

# Santa Cruz County 2003 Health Almanac

**Substance Abuse** - also see: [Tobacco](#)

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## Agencies and Information Sources

**Santa Cruz County (SCC) Health Services Agency** - <http://www.santacruzhealth.org>

The Health Services Agency (HSA) exists to protect and improve the health of the people in Santa Cruz County. The Agency provides programs in Environmental Health, Public Health, Medical Care, Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment, and Mental Health.

**California Department of Health Services** - <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/default.htm>

To Protect and Improve the Health of All Californians

**California Health Interview Survey** - <http://www.chis.ucla.edu/index.html>

The California Health Interview Survey (CHIS) is the largest state health survey conducted in the United States. Every two years, CHIS plans to collect information on the health and health care needs of California's diverse population.

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** - <http://www.cdc.gov/default.htm>

CDC's Mission is to promote health and quality of life by preventing and controlling disease, injury, and disability.

**Research Society on Alcoholism – Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research**

<http://www.alcoholism-cer.com/>

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### Alcohol Use

(All figures are for U.S.)

The estimates of excessive alcohol consumption among U.S. adults were 9.5% in 1997, 8.7% in 1998, 9.5% in 1999, 8.7% in 2000, and 9.3% in 2001 (January to June).

There were **19,358** Alcohol-induced deaths in the United States each year, not including motor vehicle fatalities **(2000)**

There were **26,552** deaths in the United States from Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis **(2000)**  
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis is the 12th leading cause of death in the United States **(2000)**

Sixty-two percent of Americans ages 18 and over have drunk alcohol in the past year **(2000)**

Thirty-two percent of current drinkers had five or more drinks on the same occasion at least once in the past year

Sixty-one percent of men 18-24 years and 42 percent of women had 5 or more drinks on the same occasion.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/alcohol.htm>

### California – 2001

#### Alcohol Consumption

**During the past month, how many days per month did you drink any alcoholic beverages, on the average?**

	1-5 days	6-10 days	11-15 days	16-20 days	21-31 days
%	56.6	14.9	10.0	6.8	11.6
CI	(54.2-58.9)	(13.3-16.4)	(8.2-11.7)	(5.6-7.9)	(10.2-12.9)
n	1323	360	217	167	302

% = Percentage, CI = Confidence Interval, n = Cell Size

Percentages are weighted to population characteristics.

Use caution in interpreting cell sizes less than 50.

[See notes for data users.](#)

**How many times during the past month did you have 5 or more drinks on an occasion?**

	None	1 time	2 times	3 times	4 times	5 or more times
%	73.3	11.1	6.0	2.2	1.7	5.8
CI	(70.9-75.6)	(9.5-12.6)	(4.8-7.1)	(1.4-2.9)	(0.3-3.0)	(4.6-6.9)
n	1834	224	122	41	23	116

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/brfss/display.asp?cat=AC&yr=2001&qkey=992&state=CA>

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**Percent Knowledge of Teen's Use of Alcohol CHIS 2001**

	Knowledge of Teen's Use of Alcohol		
	A Lot	A Little	Nothing
California--Total (Adults)	60.7	26.6	12.7
Santa Cruz--Total (Adults)	61.4	25.3	13.3
California--Male	69.9	15.0	15.1
Santa Cruz --Male	61.4	25.3	13.3
California--Female	74.3	13.5	12.1
Santa Cruz--Female	59.9	28.0	12.1
California--White	74.0	14.5	11.5
Santa Cruz--White	64.2	22.4	13.4
California--Black	73.3	11.9	14.8
Santa Cruz--Black	.	.	.
California--Latino	68.8	14.8	16.4
Santa Cruz--Latino	53.9	36.1	10.0
California--Asian	75.3	11.9	12.8
Santa Cruz--Asian	.	.	.
California--Am. Ind.	58.0	26.5	15.5
Santa Cruz--Am. Ind.	.	.	.
California--Other	73.7	13.7	12.6
Santa Cruz--Other	100.0	.	.
California--0 - 99%	67.9	13.7	18.4
Santa Cruz--0 - 99%	46.5	42.3	11.2
California--100 - 199%	72.1	15.6	12.2
Santa Cruz--100 - 199%	62.2	21.2	.
California--200 - 299%	70.7	16.1	13.2
Santa Cruz--200 - 299%	73.0	.	.
California--300%+	74.5	13.3	12.1
Santa Cruz--300%+	65.4	22.1	12.5

\* Statistically unstable  
Totals may not = 100% due to rounding.

