

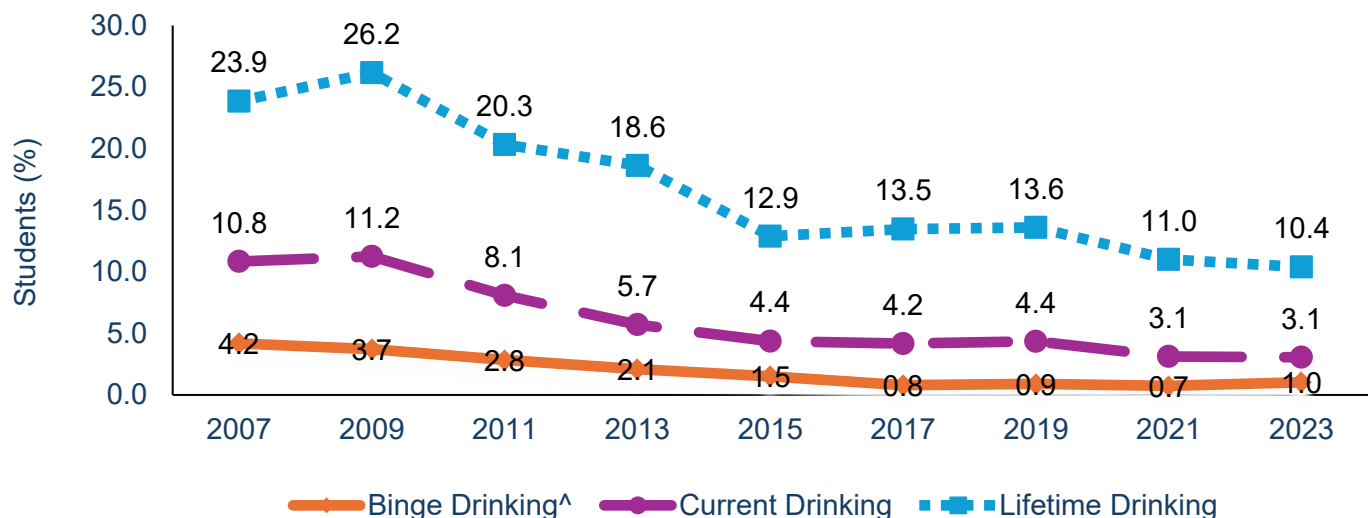
2023 Massachusetts Youth Health Survey Data Brief on Alcohol Use

April 2026

- The Massachusetts Youth Health Survey (MYHS) is a biannual surveillance project conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) to assess health status, protective factors, and risk behaviors, including substance use among public school students in grades 6–12. In 2023, 2,423 high school students and 3,304 middle school students participated in the survey.
- Alcohol, cigarettes, and marijuana were among the substances most commonly used by youth in Massachusetts.
- This data brief presents key findings from the 2023 MYHS on alcohol use among middle and high school students in Massachusetts.
- The COVID-19 pandemic influenced health-related behaviors, potentially altering substance use patterns during that period.

