



2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health

The Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration today released the findings of the 2005 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The NSDUH survey is the largest of its kind, and is the government's primary vehicle for determining how many people are abusing illegal drugs, pharmaceuticals, alcohol, and tobacco.

Survey Finds Youth Drug Use Continues Downward Slide

- The rate has been moving downward from 11.6 percent using drugs in the past month in 2002 to 11.2 percent in 2003, 10.6 percent in 2004 and 9.9 percent in 2005.
- Similarly, the rate of current marijuana use among youth ages 12 to 17 declined significantly from 8.2 percent in 2002 to 6.8 percent in 2005, and the average age of first use of marijuana increased from under age 17 in 2003 to 17.4 years in 2005.
- Drinking among teens also declined, with 16.5 percent of youth ages 12-17 reporting current alcohol use and 9.9 percent reporting binge drinking. This compares with 17.6 percent of this age group reporting drinking in 2004 and 11.1 percent reporting binge drinking in the past month in 2004.
- Between the years 2002 and 2005 past-month use of a tobacco product declined from 30.4 percent to 29.4 percent, and past-month cigarette use decreased from 26.0 percent to 24.9 percent. The rate of past month cigarette use among youth ages 12-17 declined from 13.0 percent in 2002 to 10.8 percent in 2005.

Drug Use Among Baby Boomer Generation Continues To Be High

- Those aged 50 to 59 increased their current use of any drug between 2002 and 2005 by 63 percent (the segment of those 55 to 59 increased even more – a 79 percent increase).
- As the generation most associated with high levels of drug initiation in the 1970's ages and moves off stage, they are being replaced by a new generation of youth, those aged 12-17, who are steadily turning away from drug involvement.
- Marijuana use accounts for more than 70 percent of baby boomers reported drug use.

Other Highlights from the 2005 Survey

- Lifetime methamphetamine use declined 19 percent since 2002, with a drop of 12 percent during the single year 2004-2005.
- Most importantly, a remarkable change with the number of new methamphetamine initiates (those who are "recent new users"). That number plummeted 40 percent during the single year 2004-2005.
- Nearly 6.4 million people report non-medical use of these controlled-substance prescription drugs, with misuse of pain killers representing two-thirds of the overall problem (4.7 million).