



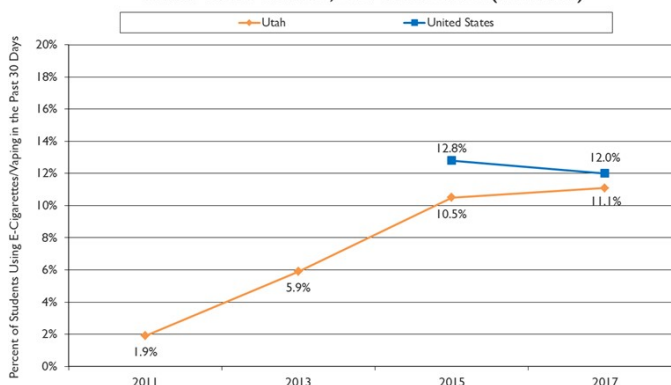
Youth substance use rates in Utah have traditionally been among the lowest in the nation. For the most common substances (alcohol, marijuana, and cigarettes), Utah youth have historically reported use rates of half or less than the national average. This brief data report provides comparisons between Utah and the United States of youth 30-day use rates for the three most widely used substance types through 2017: electronic cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana. The primary source of data for Utah youth substance use is the Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention (SHARP) Survey, while the national Monitoring the Future (MTF) Survey provides comparison data for the U.S. The SHARP Survey is administered statewide throughout the State of Utah every other year on odd years to approximately 50,000 students in grades 6, 8, 10 and 12, with the goal of obtaining representative samples for each of 13 local substance abuse authorities that are tasked with administering substance abuse treatment and prevention activities throughout the state¹. The MTF Survey is conducted annually and obtains a sample of approximately 50,000 students throughout the U.S. in grades 8, 10, and 12, with the goal of obtaining a representative national sample².

Electronic Cigarettes

Electronic cigarettes (or e-cigarettes) are battery powered devices that vaporize nicotine infused liquid for inhalation, and their use by youth in Utah has surged in the last several years. E-cigarette use was almost non-existent prior to 2011, but by 2015, e-cigarettes became the most widely used substance among youth in Utah (see Figure 1). Unlike traditional cigarettes, there are far fewer regulations regarding the manufacturing of e-cigarette materials. At the present time, the FDA has not established the safety of using e-cigarettes, and the long term effects of their use are unknown. According to the Utah Department of Health, the nicotine concentration levels across e-cigarette solutions can vary widely, possibly increasing the risk of nicotine overdose or poisoning. Unfortunately, these products are potentially attractive to youth given manufacturers' claims and misleading advertising about the safety of using e-cigarettes, and the availability of flavored solutions that can appeal to youth (e.g., grape, bubble gum, cherry, strawberry, etc.).

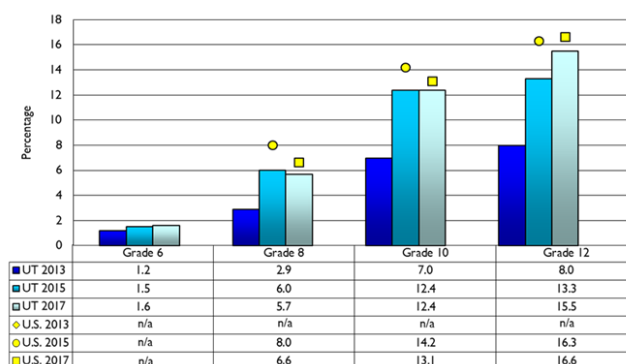
In comparing Utah to the nation, the 30-day e-cigarette use rate (any use in the 30 days preceding the survey) among Utah youth was just slightly lower than the national rate since 2015 (e-cigarettes were not included on the MTF prior to 2015). In 2017, use rates were nearly the same for Utah and the U.S. On a positive note, while e-cigarette use rates continued to increase in Utah between 2015 and 2017, the rate of increase slowed dramatically, a hopeful sign that e-cigarette use among Utah youth is plateauing. The fact there was little to no change in e-cigarette use among 6th, 8th and 10th graders in Utah from 2015 to 2017 provides some evidence of this (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Youth Past 30 Day E-Cigarette/Vaping Use Trends Utah vs. United States Grades 8, 10 & 12 Combined (2011-2017)



Sources: Utah - Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey (SHARP)
National - Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)

Figure 2. Percentage of Youth Indicating Any E-Cigarette/Vaping Use in Past 30 Days by Grade, Utah vs. United States (2013-2017)



Sources: Utah - Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey (SHARP)
National - Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)

¹For access to SHARP data at both state and regional levels please visit: <https://dsamh.utah.gov/data/sharp-student-use-reports/>.

²For more information about the MTF Survey, please visit: <http://monitoringthefuture.org/>.

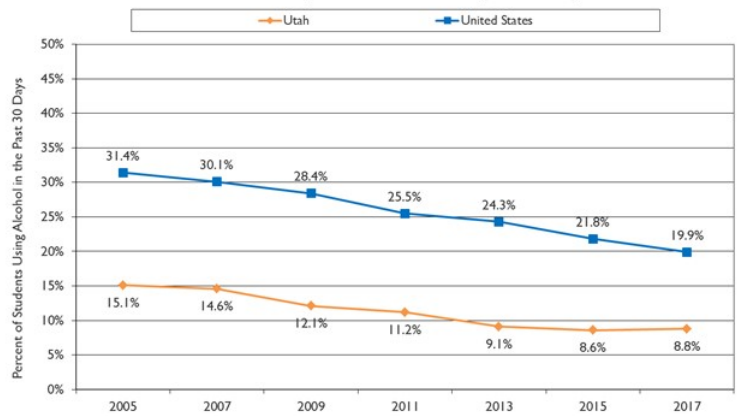
Alcohol

Figure 3 presents trend data for youth 30-day alcohol use for grades 8, 10 and 12 combined at both the state and national levels. Utah youth are clearly much less likely to report alcohol use than their national counterparts. In fact, alcohol use rates in Utah have consistently been less than half that of the nation's rates, and this trend continued in 2017.

Alcohol was the most widely used substance reported by Utah youth every year, until 2015, when it was eclipsed by electronic cigarettes. It is still the second most widely used substance by youth in Utah, and alcohol remains a significant concern for prevention efforts. With that said, the data clearly illustrate that major progress has been made in reducing underage drinking both in Utah (and nationally). Between 2005 and 2017, Utah saw a dramatic 42% decrease in youth alcohol use rates from 15.1% to 8.8%. While this is reason to celebrate, it is important that we do not become complacent in our efforts to reduce underage drinking.

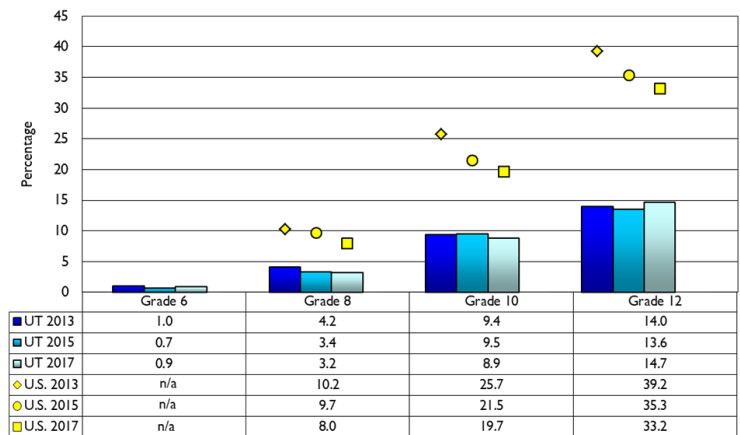
Figure 4 presents 30-day alcohol use rates by grade for Utah and the nation from 2013 to 2017 (6th grade data not available via MTF).

Figure 3. Youth Past 30 Day Alcohol Use Trends Utah vs. United States Grades 8, 10 & 12 Combined (2005-2017)



Sources: Utah - Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey (SHARP)
National - Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)

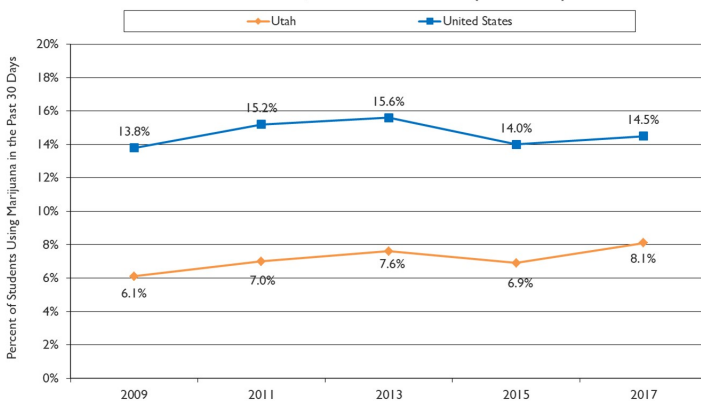
Figure 4. Percentage of Youth Indicating Any Alcohol Use in Past 30 Days by Grade, Utah vs. United States (2013-2017)



Marijuana

Marijuana is the illicit drug with the highest use rates both nationally, and in Utah. As with most substances, youth marijuana use rates in Utah have been much lower than (approximately half) national rates (see Figure 5). Marijuana use trends in Utah, and nationally, have followed a similar fluctuating pattern: increasing from 2009 to 2013, followed by a decrease in 2015, and then increasing again in 2017. In Utah, much of the increase observed in 2017 is attributable to 12th graders, whose past 30-day use rates increased from 9.3% in 2015 to 12.3% in 2017 (see Figure 6).

Figure 5. Youth Past 30 Day Marijuana Use Trends Utah vs. United States Grades 8, 10 & 12 Combined (2009-2017)



Sources: Utah - Utah Student Health and Risk Prevention Survey (SHARP)
National - Monitoring the Future Survey (MTF)

Figure 6. Percentage of Youth Indicating Any Marijuana Use in Past 30 Days by Grade, Utah vs. United States (2013-2017)