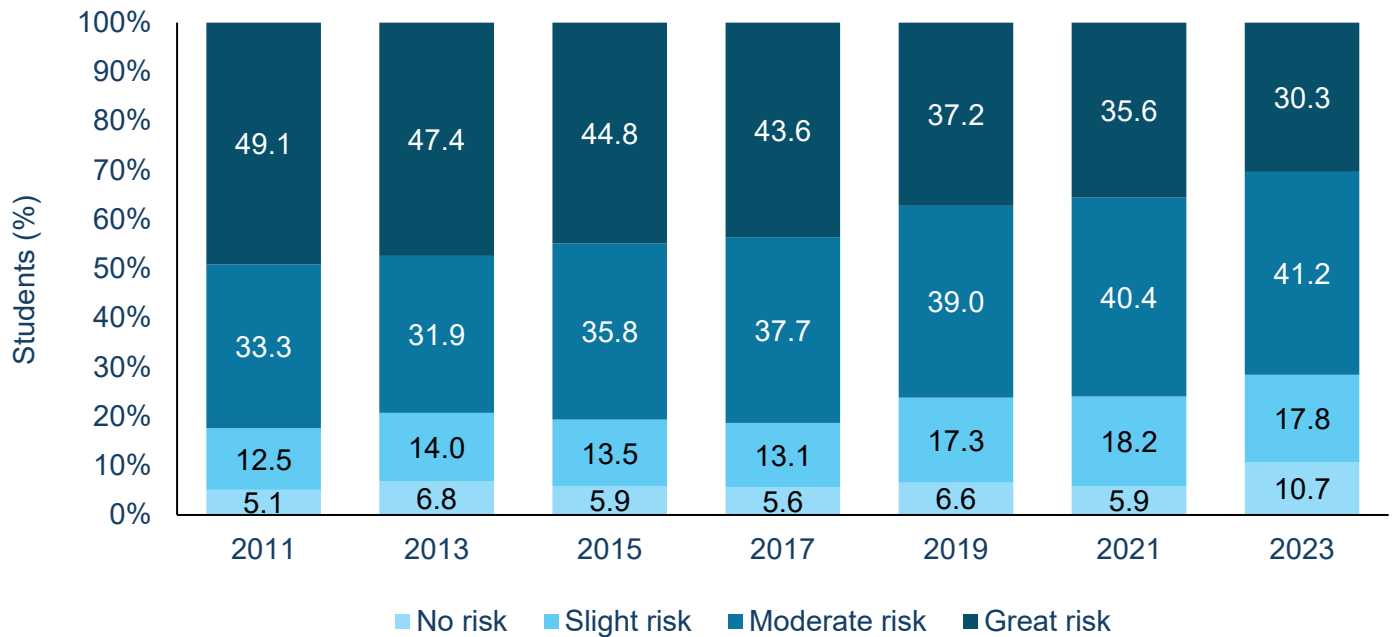
Middle School Data

Alcohol use trend (MYHS 2007-2023)



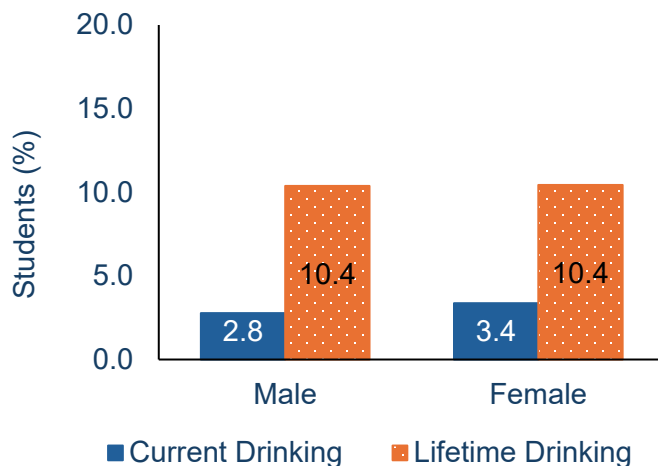
- From 2009 to 2015, estimated lifetime alcohol use and current (past 30-day) alcohol use among middle school students declined. Prevalence then stabilized from 2015 to 2019, followed by further decreases in 2021 and 2023, coinciding with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The estimated prevalence of binge drinking in the past 30 days decreased from 4.2% in 2007 to 0.7% in 2021 and was slightly higher at 1.0% in 2023.

