



## YOUTH ALCOHOL USE

### Alcohol is more widely used among youth than tobacco or illegal drugs.<sup>1</sup>

#### Health Consequences

From 2001 to 2005:

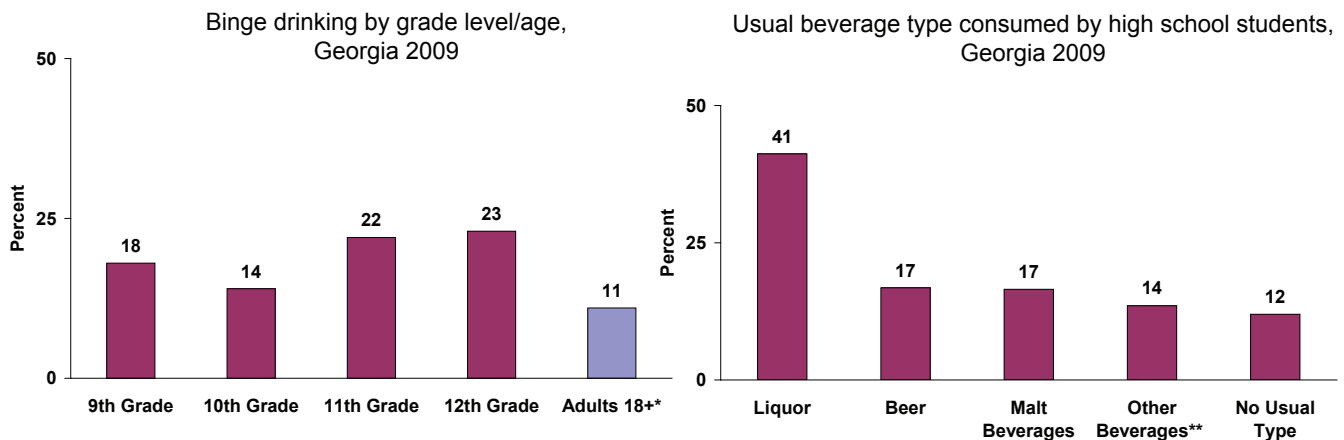
- 157 Georgia youth (< age 21) died each year from alcohol-related illness or injury
- More young men (77%) than women (23%) died each year from alcohol-related illness or injury
- 46% of youth alcohol-attributable deaths were due to motor-vehicle crashes
- 34% of youth alcohol-attributable deaths were due to homicide or suicide<sup>2</sup>

Youth alcohol use is also associated with increased risk for:

- Physical assault
- Sexual assault
- Academic problems
- Tobacco use
- Drug use
- Unplanned and unprotected sexual activity<sup>1</sup>
- Youth who consume alcohol are five times more likely to become dependent on or abuse alcohol than those who wait to try alcohol until they are 21 years of age<sup>3</sup>
- Excessive alcohol use among youth is associated with brain damage, intellectual impairment, and memory problems<sup>1,4</sup>

#### Drinking Behaviors

- In 2009, 21% of Georgia high school students reported having their first drink of alcohol (other than a few sips) before the age 13
- In 2009, 32% of Georgia middle school students and 68% of high school students reported having one or more alcoholic drinks at least once in their lifetime
- Approximately 331,386 (34%) Georgia high school students had at least one drink of alcohol in the last 30 days in 2009
- In 2009, 181,634 (19%) Georgia high school students reported binge drinking (consuming five or more drinks at one time)
- Among Georgia high school students who consumed alcohol in 2009, 41% usually drank liquor rather than malt beverages (17%), beer (17%), no usual type (12%) or other types of beverages including wine and wine coolers (14%)<sup>5</sup>



\*Binge drinking among adults<sup>6</sup> is defined as five or more drinks per episode for men and four or more drinks per episode for women.

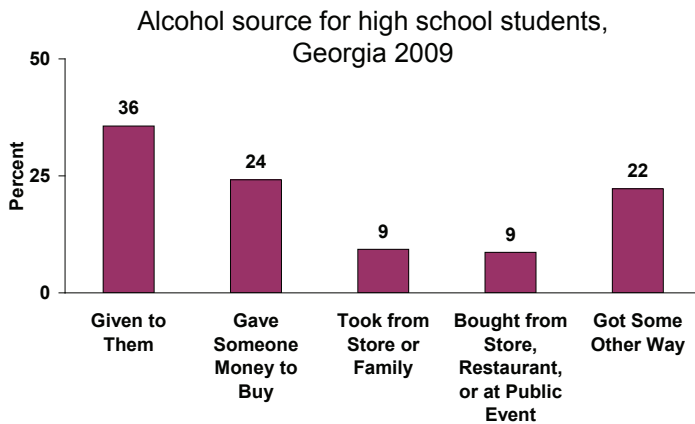
\*\*Other beverages include wine, wine coolers and other types of alcoholic beverages.

## Drinking and Driving

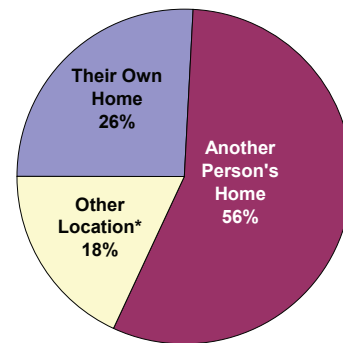
- In 2009, 66,953 (7%) Georgia high school students reported driving after consuming alcohol
- Among 12th grade students in Georgia, 12% reported driving after consuming alcohol in 2009

## Youth Access to Alcohol

- In 2009, 36% of Georgia high school students who reported alcohol use usually got alcohol from someone who gave it to them
- Among Georgia high school students who consumed alcohol, 82% did so at their own home or another person's home in 2009<sup>5</sup>



Usual location of high school student alcohol use, Georgia 2009



\*Other locations include public places, public events, in vehicles and on school property.

## Prevention of Youth Alcohol Use

- Maintaining a minimum legal drinking age of 21:
  - Results in reduced levels of alcohol consumption among young adults
  - Is recommended by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services based on strong evidence that it prevents motor-vehicle crashes among youth
- Better enforcement of laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors is recommended by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services
- Limiting alcohol outlet density, or limiting the number of places to buy alcohol from, is recommended by the Task Force on Community Preventive Services<sup>7</sup>
- Increasing alcohol excise taxes is recommended by the Committee on Developing Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Underage Drinking
- Reducing youth exposure to alcohol advertising is recommended by the Committee on Developing Strategy to Reduce and Prevent Underage Drinking<sup>8</sup>

## Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; 2007.
2. 2001-2005 Alcohol-Related Disease Impact (ARDI) Software, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (<http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/ardi.htm>).
3. Hingson RW, Heeren T, Winter MR. Age at drinking onset and alcohol dependence: age at onset, duration, and severity. *Pediatrics* 2006;160:739-746.
4. Zeigler DW, Wang CC, Yoast RA, Dickinson BD, McCaffree MA, Robinowitz CB, Sterling ML. The neurocognitive effects of alcohol on adolescents and college students. *Preventive Medicine* 2005; 40: 23-32.
5. 2009 Georgia Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey (<http://health.state.ga.us/epi/cdiee/studenthealth.asp>).
6. 2009 Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (<http://health.state.ga.us/epi/brfss/index.asp>).
7. Guide to Community Preventive Services ([www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/lawsprohibitingsales.html](http://www.thecommunityguide.org/alcohol/lawsprohibitingsales.html)).
8. Bonnie RJ, O'Connell ME, eds. Reducing underage drinking: A collective responsibility. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; 2004.