

# PHYSICAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## INDICATOR #13 Binge Drinking

### DEFINITIONS

The original established indicator is the percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report having engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days. In the interest of more fully understanding binge drinking among youth, this indicator will be explored here and in future reports as two measures, specified below as Indicators 13A and 13B.

**INDICATOR #13A** — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report ever having a drink of alcohol.<sup>f</sup>

**INDICATOR #13B** — Percentage of BC students in grades 7–12 who report binge drinking (consuming five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours) at least once in the past 30 days.

### KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Data show that alcohol is a leading contributor to injury among youth, and there is strong evidence that alcohol consumption, and especially **binge drinking**, is a risk factor for various negative health-related outcomes.<sup>1-3</sup>
- ▶ Studies of adolescent brain development over the last decade indicate that alcohol exposure could result in behavioural and cognitive deficits.<sup>1,4</sup>
- ▶ Research also shows that starting to consume alcohol at a younger age is highly associated with risk of drinking problems later in life, such as alcohol dependence and alcohol-related cancers.<sup>1,5</sup>
- ▶ Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines suggest that if youth decide to drink, they should never have more than one to two drinks per occasion and never drink more than one or two times per week.<sup>6</sup>
- ▶ On January 31, 2014, the Government of BC announced full support for all recommendations from the *BC Liquor Policy Review Final Report*, including Recommendation #1: "Government should expand public education about health and safety risks related to alcohol use, with particular emphasis on the harmful effects of binge drinking by youth and post-secondary students."<sup>7</sup>
- ▶ Other recent changes in alcohol access and availability policy,<sup>8</sup> such as liquor being available in grocery stores, may affect youth alcohol consumption behaviours, and it will be important to monitor data concerning this issue.
- ▶ Figure 13A.1 shows that the percentage of students in grades 7–12 who report having ever tried alcohol decreased from 2003 to 2013.

<sup>f</sup>"A drink of alcohol" means one standard drink: 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1.5 oz. hard liquor.

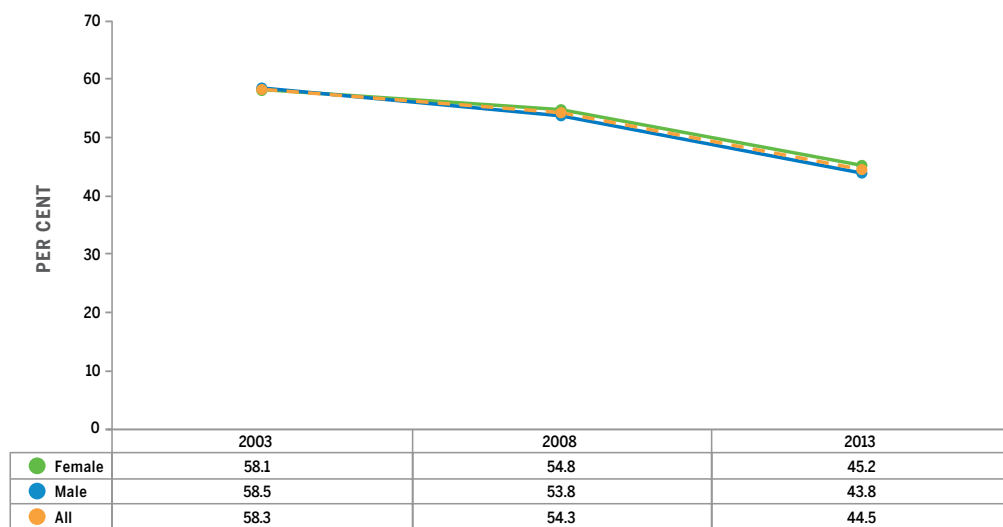
► Similarly, Figure 13B.1 shows a slightly declining trend for participation in binge drinking among students in grades 7–12 during this time period; however, it is still an important issue, with 17.3 per cent of students reporting binge drinking in the past 30 days.

► There are geographic differences across health authorities and health service delivery areas (HSDAs) that should also be considered. For example, students in Richmond HSDA reported the lowest percentage of participation in binge drinking (10.5 per cent), while students in Kootenay Boundary HSDA reported the highest (28.2 per cent) (Figure 13B.3).

