

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

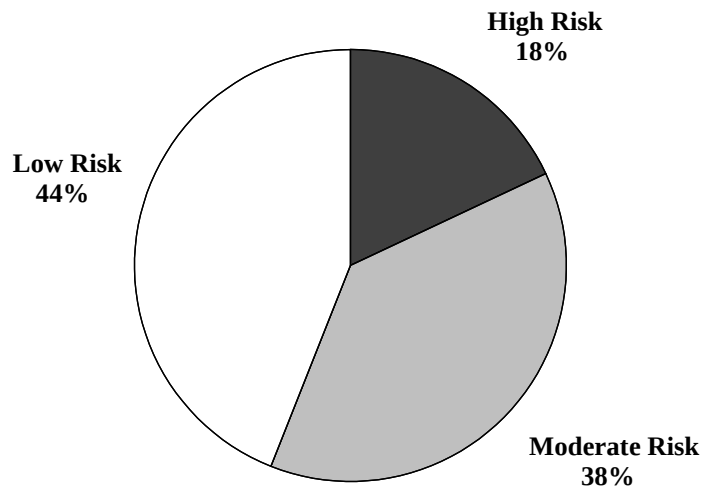
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More Than Half of U.S. Youths at Moderate or High Risk for Substance Abuse

More than one-half of U.S. youths are at moderate or high risk for substance abuse, according to a recent household telephone survey of 1,000 youths ages 12 to 17. Eight indicators of alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use, access, and exposure were used to calculate a substance abuse risk score for each youth.* Eighteen percent of youths were found to be at high risk for substance abuse, 38% were at moderate risk, and 44% were at low risk. The study found that substance abuse risk increased with age, and that youths who frequently watched R-rated movies and those who reported that half or more of their friends were sexually active had higher risk scores. Conversely, youths who attended religious services, received A's and B's, had dinner with their family frequently, and confided in their parents had lower risk scores.

Substance Abuse Risk of U.S. Youths Ages 12 to 17, 2005

(N=1,000)



NOTES: The substance abuse risk scores were calculated from the results of a factor analysis of youths' responses to the following eight questions: 1) How often have you smoked cigarettes during the past 30 days; 2) How many of your friends drink alcoholic beverages?; 3) How often do you get drunk?; 4) How many of your friends use marijuana?; 5) Do you know a friend or classmate who uses acid, cocaine, or heroin?; 6) How long would it take you to buy marijuana?; 7) Have you ever tried marijuana?; and 8) How likely is it that you will try illegal drugs in the future?

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, *National Survey of American Attitudes on Substance Abuse X: Teens and Parents*, August 2005. Available online at http://www.casacolumbia.org/Absolutenm/articlefiles/Teen_Survey_Report_2005.pdf.

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