



## Drug use: The real story

Many parents worry about whether their teenagers are drinking alcohol or taking illegal drugs, how they can tell, and what to do about it if they are.

With all the stories about drugs in the media, many parents also wonder why young people would even think about trying drugs. However, media stories often try to paint a picture of high drug use amongst secondary students. So what is the real story?



**If you would like to read further information about the Western Australian results of the national survey** visit the Drug and Alcohol Office or the Mental Health Commission website

Drug and Alcohol Office website  
[www.dao.wa.gov.au](http://www.dao.wa.gov.au)

Mental Health Commission's website  
[www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au](http://www.mentalhealth.wa.gov.au)

The Australian School Students Alcohol and Drug (ASSAD) survey is conducted every three years and involves thousands of students who answer anonymously a range of questions.

The 2014 survey results showed that in Western Australia:

- Apart from analgesics and alcohol, most young people aged 12 to 17 years do not use drugs.
- Although use of alcohol by these age groups has decreased since 2011, 44% reported they had used alcohol in the last year.
- 19% said they had used cannabis at some time in their life.
- 16% of 12-17 year olds reported they had used cannabis in the last year.
- Only 3.1% said they had used ecstasy and 2.8% had used amphetamines in the last year.
- Volatile substances (eg glue, paint, petrol or thinners) were used by 16% of 12-17 year olds at some time in their lives.

(MHC, 2016a; MHC, 2016b)

### Dispelling the myths around young people and drug use

*Your children will be exposed to news stories that may suggest to them that 'all young people are using illicit drugs'. Your children may also believe that many of their friends are drinking alcohol or using cannabis. It is therefore so important to let your children know that their perceptions about other young people's drug use are incorrect and that by choosing not to use alcohol or other drugs they are part of the majority of young people their age.*