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## Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002 Summary Report

May, 2003

**The Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey** was administered in October and November of 2002 to 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in every school district in the county. The instrument used was the California Healthy Kids Survey, developed by the California Department of Education and administered through WestEd, Inc. A total of 3,770 students completed the survey, comprising a sample of 42% of all students in these grade levels. Students were required to have written, active parental consent forms on file in order to participate in the survey. Surveys were administered during a single class period.

Santa Cruz County has conducted biennial youth surveys since 1994 for the purpose of prevention program design, resource development and allocation, community awareness and mobilization, and assessment of effective countywide strategies. Where possible, results are compared with equivalent data from State and National sources, as well as local data from prior years.

Survey sponsors include the United Way of Santa Cruz County, the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency Alcohol and Drug Program, and the Santa Cruz County Office of Education. Collaborating agencies include the Live Oak School District; the Pajaro Valley Unified School District and Pajaro Valley Prevention and Student Assistance, Inc.; the Soquel Union Elementary School District; the Santa Cruz City School District; the Scotts Valley Unified School District; the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District; the Capitola Police Department; the Santa Cruz City Police Department; the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office; the Scotts Valley Police Department; and the Watsonville Police Department.

Findings from the current survey include:

**The majority of young people in Santa Cruz County are not actively engaged in drug use.**

The prevalence of teen drug and alcohol use should not be overstated. Though 71% of 11<sup>th</sup> grader students have tried alcohol, less than half used it during the month prior to the survey. Half have tried marijuana, but three-quarters of these students did not use it at all in the month prior to the survey. More than 90% have *never* tried cocaine, methamphetamines, heroin or psychedelics. Because young people may feel compelled to match peer behavior, it is essential that findings from this survey be presented to the community in a balanced way that does not reinforce an overestimation of actual prevalence.

**Overall prevalence of use has decreasing for many key drug use categories since 1994, but this trend may be slowing or reversing.**

There have been clear and consistent decreases in the prevalence of use for the most widely used drug types: alcohol, cigarettes, marijuana, and psychedelics. Less common drugs, including cocaine, inhalants, and heroin, have remained unchanged or, in the case of heroin, increased from 1994 levels. 2002 data shows that this trend continues, but may be slowing or reversing. Lifetime use of marijuana and "been drunk" both show a slight increase, though it was not statistically significant.

**Alcohol use prevalence has diminished, but problem use patterns persist.**

Although overall rates of use have declined, the rate of use in Santa Cruz County remains higher than the state comparison rates, and many students continue to engage in high-risk behaviors related to alcohol. Over half (54%) of 11<sup>th</sup> graders have gotten "very drunk or sick" from drinking alcohol: 29% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders and 9% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders report the same. Binge drinking (five or more drinks within a couple of hours) was reported by 29% of 11<sup>th</sup> graders, 18% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders, and 5%

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of 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. one third (35%) of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade has either driven in a car after drinking or been in a car driven by a friend who had been drinking.

### **Tobacco use among Santa Cruz County youth has decreased dramatically and is well below state and national comparison.**

Cigarettes are, ultimately, the most hazardous drug use category in terms of disease and fatality. Because the majority of smokers start before the age of 18, rates of uptake among youth is an especially important public health indicator. Lower than average rates of tobacco use by Santa Cruz County youth will have far-reaching positive consequences. Increased cost due to new taxes on cigarettes, coupled with aggressive public health messages that convey accurate information about the health dangers of smoking and which seek to “de-normalize” tobacco use are widely credited with achieving lower rates of smoking in California.

