

# Youth Alcohol Use Data Summary

Alcohol is more widely used among youths than tobacco or illegal drugs.<sup>1</sup>

## HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

There are approximately 158 youths (< age 21 yrs.) deaths attributable to excessive alcohol use each year in Georgia.<sup>2</sup>

- More young males (77%) than females (23%) die from alcohol-related illnesses or injuries every year.<sup>2</sup>
- Of the alcohol-attributable deaths, approximately 34% youth deaths were due to homicide and suicide, 46% were due to motor vehicle crashes, and 20% were due to other causes.<sup>2</sup>

Youth alcohol use is associated with increased risk for:

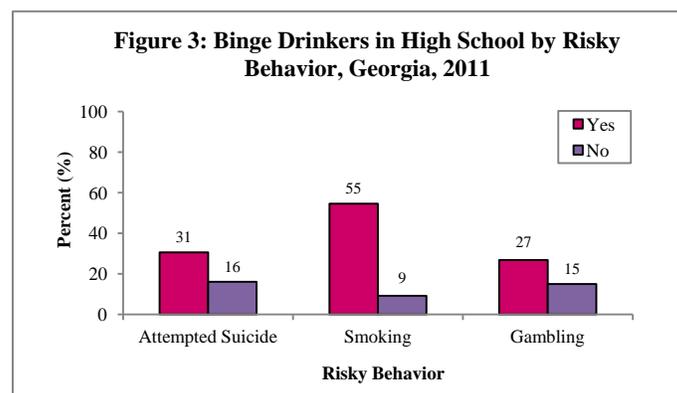
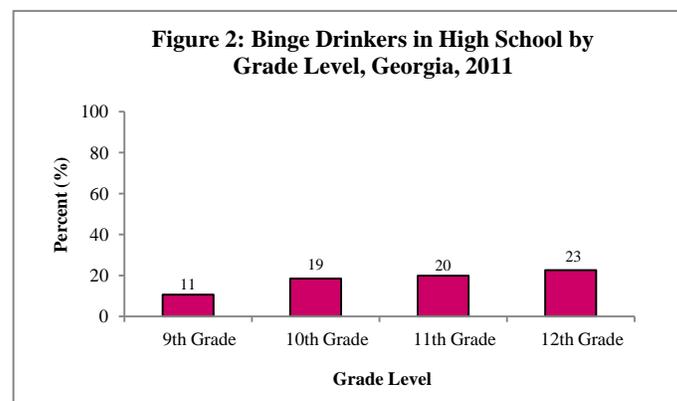
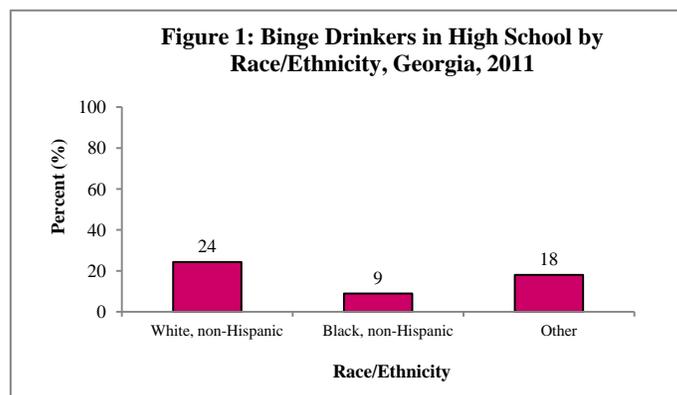
- Physical assault
- Tobacco and drug use
- Sexual assault
- Unprotected sexual activity

## YOUTH ALCOHOL USE

Individuals who begin alcohol consumption before the age of 14 yrs. are five times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who begin after age 21 yrs.<sup>3</sup>

## High School Drinking Behaviors

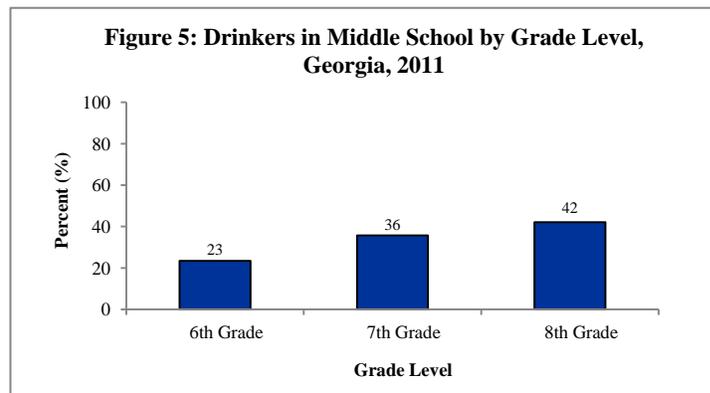
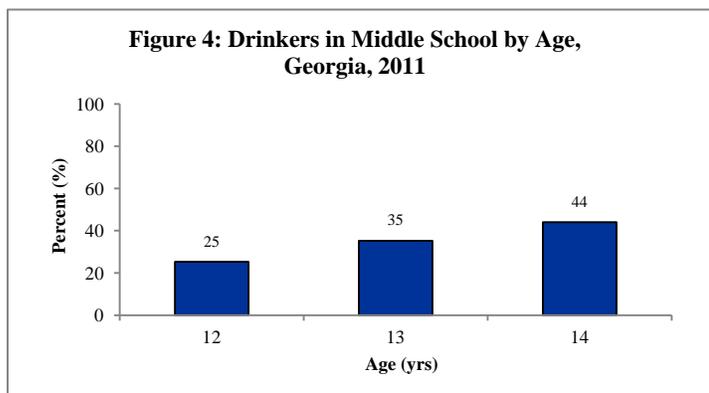
- In 2011, 35% of Georgia high school students reported having at least one drink of alcohol in the last 30 days.
- More than 17% of Georgia high school students engaged in binge drinking (5 or more drinks per occasion) in 2011.
- Binge drinking was significantly higher among non-Hispanic white high school students (24%) than non-Hispanic black high school students (9%) (Figure 1).
- Georgia students in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade were more likely to binge drink (23%) when compared to students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (20%), 10<sup>th</sup> grade (19%), and 9<sup>th</sup> grade (11%) (Figure 2).
- In 2011, among Georgia high school binge drinkers, 31% reported attempting suicide, 55% smoked, and 27% participated in gambling events (Figure 3).
- Georgia high school students who participated in binge drinking (26%) were significantly more likely to drive under the influence compared to those who did not binge drink (2%).



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## Middle School Drinking Behaviors

- In 2011, 34% of Georgia middle school students reported having at least one drink of alcohol in the last 30 days.
- Middle school students aged 14 yrs. (44%) were more likely to drink alcohol when compared to those aged 12 yrs. (25%), and 13 yrs. (35%) (Figure 4).
- Drinking was more common among Georgia middle school students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade (42%) than those in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (36%) and 6<sup>th</sup> grade (23%) (Figure 5).



## Data Sources:

2011 Georgia Youth Risk Behavioral Survey (YRBS): Conducted in collaboration between the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Department of Education and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Georgia Tobacco Youth Prevention Program, Maternal and Child Health Program, and the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the YRBS is conducted on a sample of 50 public high schools and 50 public middle schools every odd year in Georgia.

## References:

1. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2007.
2. 2001-2005 Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) Software, CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/Alcohol/ardi.htm>)
3. Hingson RW, Heeren T, Winter MR. Age at drinking onset and alcohol dependence: age at onset, duration, and severity. *Pediatrics* 2006;160:739-746

More data on alcohol use in Georgia can be found at <http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/cdiee/alcohol.asp>