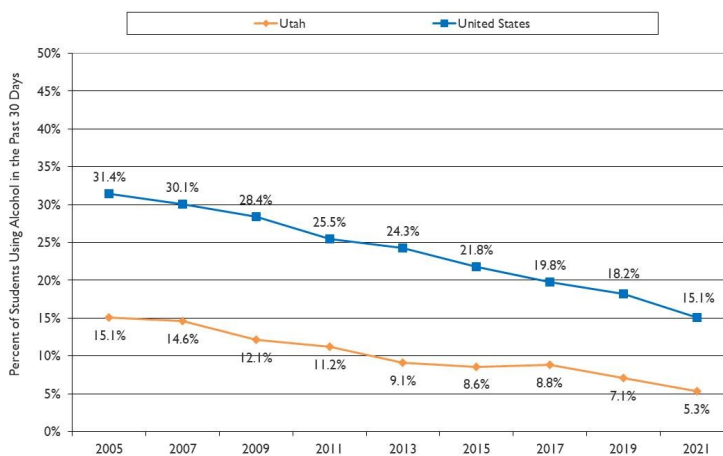


Youth Alcohol Consumption

Underage drinking rates have decreased dramatically in Utah over the last two decades (Figure 1). The 30 day alcohol use rate for youth in grades 8, 10 and 12 (combined) in Utah declined from 15.1% in 2005 to 5.3% in 2021 (a 65% decrease). Compared to the nation, alcohol rates among Utah youth have traditionally been about half (or less) of their national peers¹. This is true of lifetime alcohol use (“have you ever used alcohol in your lifetime”), past 30 day use, and binge drinking (five or more drinks in a row) in the past two weeks. In 2021, the 30 day use rates for Utah youth were less than half of the national rates for 8th, 10th and 12th graders (Figure 2). While Utah’s low and decreasing underage alcohol use rates should be celebrated, there are also data that serve as reminders against becoming complacent in our efforts to prevent underage alcohol use.

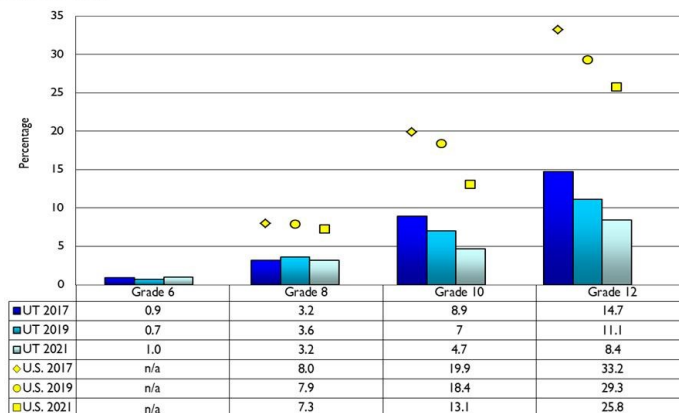
Despite the low rates of alcohol use among Utah youth, there still remains a significant number of youth who are drinking. In terms of absolute numbers, the observed 30 day use rates of 4.7% for 10th graders and 8.4% for 12th graders, equate to approximately 2,500 10th and 4,500 12th grade youth statewide who had recent alcohol use at the time of the survey². Moreover, survey data suggests that among Utah youth who use alcohol, a high proportion is involved in risky alcohol use. In 2021, almost 50% of 8th, 10th and 12th graders who reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days also reported that they binge drank in the past two weeks. This should warrant concern given that binge drinking is associated with greater risk for negative alcohol related outcomes including: drinking and driving, becoming a victim of violence, unintentional injuries, and abuse and dependence³.

Figure 1: Youth Past 30 Day Alcohol Use Trends Utah vs. United States, Grades 8, 10 & 12 Combined (2005-2021)



Despite the low rates of alcohol use among Utah youth... approximately 2,500 10th and 4,500 12th graders statewide reported recent alcohol use at the time of the 2021 SHARP survey

Figure 2. Percentage of Youth Indicating Any Alcohol Use in Past 30 Days by Grade, Utah vs. United States (2017-2021)



Alcohol-Related Consequences

Underage alcohol use is associated with a broad range of negative consequences that can affect individuals, families and society. The possible consequences of alcohol use range from immediate outcomes such as alcohol poisoning and alcohol related motor vehicle crashes to longer term consequences such as alcohol dependence and alcohol related diseases. Among youth, early initiation of alcohol use is associated with greater risk for a host of negative outcomes including: delinquency, academic problems, other substance use, sexual risk taking, violence, and increased likelihood of dependence later in life^{4,5}. Preventing alcohol use among youth or delaying the onset of use is an important goal of prevention efforts.

¹Utah data from the Utah State Health and Risk Prevention Survey; National data from the Monitoring the Future Survey

²Based on statewide school enrollment and dropout data for 10th and 12th graders

³<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/faqs.htm>

⁴Ellickson, P.L., Tucker, J.S. & Klein, D.J. (2003). Ten-year prospective study of public health problems associated with early drinking. *Pediatrics*, 111, 949-955.

⁵Grant, B. & Dawson, D.A. (2001). Age at onset of alcohol use and DSM-IV alcohol abuse and dependence: A 12-year follow-up. *Journal of Substance Abuse*, 13, 493-504.