### **Ecstasy is being used by Santa Cruz County youth, though not yet at levels comparable to statewide rates.**

For the first time, the survey includes a measure of the use of “ecstasy” (MDMA, or methylenedioxymethamphetamine), a drug often associated with the rave scene. Ecstasy produces both stimulant and psychedelic effects, and can cause a marked increase in body temperature leading to muscle breakdown and kidney and cardiovascular system failure reported in some fatal cases. Findings show that there is use of ecstasy among Santa Cruz County youth, though at the older grades it has not achieved the level common throughout the state (5% vs. 11% among 11<sup>th</sup> graders). Ecstasy is a “niche” drug, however, which may become very popular within a single area or peer group. Parents, school officials, and prevention advocates should closely monitor the popularity and use of this drug in our community.

### **Heroin use continues at levels higher than state or national comparison, and this survey may under-estimate local prevalence.**

Heroin use among in-school youth remains small, numerically, but significant in its impact. At the 11<sup>th</sup> grade level, lifetime use is nearly double the state average, and has maintained a steady level since 1996. Because heroin use is most closely associated with rapid social and academic decline, students who become involved with heroin often drop out and are not represented in this survey. Reports from law enforcement, health care providers, and teen outreach workers suggest that heroin use is widespread among out-of-school youth, and that there has been a significant increase in prevalence over the last decade. Substance abuse treatment is needed for county youth addicted to heroin, cocaine, alcohol and other drugs.

### **Santa Cruz County youth could benefit from opportunities for meaningful participation in home, school, and community settings.**

A new, mandatory element of the California Healthy Kids Survey is the “Resiliency and Youth Development” module. This section gathers information regarding “assets” in a young person’s school, family, community and peer environment. Assets are grouped into three key areas: caring relationships, high expectations, and opportunities for meaningful participation. The underlying theory holds that when young people experience environments rich in these three supports and opportunities, their basic developmental needs are met and they develop individual characteristics that protect against involvement in health-risk behaviors such as drug use and violence.

More than half of Santa Cruz County youth ranked high in overall assets, meaning their responses averaged above 3 on a four-point scale. Less than 5% ranked low (an average of 2 or below on the scale) while the rest ranked moderate (between 2 and 3 on the scale). The home environment was ranked highest in all three asset areas, followed by community, peers, and school, the lowest ranked environment. The top asset area was High Expectations with Caring Relationships as a close second. The lowest asset area was Meaningful Participation, with less than half of the number of young people ranked high, and four to seven times as many young people ranked low as in other areas.

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Santa Cruz County has remained committed to substance abuse prevention and treatment, including countywide coordination and collaboration, extensive staff training, and resource development for new, research-based programs. The biennial Youth Alcohol and Drug Survey will continue to identify and quantify emerging trends, guide program development, substantiate funding priorities, and provide a call for community awareness and involvement.

### Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

**Lifetime Use: “During your life, how many times have you used or tried the following?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
None	74%	45%	27%
Any AOD	26%	55%	73%
<hr/>			
<b>Alcohol</b>			
0 times	79%	49%	29%
1 time	8%	10%	7%
2 or 3 times	6%	12%	10%
4 or more times	7%	29%	54%
<hr/>			
<b>Marijuana</b>			
0 times	90%	69%	50%
1 time	4%	6%	8%
2 or 3 times	1%	5%	8%
4 or more times	5%	20%	35%
<hr/>			
<b>Inhalants</b>			
0 times	91%	85%	86%
1 time	5%	7%	6%
2 or 3 times	2%	3%	4%
4 or more times	3%	5%	4%
<hr/>			
<b>Cocaine</b>			
0 times	na	95%	92%
1 time	na	2%	3%
2 or 3 times	na	1%	2%
4 or more times	na	2%	4%

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

## Lifetime Use of Substances, Continued

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
<b>Methamphetamine</b>			
0 times	na	95%	94%
1 time	na	2%	2%
2 or 3 times	na	1%	1%
4 or more times	na	2%	3%
<b>LSD &amp; Psychedelics</b>			
0 times	na	93%	92%
1 time	na	3%	3%
2 or 3 times	na	1%	1%
4 or more times	na	2%	3%
<b>Ecstasy</b>			
0 times	na	95%	94%
1 time	na	2%	2%
2 or 3 times	na	1%	1%
4 or more times	na	2%	2%
<b>Heroin</b>			
0 times	na	98%	96%
1 time	na	1%	2%
2 or 3 times	na	0%	1%
4 or more times	na	1%	2%

