

# OTHER SUBSTANCE USE

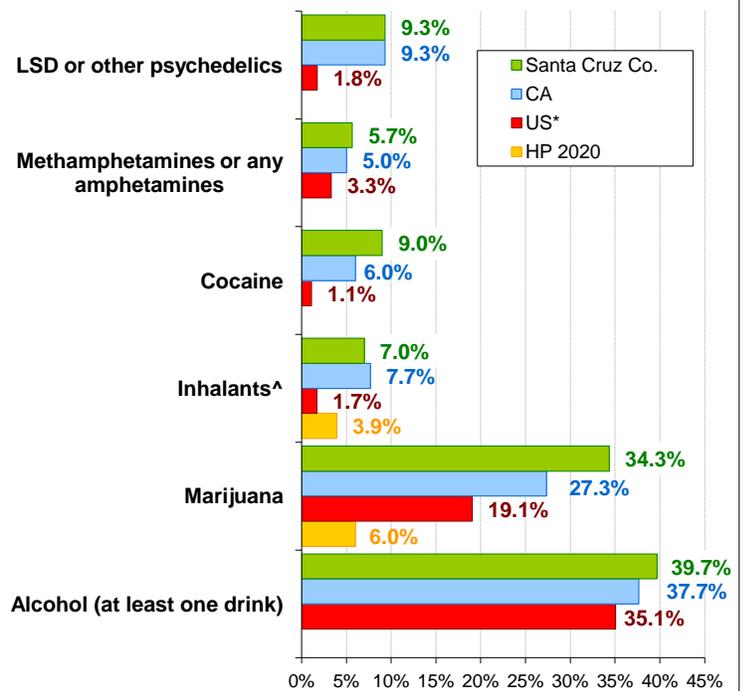
<p><b>Importance</b></p>	<p>The impact of illicit drug use and addiction is far-reaching. Cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, HIV/AIDS, hepatitis, and lung disease can all be associated with and/or affected by drug abuse, as can fatal and nonfatal overdose and other diseases associated with high-risk behavior and sexual transmission. There is a body of literature and research that details the complex and sometimes reciprocal linkages between illegal drug use and negative health and social experiences.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p><b>Healthy People 2020 Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decrease the proportion of adolescents using inhalants in the past year to 3.9%</li> <li>- Decrease the proportion of adolescents using marijuana in the past month to 6.0%</li> <li>- Decrease the proportion of adolescents using an illicit drug in the past month to 7.1%</li> </ul>

Some drugs with abuse potential have been shown to alter gene expression and brain circuitry, and consequently may permanently affect human behavior. When drug abuse occurs, a person's ability to exert self-control becomes seriously impaired. Brain imaging studies from drug-addicted individuals show physical changes in areas of the brain that are critical to judgment, decision-making, behavior control, and learning and memory. Scientists believe that these changes alter the way the brain works, and may help explain the compulsive and destructive behaviors of addiction. Some of these effects occur only when drugs are used at high doses or after prolonged use; however, some may occur after just one use.<sup>1</sup>

Adolescents are especially at risk for the negative and often life-long impacts of drug abuse, because their brains are still maturing – specifically, “the prefrontal cortex – the part of the brain that enables us to assess situations, make sound decisions, and keep our emotions and desires under control. The fact that this critical part of an adolescent’s brain is still a work-in-progress puts them at increased risk for poor decisions (such as trying drugs or continued abuse). Thus, introducing drugs while the brain is still developing may have profound and long-lasting consequences.”<sup>1</sup>

The proportions of high school students in Santa Cruz County who have recently used illicit substances are similar to the statewide rates, except for marijuana and cocaine usage, for which Santa Cruz County rates are notably higher, 26% and 50% respectively, than California rates (Figure 1).<sup>2,4,6</sup>

**Figure 1: Percentages of 9th, 11th, and Non-traditional High School Students Who Consumed the Following Substances in the 30 Days Prior to the Survey, 2008-2010\* 2, 4, 6**



\*Note: Santa Cruz County data 2009-2011, California data 2008-2010, US data for Grades 10 and 12 in 2010.  
 ^Inhalant Use for the last 12 months.  
 Sources: California Healthy Kids Survey, University of Michigan (UoM)

While the U.S. data represented in Figure 1 comes from a different source (10th and 12th grade, 2010 data from UoM<sup>6</sup>) and may not be dependably comparable with the source used for Santa Cruz County and the state of California (9th and 11th grade data collected between 2008 and 2010 from CHKS), it is worth noting that Inhalants, LSD or other psychedelics, and Cocaine usage are 4.5, 5.1, and 8.2 times higher in Santa Cruz County than in the U.S., respectively.<sup>2,4,6</sup> Both inhalant and marijuana use in Santa Cruz County are far higher than the 2020 national objectives (Figure 1).<sup>2,4,6</sup>