Alcohol-Related Consequences (continued)

Based on 2021 data, alcohol use among Utah youth was associated with a variety of negative outcomes and behaviors. For example, Utah youth (grades 6-12 combined) who indicated using alcohol at least once in the past 30 days were much more likely to: a) be categorized as higher risk for low commitment to school (75.2% of alcohol users vs. 47.3% of non-users, respectively), b) have used a vape product in the past 30 days (56.0% of alcohol users vs. 4.1% of non-users), c) have used marijuana in the past 30 days (47.1% of alcohol users vs. 2.6% of non-users), and d) have indicated they attacked someone with the idea of seriously hurting them in the past year (12.8% of alcohol users vs. 3.8% of non-users). While these data do not imply a causal relationship between alcohol use and other problem behaviors, they do highlight a clear association between youth alcohol use and a broad array of problem behaviors and issues.

Risk and Protective Factors

There are a variety of factors that contribute to alcohol use among underage drinkers. As such, there is no single solution that will prevent all underage drinking. Fortunately, Utah's youth alcohol use rates are among the lowest in the nation. In looking at some of the risk factors for alcohol use, a strong relationship is apparent between what most youth in Utah believe about the risks and acceptability of alcohol use, and the low use rates observed in our state.

Perceived risk and Attitudes toward alcohol use.

Utah youth in grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 combined overwhelmingly (83.3%) indicate that people who drink 5 or more alcoholic drinks once or twice a week are at moderate or great risk of harming themselves. Additionally, nearly all Utah youth (98.9%) indicate that their parents would feel it is wrong or very wrong for them to drink alcohol, and almost as many (93.5%) indicate that their friends would feel it is wrong for them to have one or two alcohol drinks nearly every day.

Places where alcohol is consumed and obtained.

Despite the low underage drinking rates in Utah, a number of Utah youth do report alcohol use. For these individuals, it is important to understand factors that influence their alcohol use. Survey data pertaining to where youth alcohol users drink provide insight about the contexts for underage drinking (Figure 3). Overwhelmingly,

the most common place youth report drinking is their home or someone else's home⁶. Approximately two-thirds of 10th and 12th graders who drank alcohol reported drinking at their or someone else's home *without* permission, while approximately 40% of 10th and 12th grader drinkers indicated drinking in their home *with* parent permission, and between 22-32% indicated drinking at someone else's home *with* parent permission. In regards to how youth obtained alcohol, 10th and 12th grade drinkers most frequently indicated "I got it at a party," while "from someone I know who is older than 21" was the second most frequent response (Figure 4). Obtaining alcohol from home *with* and *without* parent permission was also commonly reported. Taken together, Utah youth that drink indicate they are primarily getting alcohol through social means, using it within the context of their home or of someone they know, and parent permission of youth alcohol use (either their own or a friend's) is often an important risk factor for underage drinking.

Figure 3. Percentage of Youth (among those who used alcohol in the past year) Indicating Using Alcohol in the Following Places (2019)

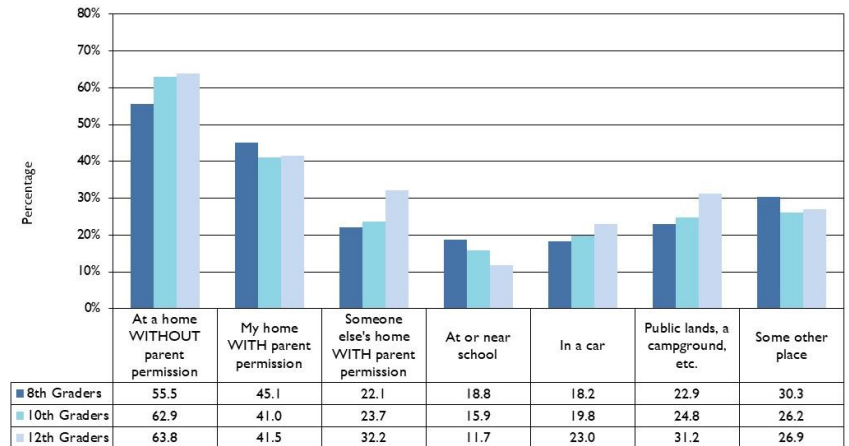
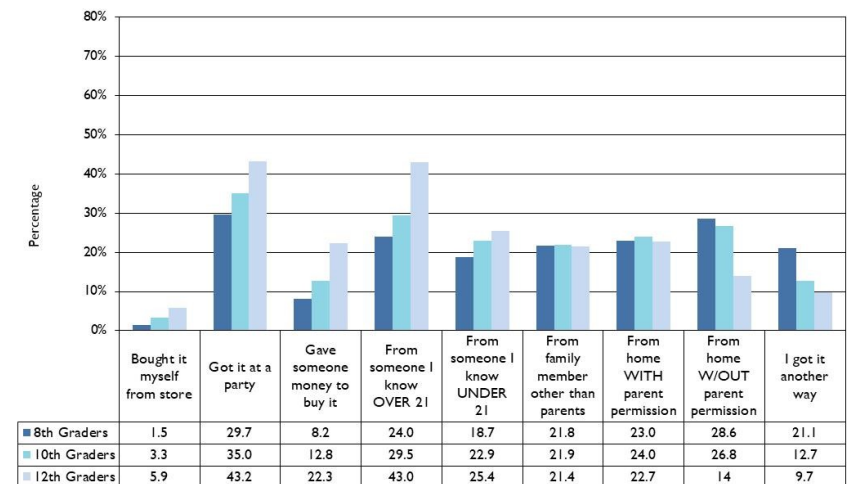


Figure 4. Where Youth (who used alcohol) Indicated Obtaining Alcohol in the Past Year (2021)



⁶Data regarding places of alcohol use (most recent 2019) are collected every other SHARP Survey Administration; data regarding how alcohol is obtained (most recent 2021) are collected on the alternate surveys.