*“We have grade sevens who are drinking and smoking in our change rooms – the very first year that they are in high school! Our experience in grade seven? We were like hiding out in the classrooms playing on the computer.”*

*“Binge drinking is not considered cool, people talk about getting their stomachs pumped – they tell horror stories about it.”*

**FIG 13A.1** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Ever Having a Drink of Alcohol, by Sex, BC, 2003, 2008, and 2013



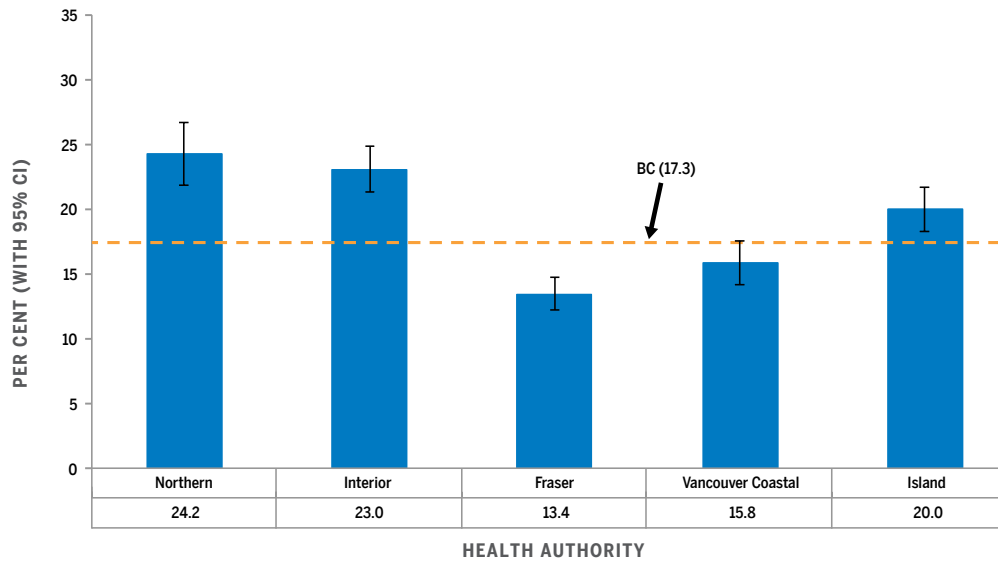
**Notes:** "A drink of alcohol" means one standard drink: 12 oz. beer, 5 oz. wine, or 1.5 oz. hard liquor. The differences between all years were statistically significant for all groups. The difference between sexes was not statistically significant for any years. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.  
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2003, 2008, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

**FIG 13B.1** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Binge Drinking, by Sex, BC, 2003, 2008, and 2013



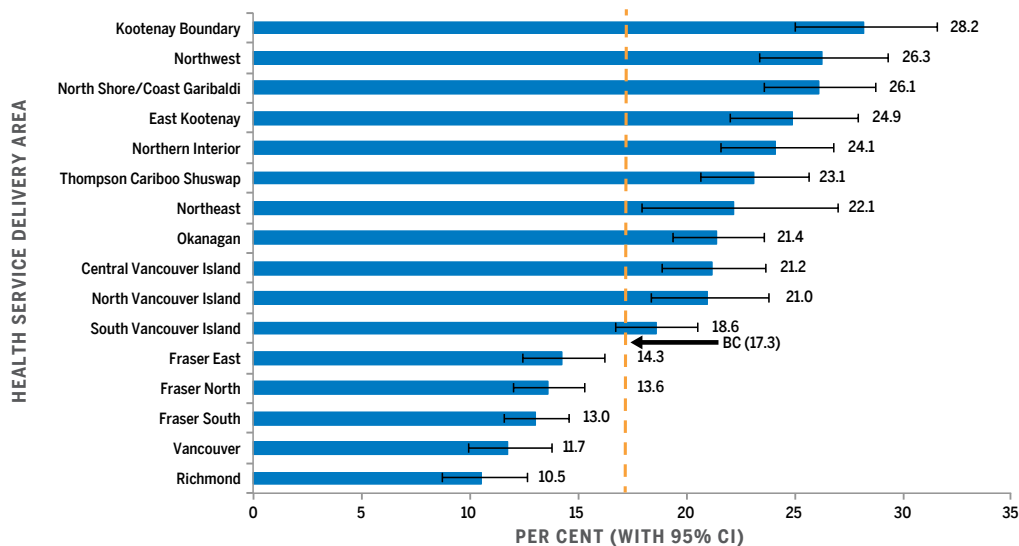
**Notes:** "Binge drinking" means having five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours at least once during the previous 30 days. The differences between 2003 and 2013 and between 2008 and 2013 were statistically significant for all groups. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.  
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2003, 2008, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

**FIG 13B.2** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Binge Drinking, by Health Authority, BC, 2013



**Notes:** "Binge drinking" means having five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours at least once during the previous 30 days. Health authority is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.  
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

**FIG 13B.3** Percentage of Students in Grades 7-12 Who Reported Binge Drinking, by Health Service Delivery Area, BC, 2013



**Notes:** "Binge drinking" means having five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours at least once during the previous 30 days. Health service delivery area is based on the location of the school. See Appendix B for more information about this data source.  
**Source:** McCreary Centre Society, BC Adolescent Health Survey, 2013. Prepared by the Surveillance and Epidemiology Team, BC Office of the Provincial Health Officer, 2016.

## REFERENCES

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- <sup>6</sup> Butt P, Beirness D, Gliksman L, Paradis C, