Alcohol use is a leading cause of death among youth, particularly teenagers.* Alcohol is the most commonly abused drug among youth in the United States and is more commonly abused than tobacco and illicit drugs.* Alcohol use is a major risk factor adolescent motor vehicle crashes and other unintentional injuries. The following graphs and tables illustrate Alcohol use among students attending high school within Cherokee Nation’s 10 counties of located in Northeastern Oklahoma.

**Percent of students who had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more days during their life**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>72.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>63.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2011, 66.5% of students within the Cherokee Nation’s 10 county service area had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more days during their life.

The percentage of females (68.2%) who reported having at least one or more drink of alcohol was greater than that of males (64.9%). Though these differences were not found to be statistically significant.

The percentage of American Indian students (72.1%) who consumed at least one or more drinks over their entire life was higher than that of White students (62.9%).

The age of alcohol initiation is an important social determinate. Younger alcohol initiation is associate with increased alcohol dependence and abuse later in life.* 20.9% of students reported having their first drink before age 13.
Students that reported drinking one or more drink of alcohol within the past 30 days are considered current alcohol users. 33.3% of students within the Cherokee Nation service area had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days.

Consuming five or more drinks of alcohol in a row is indicative of binge drinking behavior. 22.3% of students had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row 30 days prior to completing the survey. Differences between American Indian and White as well as female and male students were scientifically significant. More American Indian students (29.2%) than White students (17.5%) reported past 30 day binge drinking behavior. More males (24.4%) than females (19.6%) reported past 30 day binge drinking behavior.
Consequences of Underage Drinking

Youth who drink alcohol\textsuperscript{1,3,8} are more likely to experience

- School problems, such as higher absence and poor or failing grades.
- Social problems, such as fighting and lack of participation in youth activities.
- Legal problems, such as arrest for driving or physically hurting someone while drunk.
- Physical problems, such as hangovers or illnesses.
- Unwanted, unplanned, and unprotected sexual activity.
- Disruption of normal growth and sexual development.
- Physical and sexual assault.
- Higher risk for suicide and homicide.
- Alcohol-related car crashes and other unintentional injuries, such as burns, falls, and drowning.
- Memory problems.
- Abuse of other drugs.
- Changes in brain development that may have life-long effects.
- Death from alcohol poisoning.

How do Cherokee Nation youth compare to other youth in the United States?

In 2009, 72\% of youth nationwide consumed at least one drink of alcohol on at least 1 day during their lifetime and 42\% consumed at least one drink of alcohol 30 days prior to the survey. This means that a small percentage of students within Cherokee Nation high schools currently consume alcohol or have consumed alcohol over their entire lifetime. However, when American Indian student data is disaggregated, current and lifetime consumption of alcohol are similar to the national percents.

In the same year, 24\% percent of youth nationwide drank five or more drinks in a row, which was slightly more than students attending schools within the Cherokee Nation schools (22.3\%).