Perception of risk of harm from having 5+ drinking in a row (MYHS 2011-2023)

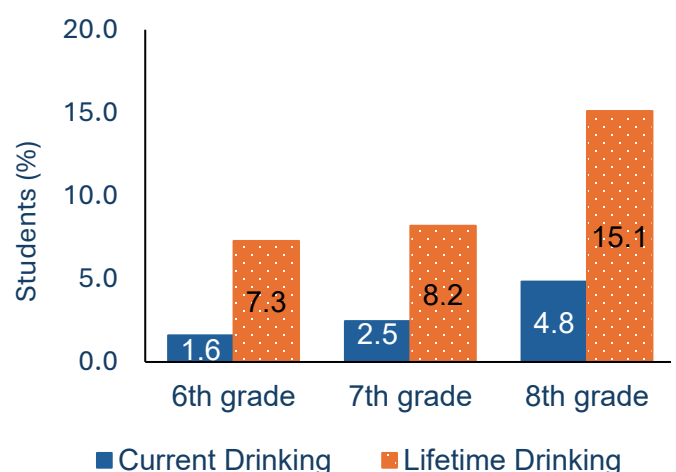


- Between 2011 and 2023, the percentage of students who perceived slight or moderate risk of harm (either physically or in other ways) from consuming 5 or more drinks in a row increased from a combined rate of 46% to 59%.
- Conversely, the proportion of students who perceived a great risk of harm from this behavior dropped from 49% in 2011 to 30% in 2023.

Alcohol use by gender (MYHS 2023)

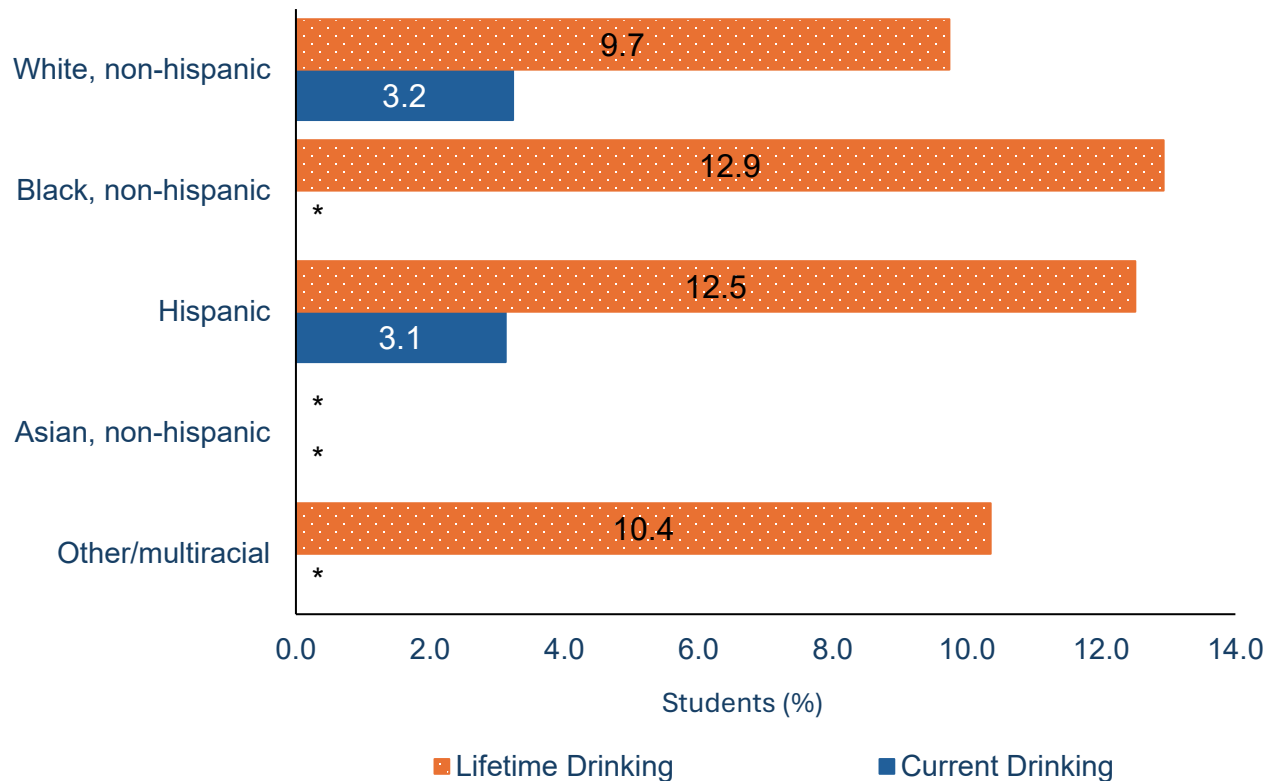


Alcohol use by grade (MYHS 2023)