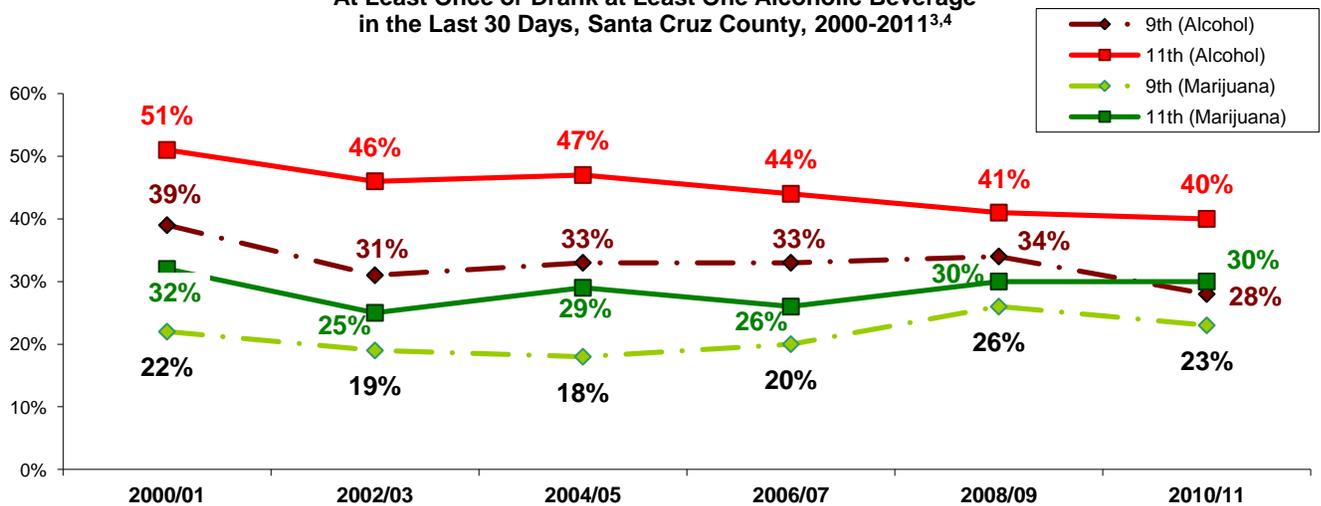
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Between the 2000/01 and 2010/11 school years, there has been little or no reduction in the proportions of 11th graders who have used drugs in the last 30 days, with the exception of an 11% decrease in alcohol consumption. The proportion of 9th graders who have used has increased or stayed the same for every substance asked about, except alcohol. A higher proportion of 9th graders than 11th graders reported using methamphetamines and inhalants in the 2010/11 school year (Figures 2 to 6).<sup>3,4</sup>

In addition to alcohol and illegal drugs, abuse of prescription and over-the-counter drugs for nonmedical uses is an increasing issue. In 2011, 15.2% of high school seniors in the United States reported nonmedical use of prescription and over-the-counter medicines in the past year.<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that improper use of prescription drugs, even for medical purposes, is a major cause of poisoning and death (see the Mortality Chapter).

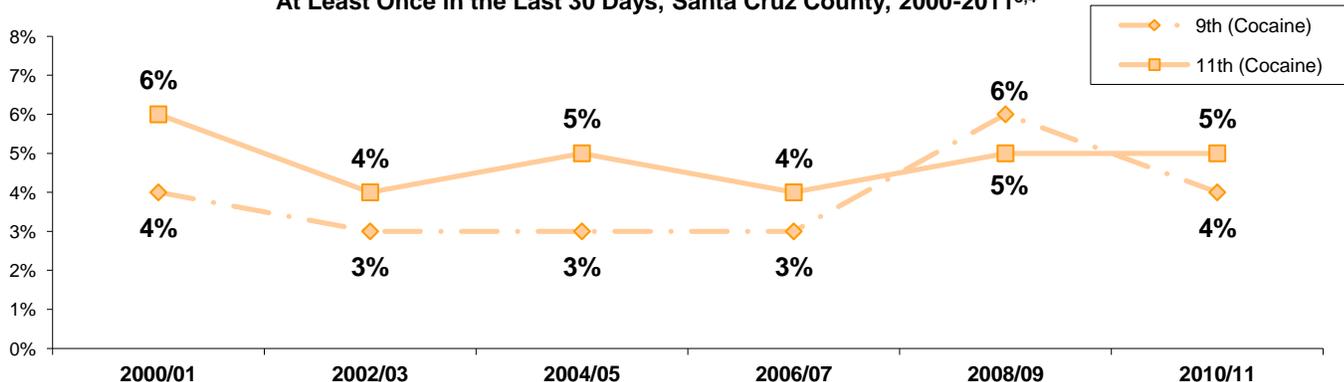
Drugs such as synthetic marijuana (a.k.a. K2/Spice), Salvia, and "bath salts" are emerging on the market, and since they are new, they are under- or unregulated and can be sold in head shops, gas stations, and via the Internet. Often they are falsely considered "safer" than illicit drugs because they are sold legally. In 2011, 11.4% of high school seniors reported using K2/Spice in the past year nationwide.<sup>5</sup>

