

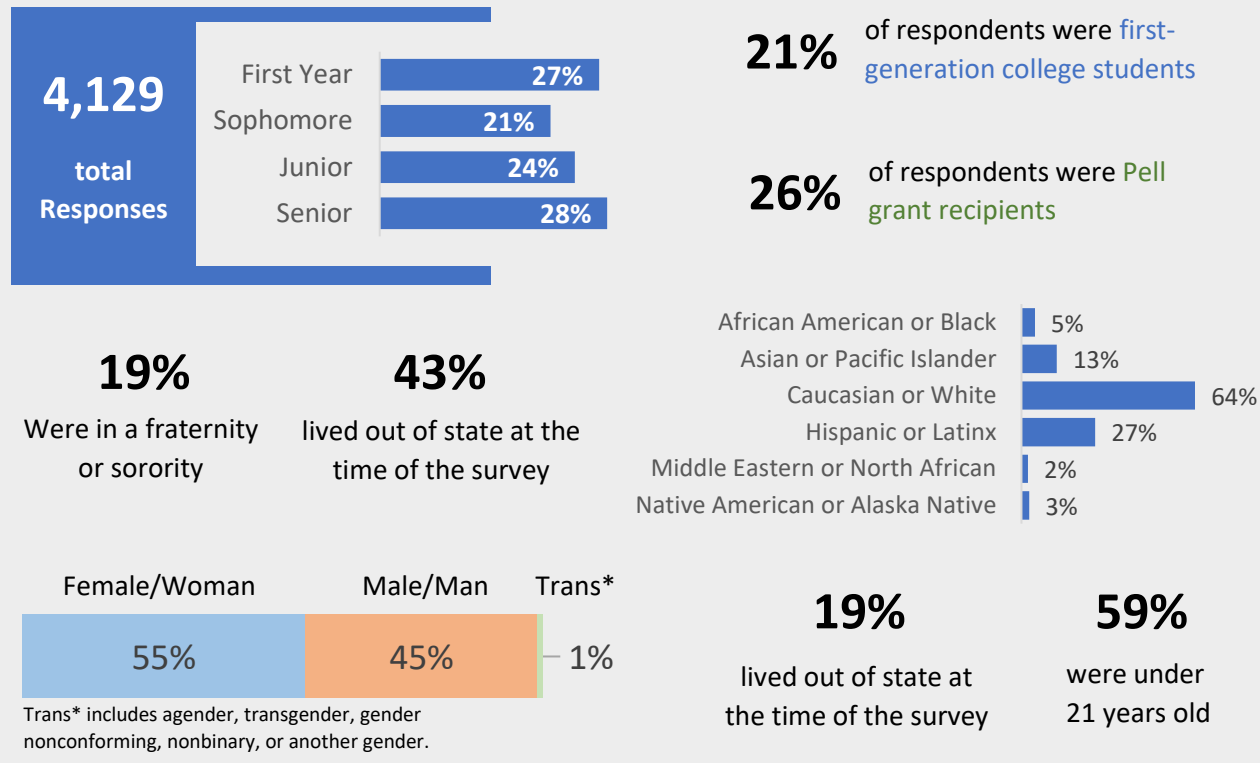
Health and Wellness 2021 Insights Report Series

Alcohol and Other Drugs



The 2021 Health and Wellness Survey was administered in Spring 2021 by Campus Health Service (2/12 – 3/31). In order to adapt to COVID-19, the survey was completely digitally and was administered in virtual classrooms and over D2L. Despite these limitations, the sample was similar to previous years. This report uses only the undergraduate sample – graduate students will be represented in other reports.

Sample Snapshot:



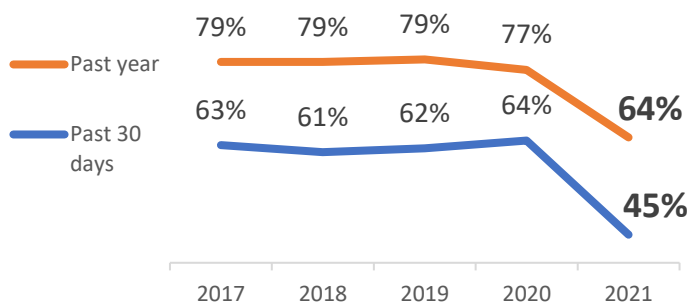
Note: Undergraduate data is weighted to match UA demographics related to gender, class, and fraternity/sorority affiliation. For more in-depth demographics, see the [2021 Health and Wellness Aggregate Report](#).