- In 2023, an estimated 10.4% of middle school students reported lifetime alcohol use. The estimated percentage of students reporting alcohol use in the past 30 days was 3.4% for females and 2.8% for males.
- Estimated prevalence of both lifetime and current alcohol use was higher among students in higher grade levels.

Alcohol use by race and ethnicity (MYHS 2007-2023)



- Among racial and ethnic groups, 13% of Black, non-Hispanic and Hispanic students reported lifetime alcohol use, compared to 10% of White, non-Hispanic and Other or Multiracial students. Current alcohol use was reported by 3% of Hispanic and White, non-Hispanic students.
- Certain data values were suppressed due to an insufficient number of respondents or high variability in the data and are marked with an asterisk (*).

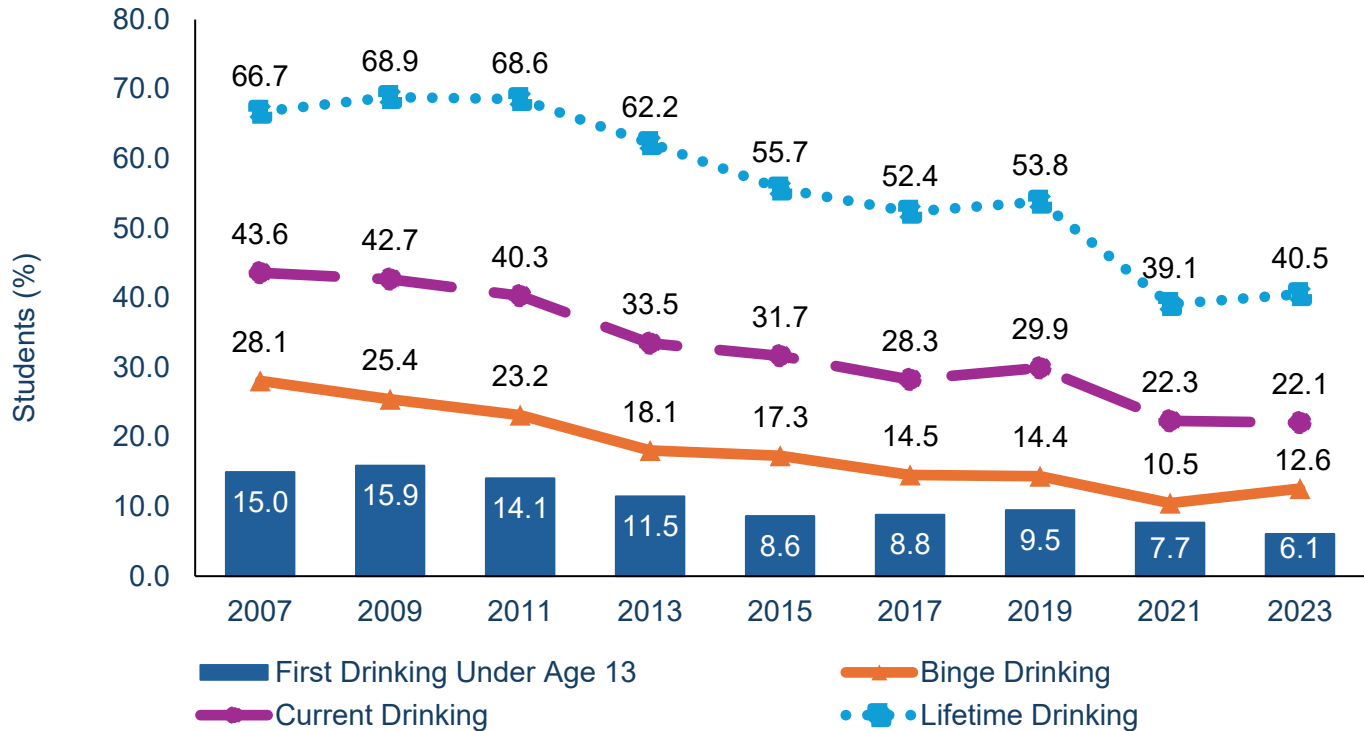
Notes:

