

How are the Children?



Suburban Ramsey
Family Collaborative

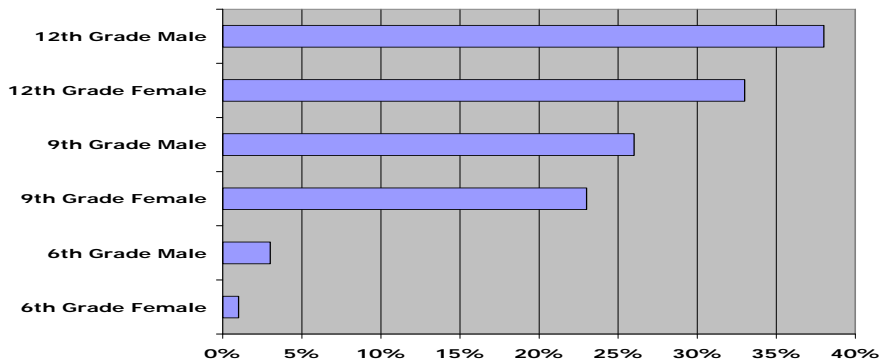
Tips for Parents & Caring Adults:

Worried about Marijuana Use?

Marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug among young people today. Today's teens are smoking a more potent drug and starting use at increasingly younger ages, during crucial brain development years. The Minnesota Student Survey asked 6th, 9th and 12th graders about their marijuana use.

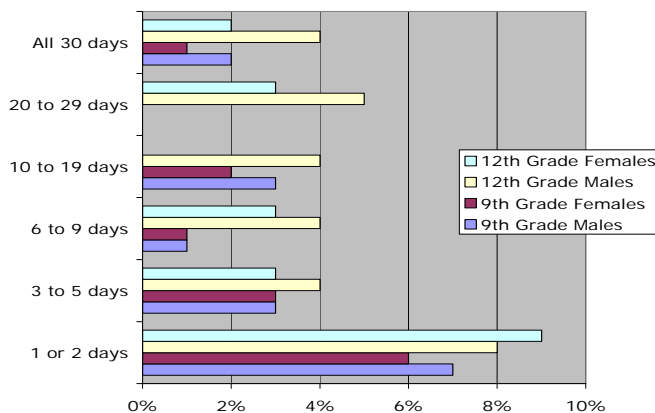
As this chart shows, use of marijuana among Suburban Ramsey County young people increases with age and more boys than girls are using marijuana. While rates are lower than for drinking alcohol, it is still concerning that more than one in three 12th graders have used marijuana in the past year.

Used Marijuana in the Past Year



A smaller number of Suburban Ramsey County young people are *regular* marijuana users. This chart shows the number of young people who use marijuana at least monthly. Of these, nearly one in ten 12th grade boys and nearly one in twenty 12th grade girls said they used marijuana *20 days or more in the past month*.

Days Used Marijuana in Past Month



Research shows that students who use marijuana don't do as well in school, and their odds of dropping out are more than twice that of non-users. Marijuana use affects memory, judgment and perception. Teens with an average grade of "D" or below are more than four times as likely to have used marijuana in the past year as teens who reported an average grade of "A." Long-term marijuana use is also associated with a lack of motivation.



Research also shows that young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life. And teens aged 12-17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts.

What Parents & Other Caring Adults Can Do:

- **Be absolutely clear with your children that you don't want them using Marijuana.** Ever. Anywhere. Don't leave room for interpretation. Setting a firm rule of no drug use helps teens navigate peer and other pressure to use drugs. Parents are the most powerful influence on their kids when it comes to illicit drugs. Two-thirds of young people ages 13-17 say upsetting their parents' respect is one of the main reasons they don't use marijuana or other drugs. On the other hand, young people who felt their parents did not strongly disapprove of marijuana use were about six times as likely to use marijuana as youth who felt their parents would disapprove.
- **Talk often about the dangers and results of drug and alcohol abuse.** Once or twice a year won't do it. Virtually all parents in America (98 percent) say they've talked with their children about drugs; however, only 27 percent of teens (roughly one in four) say they're learning a lot at home about the risks of drugs, according to a national study by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PDFA).
- **Even if you have used marijuana, it is important for you to talk with your children.** Sometimes adults who have used marijuana worry that it is hypocritical to talk to their children about the dangers of marijuana. Keep the focus of the conversation on their future not on your past. Visit <http://www.drugfree.org/file.ashx?id=a39aa3d6-e59f-4072-81b0-3f6903e32c4e> for more specific tips on how to have this conversation.

Additional Resources:

For many more tips and resources on talking with children about drugs, stress, and other topics, visit <http://www.theantidrug.com>. This site offers a parent e-newsletter, tips on starting conversations, help with setting and enforcing rules and some action suggestions to learn more about social influences on young people. All web content is available in Spanish, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese.

For more information:

To learn what you can do to support the health, learning, safety and security of all Suburban Ramsey County children and young people, contact:

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How are the Children?

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www.howarethechildren.org

Citations:

1. Minnesota Student Survey
2. www.theantidrug.com
3. Partnership for a Drug-free America

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