Both use of alcohol and average drinks per week were at an all-time low in 2021.

Alcohol use in the past year decreased by **19%** from the previous 4-year average, and use in the past 30 days decreased by **29%**. This decrease can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic, as students spending less time out or living with parents likely decreased use.

5 year trends in Alcohol use:

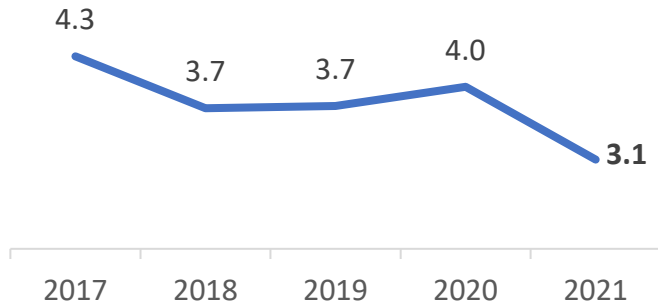


36%

did NOT drink in the past year



5 year trends in average drinks per week:

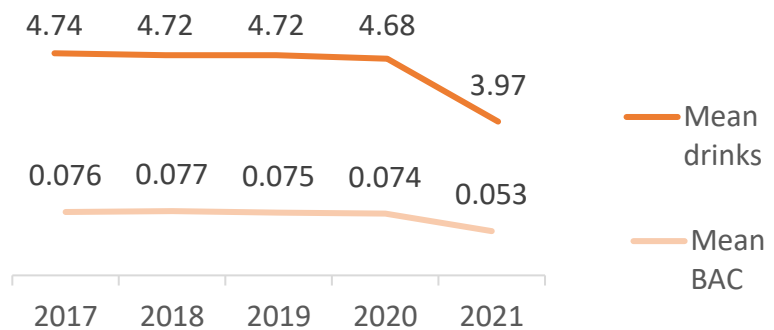


Average drinks per week also decreased **28%** from the previous 4-year average, among those who did drink. However, students in fraternities and sororities reported heavier drinking, though still **19%** less than the previous 4-year average.



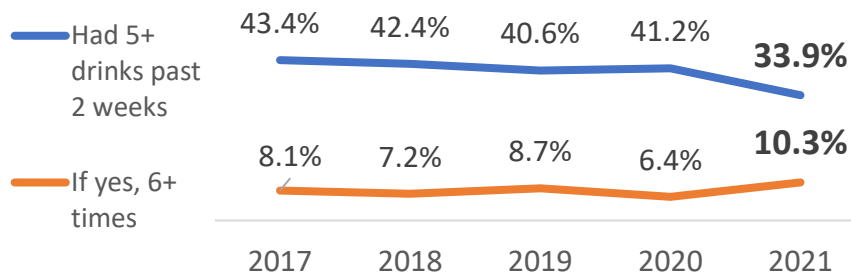
Mean drinks on the last drinking occasion decreased by **16%** from the previous 4-year average, and mean BAC decreased by **30%**. Both mean drinks and mean BAC were the lowest ever – once again, most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following other data on drinking trends.

5-year trends in mean number of drinks and mean BAC on last drinking occasion:



Binge drinking decreased in 2021, but frequent binge drinking increased among those who reported 5+ drinks in one sitting in the last 2 weeks.

5-year trends in binge drinking:



Although binge drinking (5+ drinks in one sitting in the past 2 weeks) decreased **19%** from the prior 4-year average, those who binge drank frequently (6+ times in past 2 weeks) increased **36%**. This suggests that some students may be using alcohol to cope with the stresses of the pandemic.