^ Binge Drinking: Have 4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row for women, or 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row for men, within a couple of hours.

* Prevalence estimates are not presented if the underlying sample size is less than 100 respondents, or if a ratio of standard error to the estimate itself exceeds 30%. Standard error of the estimate is a measure of its variability. Larger standard errors yield wider confidence intervals and less reliable estimates.

High School Data

Alcohol use trend (MYHS 2007-2023)

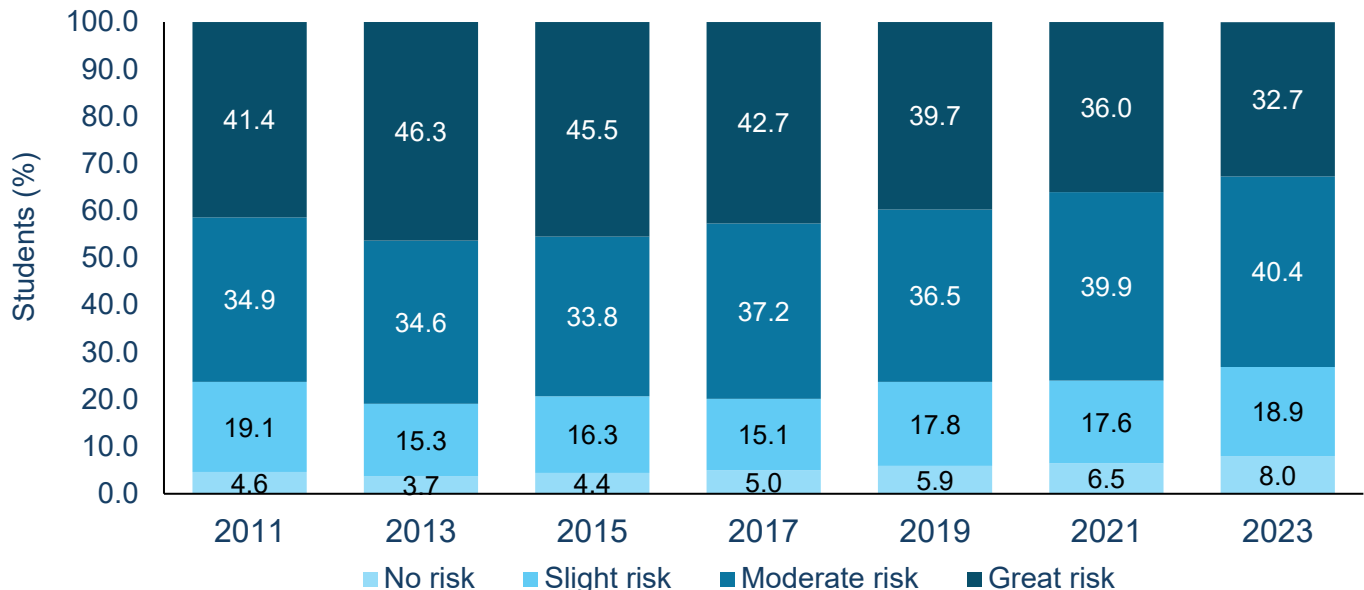


- The estimated percentage of high school students who reported first alcohol use before age 13 was lower in 2023 (6%) compared with 2007 (15%).
- Between 2007 and 2017 the estimated prevalence of lifetime alcohol use among high school students decreased from 67% to 52%, while current alcohol use (past 30-day use) decreased from 44% to 28%, and after a brief uptick in 2019, estimated prevalence declined again, reaching 41% for lifetime use and 22% for current use in 2023.
- The estimated prevalence of binge drinking in the past 30 days declined from 28% in 2007 to 10.5% in 2021, before rising slightly to 12.6% in 2023.

