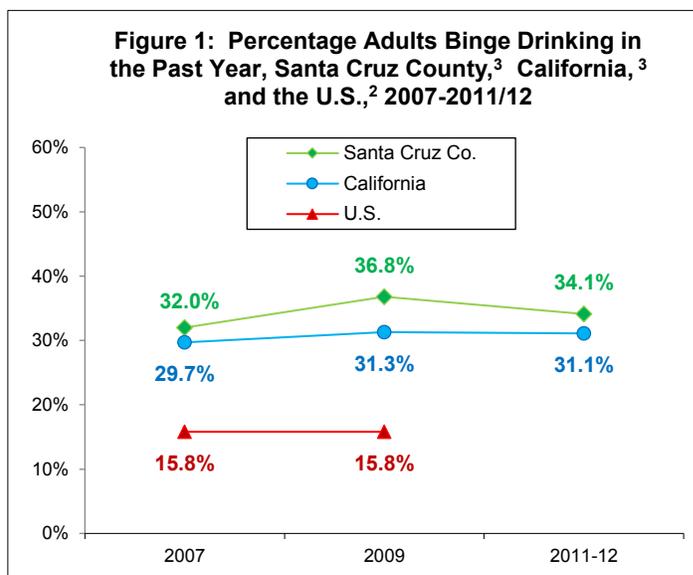
# ALCOHOL USE

Excessive alcohol use, including underage drinking, drinking while pregnant, binge drinking (drinking 5 or more drinks on an occasion for men or 4 or more drinks on an occasion for women), and heavy drinking (drinking 15 or more drinks per week for men or 8 or more drinks per week for women), is associated with numerous health problems, such as injuries, violence, liver diseases, and cancer.<sup>1</sup> Even moderate drinking (defined as up to 2 drinks per day for men or up to 1 drink per day for women) is associated with increased health risks. Also, there is no safe level of alcohol use during pregnancy.

Over one-third of adults in Santa Cruz County had an occasion of binge drinking in the past year in 2011-2012, which is more than twice the U.S. percentage of 15.8% in 2009 (Figure 1).<sup>2,3</sup> By gender, men binge drink more than women in Santa Cruz County and statewide (Figure 2). Binge drinking typically decreases with age, e.g., 13% of persons 65 and over had a binge drinking episode in the past year compared to 48% of persons age 18 to 39 in Santa Cruz County.<sup>3</sup>

## ADOLESCENT ALCOHOL USE

Consequences of youth alcohol use include increased risk of fatal and non-fatal injuries, risky sexual behaviors, poor school performance, and increased risk of suicide and homicide.<sup>1</sup> Research has also shown that youth who use alcohol before age 15 are five times more likely to become alcohol dependent than adults who begin drinking at age 21 or later.<sup>1</sup> Between 2011 and 2013, 20.3% of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders (including non-traditional students) in Santa Cruz County consumed 5 or more servings of alcohol within a couple hours on one occasion within the past month, versus 13.6% statewide (Figure 3).<sup>4</sup>



### Sources

- (1) CDC, Alcohol and Public Health. "Frequently Asked Questions." <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>
- (2) CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Population Health. BRFSS Prevalence & Trends Data [online]. 2015. Accessed Jul 21, 2015. <http://wwwdev.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>.
- (3) UCLA. California Health Interview Survey. AskCHIS. <http://ask.chis.ucla.edu>
- (4) California Dept. of Education. CHKS (California Healthy Kids Survey). Data compiled by KidsData.org. <http://www.kidsdata.org/>