Student Athletes are

1.5 times

more likely to report binge drinking in the last 2 weeks

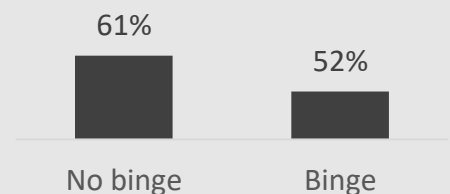


Greek students are

4.9 times

more likely to report binge drinking in the last 2 weeks

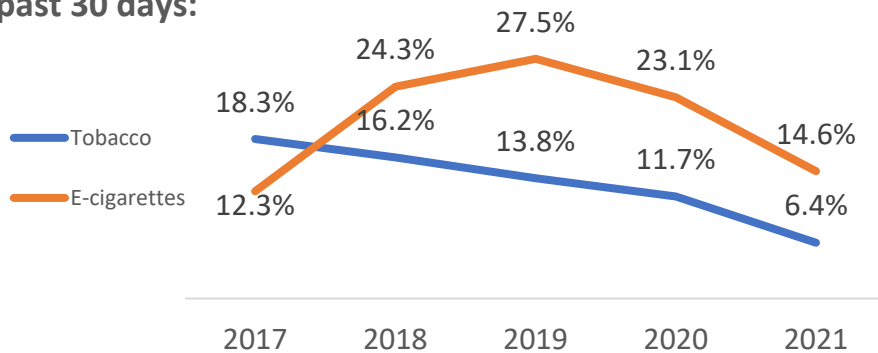
Binge drinkers were significantly **less likely to usually or always use a condom during sex:**





Tobacco and e-cigarette use went down substantially, with tobacco use being at an all-time low and e-cigarette use being the lowest since 2018.

5-year trends in tobacco and e-cigarette use in the past 30 days:

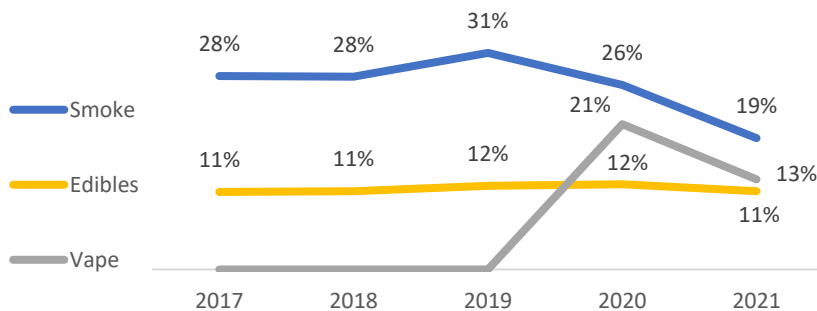


Mean tobacco use decreased by **57%** from the previous 4-year average, although tobacco use has been on a downward trend. Use of e-cigarettes decreased by **33%** and was the lowest since 2018.



Insight: Undergraduate use of all types of marijuana went down, except for marijuana edibles.

5-year trends in marijuana use in the past 30 days:

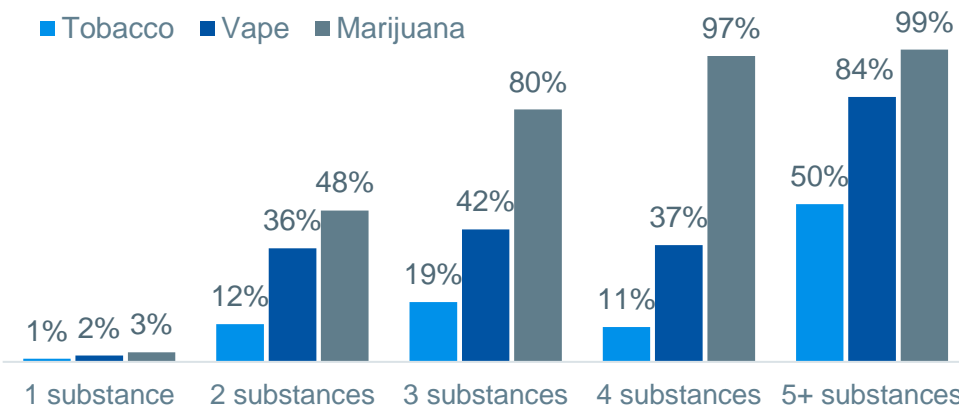


Marijuana use followed a similar trend to other substance use, except for use of edibles. Students reporting smoking marijuana decreased by **33%** from the previous 4-year average. Vaping decreased **38%** from the year prior (vaping marijuana was added in 2020). There was no change in edible use.