Notes:

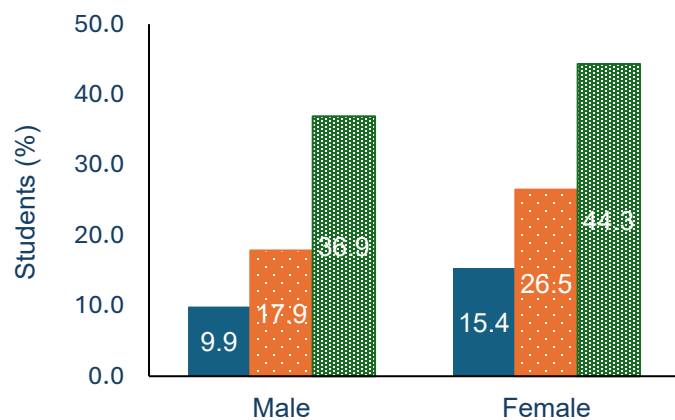
- The MYHS data is weighted to represent the population of students enrolled in Massachusetts public high schools and middle schools. Weighting makes the sample representative in two ways: 1) It adjusts for differences in the probability of selection due to school size. 2) It adjusts for school and student non-participation.
- Comparisons across groups or survey years are descriptive in nature, and no statistical tests for differences were conducted.

Perception of risk of harm from having 5+ drinking in a row (MYHS 2011-2023)



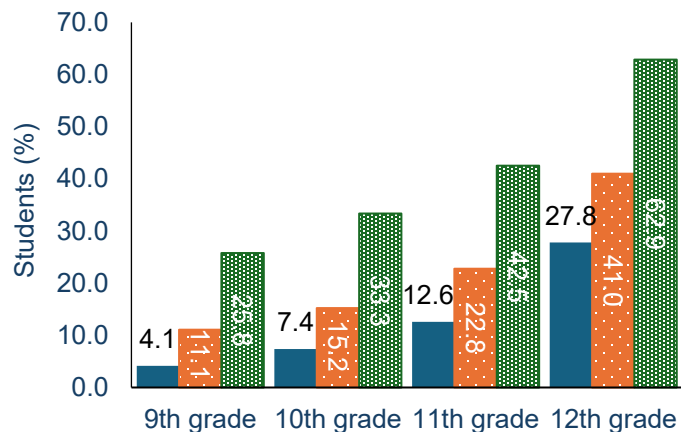
- Between 2013 and 2023, the estimated percentage of high school students who perceived great risk of harm—whether physical or in other ways—associated with consuming five or more drinks in a row declined from 46% to 33%.
- Meanwhile, the estimated percentage of students who perceived no risk from such behavior increased from 3.7% to 8% over the same period.

Alcohol use by gender (MYHS 2023)