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

### **30-Day Use: “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use the following?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
None	83%	64%	49%
Any AOD	17%	36%	51%
Alcohol	13%	31%	46%
Tobacco	5%	9%	11%
Marijuana	6%	19%	25%
Inhalants	5%	5%	3%
Cocaine	Na	3%	4%
Methamphetamines	na	3%	3%
Ecstasy	na	3%	2%
LSD & Psychedelics	na	4%	3%

### **Use Frequency: “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use the following?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
<b>Alcohol</b>			
None	87%	69%	54%
1 or 2 days	9%	17%	23%
3 to 9 days	2%	9%	16%
10 to 19 days	1%	4%	5%
20 or more days (daily)	1%	2%	2%
<b>Marijuana</b>			
None	94%	81%	75%
1 or 2 days	2%	7%	10%
3 to 9 days	1%	5%	6%
10 to 19 days	1%	4%	4%
20 or more days (daily)	1%	4%	5%

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

### Lifetime Use of Substances Compared to California Student Survey

Grade 11	Santa Cruz	CSS	
Alcohol	71%	65%	s
Tobacco	40%	56%	s
Marijuana	51%	44%	s
Inhalants	14%	13%	
Cocaine	9%	9%	
Methamphetamines	6%	9%	s
Psychedelics	7%	10%	s
Ecstasy	5%	11%	s
Heroin	5%	3%	s

Grade 9	Santa Cruz	CSS	
Alcohol	51%	48%	
Tobacco	31%	41%	s
Marijuana	31%	24%	s
Inhalants	15%	9%	s
Cocaine	5%	4%	
Methamphetamines	5%	3%	s
Psychedelics	6%	4%	s
Ecstasy	5%	6%	
Heroin	2%	2%	

Grade 7	Santa Cruz	CSS	
Alcohol	21%	21%	
Tobacco	14%	19%	s
Marijuana	10%	8%	s
Inhalants	10%	6%	s

"s" indicates statistical significance, measured at a 95% confidence interval by the following formula:  $(p_1 - p_2) \pm 1.96 \times \sqrt{[p_1(1-p_1)/n_1 + p_2(1-p_2)/n_2]}$  where  $p_1$  and  $n_1$  are the percentage response and sample size of the local data, while  $p_2$  and  $n_2$  are the percentage response and sample size for the comparison data.

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

### Use of Substances in the Past 30 Days Compared to California Student Survey

Grade 11	Santa Cruz	CSS	
Alcohol	46%	41%	s
Tobacco	11%	19%	s
Marijuana	25%	23%	
Inhalants	3%	4%	
Cocaine	4%	4%	
Methamphetamines	3%	5%	s
Psychedelics	3%	3%	

Grade 9	Santa Cruz	CSS	
Alcohol	31%	29%	
Tobacco	9%	11%	
Marijuana	19%	13%	s
Inhalants	5%	3%	s
Cocaine	3%	2%	
Methamphetamines	3%	2%	
Psychedelics	4%	2%	s

Grade 7	Santa Cruz	CSS	
Alcohol	13%	10%	s
Tobacco	5%	4%	
Marijuana	6%	4%	s
Inhalants	5%	2%	s

"s" indicates statistical significance, measured at a 95% confidence interval by the following formula:  $(p_1 - p_2) \pm 1.96 \times \sqrt{[p_1(1-p_1)/n_1 + p_2(1-p_2)/n_2]}$  where  $p_1$  and  $n_1$  are the percentage response and sample size of the local data, while  $p_2$  and  $n_2$  are the percentage response and sample size for the comparison data.

