

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

IMPAIRED DRIVING

AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS



PREVALENCE

- Among those attending 4-year colleges full-time at ages 19-22 in calendar years 2019-2023, 16.7% of students reported past 2-week driving under the influence of any alcohol, driving after five or more drinks, marijuana use, or other illicit drug use.

Source: *Monitoring the Future Panel Study, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan.*



CONSEQUENCES

- Of students who drove a car in the last 30 days, 7.4% did so after drinking any alcohol, and 6% did so within six hours of using cannabis/marijuana.

Source: *American College Health Association – National College Health Assessment (Spring 2024).*



VARIOUS DRUGS & THEIR EFFECTS ON DRIVING

- Driving skills differ depending on how various drugs act in the brain. For instance:
 - ✓ Cannabis use can slow reaction time, impair judgment of time and distance, and decrease coordination, and use of alcohol with cannabis makes drivers more impaired, causing even more lane weaving.
 - ✓ Drivers who have used cocaine or methamphetamine can be aggressive and reckless when driving; and



- ✓ Certain kinds of prescription medicines, including benzodiazepines and opioids, can cause drowsiness, dizziness, and impair cognitive functioning (i.e., thinking and judgment).
- It is clear that drugs alter perception, mental processes, attention, coordination, reaction time, and other skills needed for safe driving.
- With lesser reaction time and impaired judgment, crashes are more likely to occur, which can result in injury or even death.

Source: *Drugged Driving DrugFacts. National Institute on Drug Abuse. Retrieved September 17, 2024, from <https://nida.nih.gov/publications/drugfacts/drugged-driving>*



THINGS YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT IMPAIRED DRIVING

- Consider adding a question about impaired driving to campus-based surveys to get an accurate sense of the prevalence of this behavior among students.
- Identify and correct misperceptions students may have about impaired driving, including how various drugs affect driving skills.
- Talk with students about having a plan to get home safely from parties or other social gatherings.
- Collaborate with local law enforcement personnel to stay current on impaired driving trends and prevention strategies in the community.
- Get involved! Join your campus's or local community's coalition to prevent impaired driving.

HELPFUL RESOURCES



- **DEA Website:** www.campusdrugprevention.gov
- **DEA Drug Fact Sheets:** www.campusdrugprevention.gov/content/drug-fact-sheets
- **DEA Publication:** *Prevention with Purpose A Strategic Planning Guide for Preventing Drug Misuse Among College Students:* www.campusdrugprevention.gov/preventionguide