

# YOUTH SURVEY

## FAIRFAX COUNTY

# TEENAGE INHALANT USE in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey. Data from the Sixth Grade Youth Survey is reported separately and not included in totals.

**2%** of students report past 30-day inhalant use

**4%** of 6th graders report ever trying inhalants



**52%** decrease since 2011 in past 30-day use among 8th, 10th & 12th graders

**3%** of 8th graders report past 30-day use

**<1%** of 10th and 12th graders report past 30-day use

**2%** of 6th graders report past 30-day use



## What You Need to Know

Inhalant use (sniffing or breathing aerosol or other gases to get high) is the most common drug behavior for 6th graders (2%). Four percent of 6th graders have tried inhalants in their lifetime.

Inhalants are the only substances used to get high where use for 10th and 12th graders (each below 1%) is lower than use among 8th graders (3%).

Inhalant use in Fairfax County has decreased over the past few years and is now comparable to the national average for students overall and in the 8th, 10th and 12th grades. (A national comparison for 6th graders isn't available.)\*

Gender is not a significant factor in the prevalence of inhalant use. Girls and boys report similarly for using inhalants in the past 30 days. Race and ethnicity are not significant factors, either.

### Common Inhalants:

- glue
- shoe polish
- gasoline or lighter fluid
- spray paints or other aerosols
- air fresheners or locker room odorizers known as "poppers" or "rush"
- correction fluid
- degreasers
- cleaning fluid
- nitrous oxide in whipped cream dispensers known as "whippits"

## What Can You Do?

### IF YOU NOTICE

- ▶ Chemical odors on breath or clothing.
- ▶ Paint or other stains on face, hands or clothes.
- ▶ Hidden empty spray paint or solvent containers, and chemical-soaked rags or clothing.
- ▶ Drunk or disoriented appearance.
- ▶ Slurred speech.
- ▶ Nausea or loss of appetite.
- ▶ Inattentiveness, lack of coordination, irritability and depression.
- ▶ Seizures.
- ▶ Missing household items.

### CONSIDER THIS

- ▶ Drug use has serious consequences on the teenage brain because it is still developing at this age.
- ▶ Nine out of 10 people who met medical criteria for drug or alcohol abuse or dependence started smoking, drinking or using other drugs before the age of 18. Inhalant users, on average, initiate use of other drugs at younger ages and display a higher lifetime prevalence of substance use disorders, including abuse of prescription drugs, when compared with substance abusers without a history of inhalant use.
- ▶ More Americans die from drug overdoses than in car crashes, and this increasing trend is driven by the use of prescription painkillers.
- ▶ Drug use lowers one's inhibitions, leading to actions that teenagers will later regret.
- ▶ Inhalants can be lethal, even among otherwise healthy people using them once. Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of the chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can directly cause heart failure within minutes.

### IF YOU ARE CONCERNED

- ▶ Set clear expectations for their behavior and apply appropriate and consistent consequences.
- ▶ Talk to your teens. Listen and try to understand the pressures of their life. Avoid criticism.
- ▶ Let your child know that he or she can always count on you and come to you for support.
- ▶ Keep track of where your teens are and what they are doing. Get to know who their friends are.
- ▶ Store prescription and over-the-counter medicines in a secure place. Immediately and securely dispose of expired or unused medicines.
- ▶ Talk to your teen's school counselor, psychologist or social worker.
- ▶ Be a positive role model. Don't misuse alcohol or use illegal drugs. Don't drink and drive.

Adapted from [www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov) and [www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org).