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

**Lifetime Very Drunk or Sick: “During your life, how many times have you been very drunk or sick after drinking alcohol?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
<b>Alcohol</b>			
0 times	92%	71%	47%
1 time	4%	10%	16%
2 or 3 times	3%	8%	16%
4 or more times	2%	11%	22%

**Binge Drinking in the Last Month: “During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, that is, within a couple of hours?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
0 days	95%	82%	71%
1 or 2 days	2%	9%	15%
3 or more days	3%	9%	14%

**Lifetime DUI: “During your life, how many times have you ever driven a car when you had been drinking alcohol, or been in a car driven by a friend when he or she had been drinking?”**

	Grade 9	Grade 11
Never	73%	65%
Any	27%	35%
1 time	10%	12%
2 times	6%	9%
3 to 6 times	%	9%
7 or more times	5%	6%

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

**Perceived Harm of Frequent Use: “How harmful do you think it is to use the following substances frequently (daily or almost daily)?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
<b>Alcohol</b>			
Extremely harmful	42%	33%	34%
Harmful	31%	30%	30%
Somewhat harmful	17%	24%	24%
Mainly Harmless	6%	9%	7%
Harmless	4%	4%	4%
<b>Marijuana</b>			
Extremely harmful	69%	43%	33%
Harmful	15%	23%	27%
Somewhat harmful	7%	15%	20%
Mainly Harmless	4%	11%	14%
Harmless	6%	7%	7%
<b>Cigarettes</b>			
Extremely harmful	54%	51%	57%
Harmful	30%	32%	29%
Somewhat harmful	9%	12%	10%
Mainly harmless	3%	3%	1%
Harmless	5%	3%	3%

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**Perceived Availability: “How difficult is it for students in your grade to get any of the following substances if they really want them?”**

	Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11
<b>Alcohol</b>			
Very difficult	16%	6%	3%
Fairly difficult	16%	8%	7%
Fairly easy	18%	26%	24%
Very easy	17%	43%	56%
Don't know	34%	17%	10%
<b>Marijuana</b>			
Very difficult	26%	8%	3%
Fairly difficult	14%	7%	3%
Fairly easy	10%	22%	18%
Very easy	13%	43%	65%
Don't know	37%	20%	11%
<b>Cigarettes</b>			
Very difficult	18%	5%	4%
Fairly difficult	15%	9%	7%
Fairly easy	17%	27%	25%
Very easy	13%	36%	48%
Don't know	37%	21%	17%

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Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

### Lifetime Use: Santa Cruz County Trend, 1994 - 2002\*

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
<b>11<sup>th</sup> GRADE</b>					
Alcohol	90%	89%	87%	74%	73%
Been Drunk	68%	67%	62%	56%	57%
Cigarettes	64%	66%	59%	55%	44%
Marijuana	60%	64%	61%	53%	55%
Inhalants	12%	15%	13%	18%	16%
Cocaine	11%	17%	14%	13%	12%
Psychedelics	24%	27%	18%	13%	11%
Heroin	3%	6%	5%	5%	6%
<b>9<sup>th</sup> GRADE</b>					
Alcohol	86%	79%	77%	58%	51%
Been Drunk	53%	47%	43%	35%	29%
Cigarettes	65%	55%	51%	38%	31%
Marijuana	53%	52%	46%	33%	31%
Inhalants	18%	18%	16%	16%	15%
Cocaine	6%	10%	8%	8%	5%
Psychedelics	20%	16%	14%	8%	6%
Heroin	2%	4%	4%	4%	2%

\* County trend data includes district alternative education students.

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### 30-Day Use: Santa Cruz County Trend, 1994 - 2002\*

	1994	1996	1998	2000	2002
<b>11<sup>th</sup> GRADE</b>					
Alcohol	55%	53%	51%	48%	46%
Marijuana	35%	35%	34%	28%	25%
Inhalants	3%	2%	1%	3%	3%
Cocaine	4%	6%	5%	3%	4%
Psychedelics	10%	8%	4%	5%	3%
<b>9<sup>th</sup> GRADE</b>					
Alcohol	51%	42%	38%	37%	31%
Marijuana	35%	30%	25%	21%	19%
Inhalants	6%	4%	5%	5%	5%
Cocaine	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Psychedelics	10%	6%	5%	4%	4%

\* County trend data includes district alternative education students.