■ Binge Drinking ■ Current Drinking ■ Lifetime Drinking

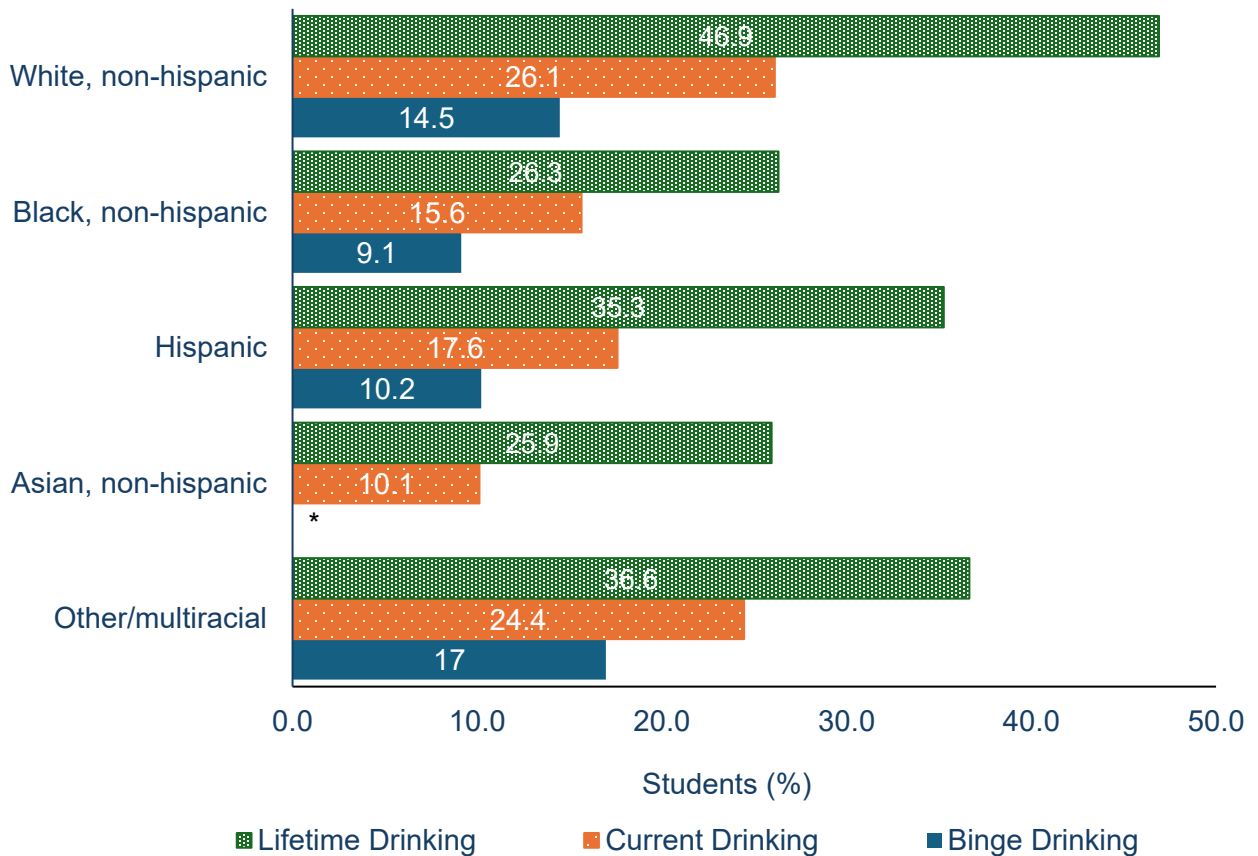
Alcohol use by grade (MYHS 2023)



■ Binge Drinking ■ Current Drinking ■ Lifetime Drinking

- In 2023, 44% of female and 37% of male high school students reported lifetime alcohol use, 27% of females and 18% of males reported alcohol use in the past 30 days, and the estimated prevalence of binge drinking was 15% among females and 10% among males.
- Estimated alcohol use was higher at each advancing grade level, with the highest levels observed in 12th grade (63% lifetime use, 41% current use, and 28% binge drinking).

Alcohol use by race and ethnicity (MYHS 2007-2023)



- White, non-Hispanic high school students had the highest estimated prevalence of lifetime and current alcohol use.
- Other/multiracial students had the second-highest prevalence in both categories but the highest binge drinking rates.
- Conversely, Asian, non-Hispanic high school students had the lowest estimated prevalence of lifetime and current alcohol use.