Positive Choices
Drug and Alcohol Information
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Factsheet

How many young people in Australia use alcohol or other drugs



Evidence ratings:

This resource has undergone expert review. See our Help/Q&A section for more details.

Year: Year 7–8, Year 9–10, Year 11–12

Targeted Drugs: Alcohol, Cannabis, Cocaine, Drugs (General), Electronic Cigarettes/Vaping, Hallucinogens, Heroin, "Ice" (Methamphetamine), MDMA/Ecstasy

Tags: prevalence

Origin: Australian

Cost:
Free

How many young people aged 12–17 used drugs and alcohol in the past month?

It may be shown differently by the media, but the truth is that most young people have never tried an illegal drug or had a full serve of alcohol. This is important because if young people think that most of their friends use drugs they might be more inclined to try drugs as well. The following table outlines how many young people have used illegal drugs or consumed alcohol in the past month.

Drug	How many people have used it
Alcohol (at least a full serve)	1 in 5 (22%)
E-cigarettes/Vapes	1 in 6 (16%)
Cannabis	1 in 14 (7%)
MDMA/Ecstasy	1 in 100 (1%)
Hallucinogens	1 in 100 (1%)
Methamphetamine	1 in 100 (1%)
Cocaine	1 in 100 (1%)
Heroin	1 in 500 (0.2%)

Evidence Base

Scully, M., Koh, I., Bain, E., Wakefield, M. & Durkin, S. (2023). ASSAD 2022-2023: Australian secondary school students' use of alcohol and other substances. Cancel Council Victoria.

Scully, M., Bain, E., Koh, I., Wakefield, M. & Durkin, S. (2023). ASSAD 2022-2023: Australian secondary school students' use of tobacco and e-cigarettes. Cancel Council Victoria.

- Credit to 2&2 for the 'Avoiding Drugs?' infographic.

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