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## Santa Cruz County Youth Drug and Alcohol Survey, 2002

### Percent of Students Scoring High, Moderate, and Low in Assets (%)

	Grade 7			Grade 9			Grade 11		
	H	M	L	H	M	L	H	M	L
<b>Total External Assets</b>									
Caring Relationships	67	28	5	58	36	6	61	35	4
High Expectations	73	23	4	64	33	4	64	34	3
Meaningful Participation	42	44	14	27	53	20	24	55	21
<b>School Environment</b>									
Caring Relationships	36	52	12	25	59	16	29	59	12
High Expectations	48	43	8	36	53	12	36	56	9
Meaningful Participation	21	55	24	12	52	36	12	51	37
<b>Home Environment</b>									
Caring Relationships	68	25	7	56	35	9	56	35	10
High Expectations	78	18	4	73	24	4	76	20	3
Meaningful Participation	53	37	10	36	48	16	32	51	17
<b>Community Environment</b>									
Caring Relationships	68	24	7	60	29	10	60	30	10
High Expectations	69	24	7	61	29	10	59	31	10
Meaningful Participation	49	34	17	40	37	23	39	39	22
<b>Peer Environment</b>									
Caring Relationships	53	36	10	57	33	10	64	28	8
High Expectations	50	46	4	39	57	4	38	59	4

### Drug Use -- Illegal

(All figures are for U.S.)

There were 19,102 Deaths From Drug-Induced Causes in 1999 (legal and illegal drugs) (1999)

7% of Youth Ages 12-17 Have Smoked Marijuana in the Past Month (2000)

22.4% of High School Seniors Have Smoked Marijuana in the Past Month (2001)

2.1% of High School Seniors Have Used Cocaine in the Past Month (2001)

1.7% of High School Seniors Have Used Inhalants in the Past Month (2001)

There were 175,000 Cocaine-Related Emergency Room Episodes in 1999 (2000)

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/druguse.htm>

### Illegal Herb Not Harmless, but Data Show No Link to Death

By Daniel DeNoon

Reviewed By Brunilda Nazario, MD

WebMD Medical News

on Thursday, September 18, 2003

Sept. 18, 2003 -- Marijuana smoking isn't harmless, but at least it won't kill you.

It's been feared that marijuana smoke, like tobacco smoke, causes cancer and heart disease.

The evidence argues otherwise, writes Stephen Sidney, MD, associate director for research for Kaiser Permanente, Oakland, Calif., in the Sept 20 issue of *The Lancet*.

"Although the use of [marijuana] is not harmless, the current knowledge base does not support the assertion that it has any notable adverse public health impact in relation to mortality," Sidney concludes.

#### No Marijuana Deaths in 2 Large Studies

Sidney points to two large studies. The first is from (where else?) California. A large HMO looked at 65,177 men and women age 15-49. Over 10 years, marijuana users died no sooner than nonusers.

The second study looked at 45,450 Swedish army conscripts. They were 18-20 years old when asked about marijuana use. Fifteen years later, the marijuana users were just as likely to remain alive as nonusers.

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And since marijuana smoking can't kill outright -- there's no such thing as a fatal marijuana overdose -- short-term use isn't deadly. Long-term use can't be good for you. But Sidney notes that most marijuana smokers don't become long-term users.

One worry about marijuana smoke is that it is inhaled, and held, deep in the lungs. But the typical user smokes only one marijuana cigarette -- or less -- a day. Tobacco users often smoke 20 or more cigarettes daily. Moreover, tobacco contains nicotine, a highly addictive substance.

Marijuana, Sidney concludes, is less likely to harm than tobacco.

A 2001 study suggested that marijuana smoking increases the risk of heart attack in the hour immediately after smoking. But this seems to be the case in no more than one-fifth of 1% of heart attacks -- a very rare risk indeed.

### **More Marijuana Deaths in the Future?**

Marijuana users shouldn't cancel their life insurance policies just yet. Sidney warns that longer-term data may indeed show that marijuana smoking eventually raises the risk of premature death. And if marijuana is legalized, long-term use may become more common. If this is the case, there certainly will be more long-term effects of marijuana use