



# Youth Knowledge and Attitudes on Sexual Health: A National Survey of Adolescents and Young Adults

Special Analysis prepared for *Dangerous Liaisons: Substance Abuse and Sexual Behavior*, a one day conference sponsored by the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia University, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

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**Q1. I'd like your opinions about alcohol and drugs and sex. Thinking about people your age, how often do you think they drink or use drugs before having sex? Would you say a lot, sometimes, just occasionally, or never?**

	Total	Age		Gender		Sexual Experience	
		15-17	18-24	Male	Female	Sexually active	Not sexually active
A lot	50%	41%	54%	49%	51%	56%	37%
Sometimes	38%	43%	35%	36%	40%	33%	47%
Just occasionally	10%	15%	8%	13%	8%	9%	13%
Never	1%	*	1%	1%	1%	1%	*
Don't know/Refused	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%
n	998	296	702	446	552	678	320

**Q2. How concerned are you personally that you might do more sexually than you had planned because you are drinking or using drugs—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

	Total	Age		Gender		Sexual Experience	
		15-17	18-24	Male	Female	Sexually active	Not sexually active
Very concerned	21%	24%	20%	18%	24%	21%	20%
Somewhat concerned	22%	25%	20%	22%	22%	21%	23%
Not too concerned	19%	23%	18%	22%	17%	18%	22%
Not at all concerned	37%	27%	42%	37%	37%	39%	33%
Don't know/Refused	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	*	2%
n	998	296	702	446	552	678	320

**Q3. Please tell me whether you agree or disagree. [INSERT] Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree? [ROTATE]**

	Total	Age		Gender		Sexual Experience	
		15-17	18-24	Male	Female	Sexually active	Not sexually active
<b>a. It is not a big deal if people my age make decisions about sex when they are drinking or using drugs</b>							
Strongly agree	9%	7%	10%	11%	7%	10%	7%
Somewhat agree	12%	11%	12%	16%	8%	13%	10%
Somewhat disagree	22%	25%	21%	27%	17%	23%	19%
Strongly disagree	55%	55%	55%	43%	68%	52%	62%
Don't know/Refused	1%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	2%
<b>b. People my age often don't use condoms when they are drinking or using drugs</b>							
Strongly agree	37%	36%	37%	32%	41%	40%	30%
Somewhat agree	36%	34%	37%	33%	38%	34%	39%
Somewhat disagree	14%	18%	12%	18%	10%	12%	16%
Strongly disagree	11%	8%	12%	13%	9%	12%	9%
Don't know/Refused	3%	4%	3%	4%	3%	2%	6%
n	998	296	702	446	552	678	320

**Q4. Would you like to learn more about how alcohol or drugs might affect decisions about sex or not?**

	Total	Age		Gender		Sexual Experience	
		15-17	18-24	Male	Female	Sexually active	Not sexually active
Yes	37%	48%	32%	36%	38%	35%	42%
No	62%	51%	68%	64%	61%	65%	57%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	*	*	*	*	*
n	998	296	702	446	552	678	320

**Q5. The [INSERT] you had sexual intercourse had you been drinking or using drugs?**

Based on *sexually active youth*

	Total	Age		Gender	
		15-17	18-24	Male	Female
<b>a. First time</b>					
Yes	11%	7%	12%	12%	9%
No	89%	93%	88%	87%	90%
Don't know/Refused	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
<b>b. Most recent time</b>					
Yes	11%	12%	11%	16%	6%
No	89%	87%	89%	84%	93%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	*	*	*
n	678	117	561	320	358

**Q6. Have [INSERT]?**

Based on *sexually active youth ages*

	Total	Age		Gender	
		15-17	18-24	Male	Female
<b>a. Alcohol or drugs ever influenced your decision to do something sexual</b>					
Yes	36%	29%	37%	40%	32%
No	64%	70%	63%	60%	68%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	*	*	*
<b>b. You ever used alcohol or drugs to help you feel more comfortable with a sexual partner</b>					
Yes	15%	13%	16%	19%	11%
No	84%	86%	84%	81%	88%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	*	-	1%
<b>c. You ever done more sexually than you had planned because you had been drinking or using drugs</b>					
Yes	29%	24%	31%	31%	28%
No	71%	75%	69%	69%	72%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	-	-	*
<b>d. You ever had unprotected sex (not used a condom) because you were drinking or using drugs</b>					
Yes	23%	12%	25%	25%	21%
No	77%	87%	74%	75%	79%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	*	*	*
<b>e. You ever worried about STDs or pregnancy because of something you did sexually while drinking or using drugs</b>					
Yes	28%	26%	28%	30%	25%
No	72%	73%	72%	70%	75%
Don't know/Refused	*	1%	*	*	*
n	678	117	561	320	358

**Methodology**

The questions and results on this document are from the Kaiser Family Foundation's *National Survey of Youth Knowledge and Attitudes on Sexual Health Issues* a national random-sample survey of 1200 adolescents and young adults, including 202 13- to 14-year-olds, 296 15- to 17-year-olds, and 702 18- to 24-year-olds. The findings reported here reflect the behaviors and attitudes of 15- to 24-year-olds. The questionnaire was designed by staff at the Kaiser Family Foundation and Princeton Survey Research Associates (PSRA) and analysis was conducted by staff at the Foundation.

Fieldwork was conducted by telephone by PSRA between November 13, 2001 and January 20, 2002. Interviews were completed both in English and Spanish according to the preferences of the respondent. The final response rate was 57%. The data have been weighted by age, sex, race/ethnicity, region, and education to be representative of national samples of youth and to account in part for nonresponse.

Questions on personal sexual experience were only asked of youth ages 15 and older. Overall, 67% of youth 15 to 24 have had sexual intercourse (or are currently married, living as married, or have ever been married) including 37% of those 15 to 17 and 81% of those 18 to 24. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 4% for all 15- to 24-year-olds, plus or minus 7% for 15- to 17-year-olds, plus or minus 4% for 18- to 24-year-olds, plus or minus 5% for females and 5% for males 15 to 24, plus or minus 4% for sexually active youth 15 to 24 and 6% for those not sexually active and may be larger for certain subsets presented in this analysis. Note: \*=<1% reported, -=0 reported.

Additional copies of this document (#3216) as well as a survey snapshot (#3215) for the questions and toplines discussed in this document are available at [www.kff.org/repro](http://www.kff.org/repro) or by calling the Foundation's Publication Request Line at 1-800-656-4533.