Insight: Likelihood of smoking, vaping, and using marijuana increases with the number of substances used

Likelihood of using tobacco, vaping or using marijuana by number of substances used in the past year

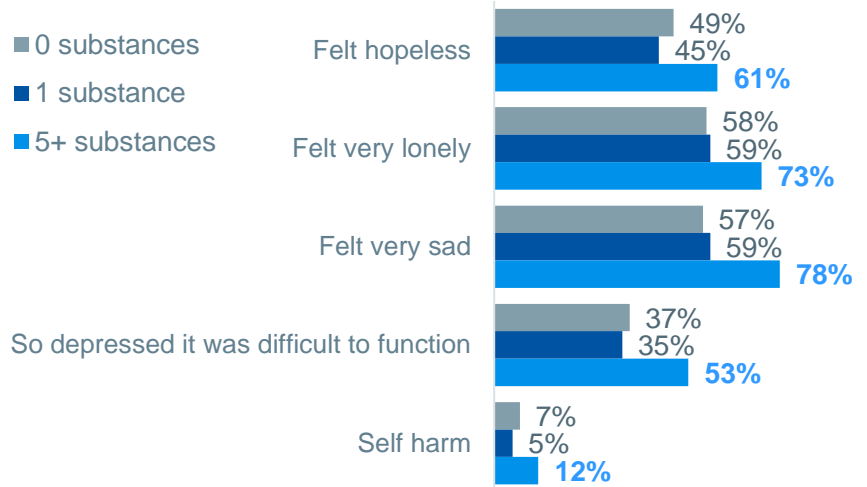


Polysubstance use increases the likelihood that students will use tobacco, vape, or use marijuana. This is based on use of a list of 11 substances. Use of marijuana was high over 2 substances, while tobacco increased the most after 5+ substances were reported.

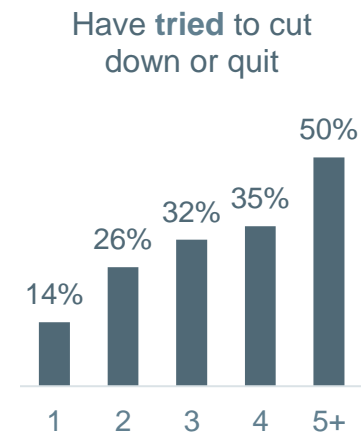
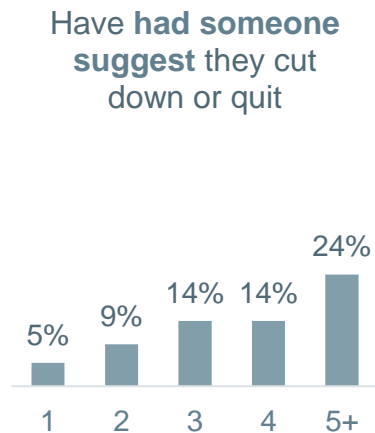
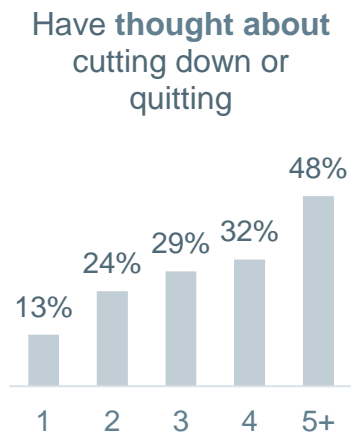


Insight: Students who reported using 5 or more substances in the last year were more likely to experience mental health symptoms

Polysubstance use also was associated with a greater likelihood of reporting mental health symptoms. Those who reported using 0 or 1 substances in the last year were much less likely to report mental health symptoms compared with those using 5 or more substances in the past year.



Insight: Students with greater polysubstance use in the last year may be more open to intervention



When looking at thoughts and behaviors around cutting down or quitting, those with the highest polysubstance use are most likely to have thought about, had someone suggest, or tried cutting down or quitting. Given that higher polysubstance use is associated with greater consequences (Meshesha, Dennhardt, & Murphy, 2015), this may not be surprising – but it also indicates that these students may be more open to intervention. This is especially supported by the fact that they are most likely to have thought about or tried to cut down or quit rather than had someone suggest that they do, possibly indicating greater readiness.

References:

Meshesha LZ, Dennhardt AA, Murphy JG. (2015). Polysubstance use is associated with deficits in substance-free reinforcement in college students. *J Stud Alcohol Drugs*. 76(1):106-16. PMID: 25486399.

For more information, contact:

Peggy Glider, PhD
 Coordinator of Evaluation and Research | Campus Health Service
glider@arizona.edu

Lauren Pring, MPH
 Evaluation Specialist | Campus Health Service
pring@arizona.edu



CAMPUS HEALTH