

1 in 4 in U.S. starts drinking before turning 21, report states

November 26 2012



Six of the top 10 states for underage drinking are in the Northeast, analysis agency finds.

(HealthDay)—Underage drinking in the United States remains a serious public health issue, a new federal government report shows.

The analysis of data gathered between 2008 and 2010 from the U.S. National Survey on [Drug Use](#) and Health found that more than 26 percent of 12- to 20-year-olds reported drinking in the month before they were surveyed, and nearly 9 percent said they bought their own [alcohol](#) the last time they drank.

The purchase and consumption of alcohol by anyone under age 21 is prohibited in the United States.

There has been progress in reducing the amount of underage drinking in recent years, particularly among those under 18 years of age. However,

rates of underage drinking are still unacceptably high, according to the report released Nov. 20 by the U.S. Substance Abuse and [Mental Health Services](#) Administration (SAMHSA).

"Underage drinking should not be a normal part of growing up. It's a serious and persistent public health problem that puts our young people and our communities in danger," SAMHSA administrator Pamela Hyde said in an agency news release.

"Even though drinking is often glamorized, the truth is that underage drinking can lead to [poor academic performance](#), [sexual assault](#), injury and even death," she noted.

Rates of underage drinking were highest in Vermont (37 percent) and lowest in Utah (14.3 percent). Five other states in the Northeast were among the 10 states with the highest rates of underage drinking: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York and Rhode Island.

New York also had one of the highest rates of underage youth illegally buying alcohol (15 percent). States with the lowest rates of underage youth buying alcohol included New Mexico (2.5 percent), Idaho (2.6 percent) and Oregon (2.6 percent).

Southern states had some of the lowest rates of [underage drinking](#) (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia) and some of the highest rates of underage youth illegally purchasing alcohol (Alabama, Louisiana, Kentucky, Mississippi and North Carolina), the investigators found.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism has more about [underage drinking](#).

Copyright © 2012 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: 1 in 4 in U.S. starts drinking before turning 21, report states (2012, November 26)
retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2012-11-states.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.