## Who Can Help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)  
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxCSB>  
 Entry & Referral 703-383-8500, TTY 711  
 24-Hour Emergency Services 703-573-567, TTY 711

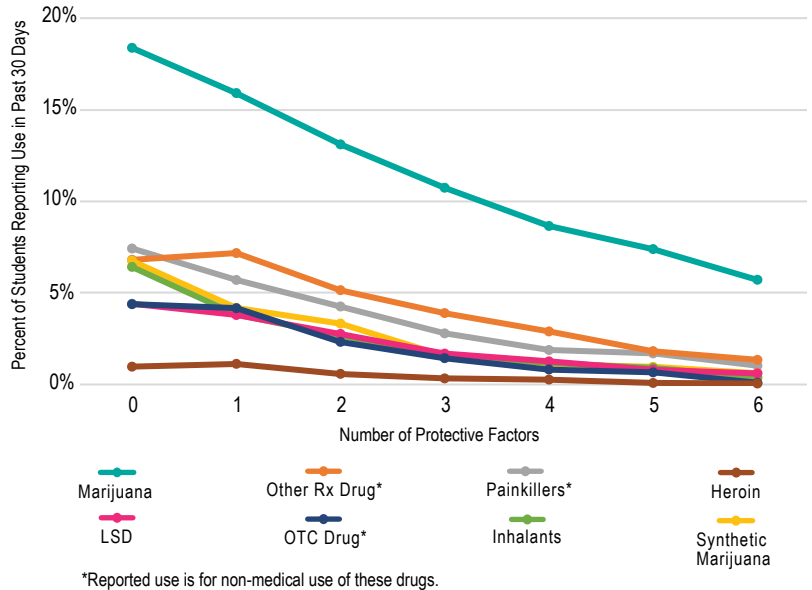
Fairfax County Public Schools  
<http://bit.ly/FCPSspecialsvcs>  
 Intervention & Prevention Services 571-423-4020  
 Student Safety & Wellness 571-423-4270

Partnership for Drug-Free Kids Helpline  
[www.drugfree.org/get-help/helpline](http://www.drugfree.org/get-help/helpline)  
 855-378-4373



Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.



### Protective Factors

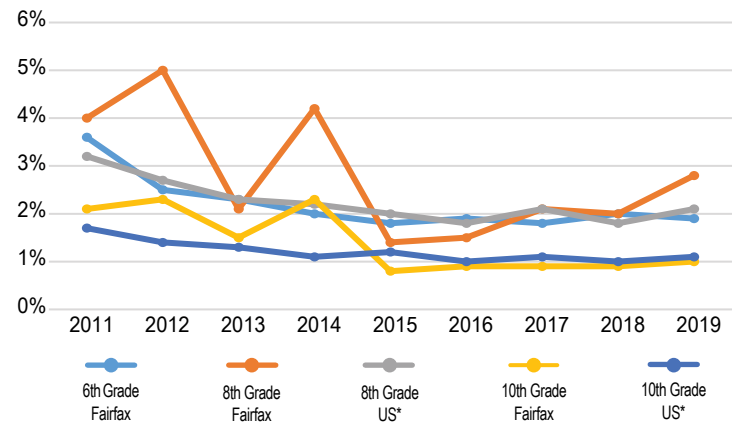
- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- Having community adults to talk to
- Performing community service
- Participating in extracurricular activities
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Having parents available for help

## Past 30-Day Drug Use

	OVERALL	8TH GRADE	10TH GRADE	12TH GRADE
ALCOHOL	15.1%	4.5%	13.9%	27.7%
MARIJUANA	9.7%	2.5%	9.9%	17.0%
SYNTHETIC MARIJUANA	1.7%	1.1%	2.1%	1.9%
INHALANTS	1.5%	2.8%	1.0%	0.7%
PAINKILLERS*	2.6%	2.6%	2.5%	2.6%
OTHER PRESCRIPTION DRUGS*	3.3%	2.7%	3.2%	4.1%
HEROIN	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.3%

\*Reported use is for non-medical use of these drugs.

## Past 30-Day Inhalant Use



\*National comparisons are from the Monitoring the Future Survey.

### WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey)

Fairfax County Prevention System  
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America  
[www.drugfree.org](http://www.drugfree.org)

NIDA for Teens  
[www.teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/inhalants](http://www.teens.drugabuse.gov/drug-facts/inhalants)

## Related Factors

Fairfax County youth who have used drugs or alcohol in the past 30 days are more likely to:

- Have skipped school or been suspended.
- Have experienced symptoms of depression or considered suicide.
- Have had sexual intercourse.

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2019.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



A Fairfax County, Va., publication  
 November 2020