**Figure 2: Percentages of 9th and 11th Grade Students Who Used Marijuana At Least Once or Drank at Least One Alcoholic Beverage in the Last 30 Days, Santa Cruz County, 2000-2011<sup>3,4</sup>**



Note: Data are weighted based on gender, ethnicity, and location.  
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey via CAP, 2012

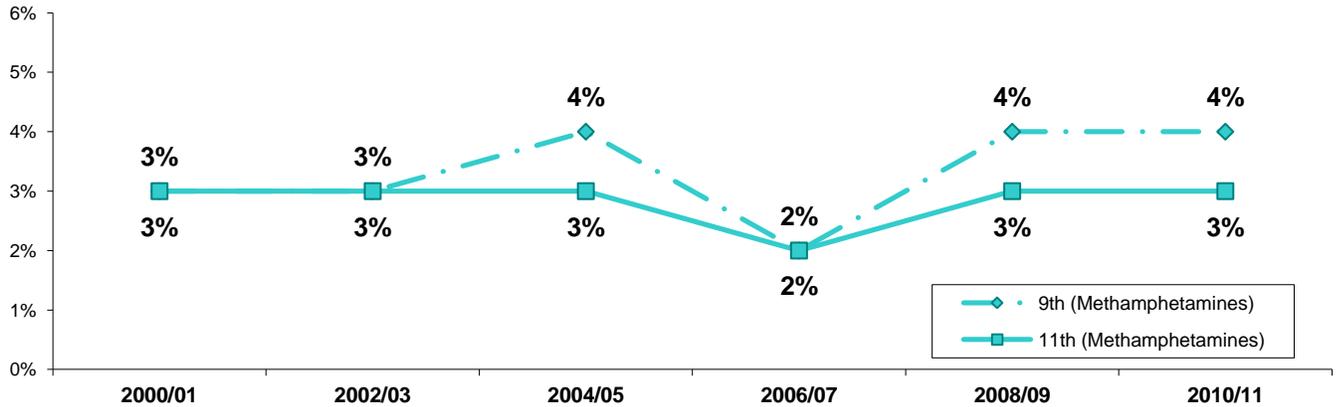
**Figure 3: Percentages of 9th and 11th Grade Students Who Used Cocaine At Least Once in the Last 30 Days, Santa Cruz County, 2000-2011<sup>3,4</sup>**



Note: Data are weighted based on gender, ethnicity, and location.  
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey via CAP, 2012

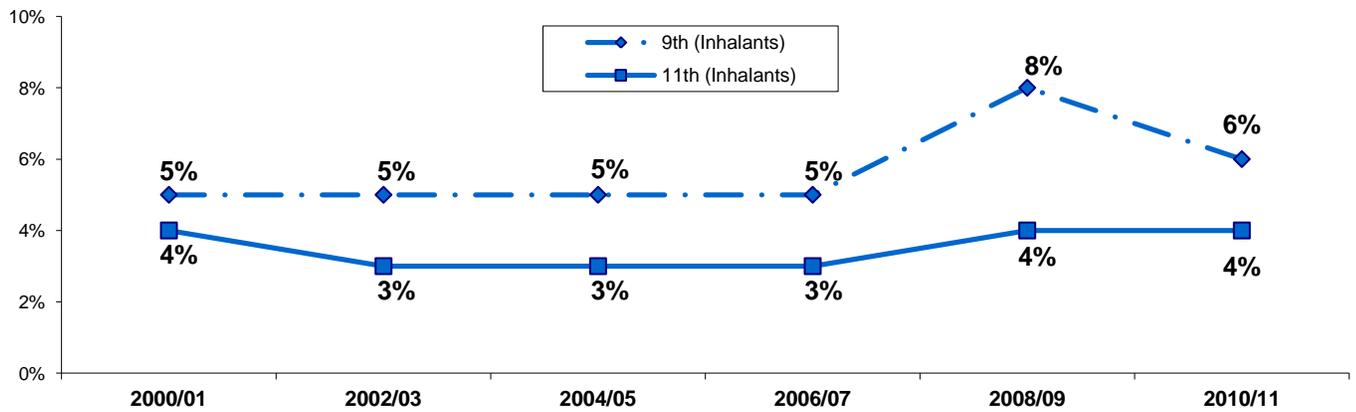
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**Figure 4: Percentages of 9th and 11th Grade Students Who Used Methamphetamines\* At Least Once in the Last 30 Days, Santa Cruz County, 2000-2011<sup>3,4</sup>**



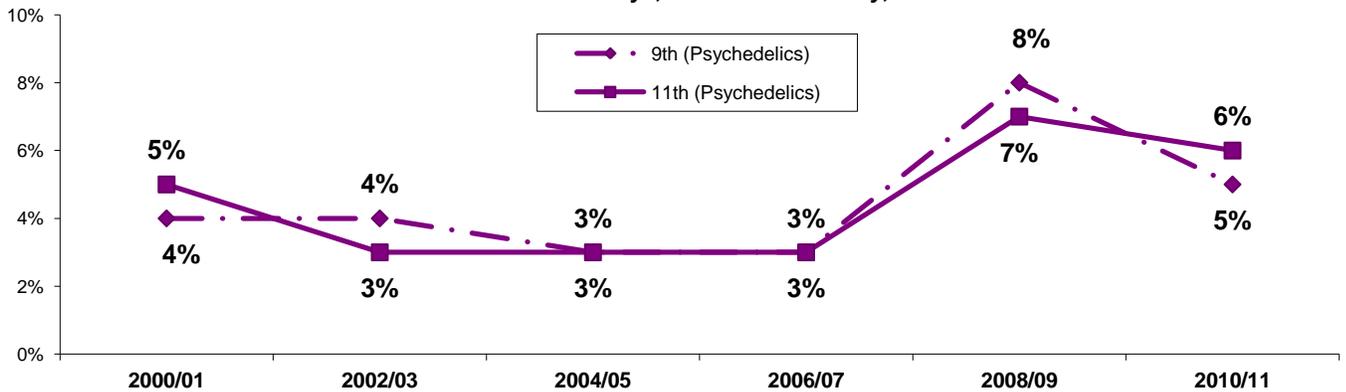
Notes: Data are weighted based on gender, ethnicity, and location. \*Includes other amphetamines.  
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey via CAP, 2012

**Figure 5: Percentages of 9th and 11th Grade Students Who Used Inhalants At Least Once in the Last 30 Days, Santa Cruz County, 2000-2011<sup>3,4</sup>**



Notes: Data are weighted based on gender, ethnicity, and location.  
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey via CAP, 2012

**Figure 6: Percentages of 9th and 11th Grade Students Who Used Psychedelics\* At Least Once in the Last 30 Days, Santa Cruz County, 2000-2011<sup>3,4</sup>**



Notes: Data are weighted based on gender, ethnicity, and location. \*Includes Ecstasy, LSD, or other psychedelics.  
Source: California Healthy Kids Survey via CAP, 2012

# OTHER SUBSTANCE USE

<p><b>Primary Prevention Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Santa Cruz County Friday Night Live Partnership:</b> comprises the Friday Night Live (FNL) and Club Live (CL) programs. These programs are multi-cultural and youth-driven and -led, designed to prevent alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use among middle school and high school students.</p>	
<p><b>Helpful Websites</b></p>	<p>National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.drugabuse.gov/">http://www.drugabuse.gov/</a></p>
	<p>Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)</p>	<p><a href="http://www.samhsa.gov/">http://www.samhsa.gov/</a></p>
<p><b>Sources</b></p>	<p>(1) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "Drugs, Brains, and Behavior: The Science of Addiction," published April 2007, revised August 2010. <a href="http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/science-addiction">http://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/science-addiction</a>.</p> <p>(2) Health and Human Development Program for the California Department of Education. Santa Cruz County. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2009-11: Main Report San Francisco: WestEd. <a href="http://www.wested.org/cs/chks/print/docs/chks_home.html">http://www.wested.org/cs/chks/print/docs/chks_home.html</a>.</p> <p>(3) Applied Survey Research. <i>Life in Santa Cruz County, Year 15 (2009), Year 18 (2012): Community Assessment Project: Comprehensive Report</i>. San Jose, CA: United Way of Santa Cruz, 2012.</p> <p>(4) Health and Human Development Program for the California Department of Education. Weighted Statewide. California Healthy Kids Survey, 2008-10: Main Report San Francisco: WestEd. <a href="http://www.wested.org/cs/chks/print/docs/chks_home.html">http://www.wested.org/cs/chks/print/docs/chks_home.html</a>.</p> <p>(5) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institutes of Health (NIH), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "DrugFacts: High School and Youth Trends" webpage. July 2012. Accessed October 2012. <a href="http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/HSYouthtrends.html">http://www.drugabuse.gov/infofacts/HSYouthtrends.html</a>.</p> <p>(6) Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Bachman, J. G., &amp; Schulenberg, J. E. (2012). Monitoring the Future – National Results on Adolescent Drug Use: Overview of Key Findings 2011. Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. <a href="http://monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-overview2011.pdf">http://monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/mtf-overview2011.pdf</a></p>	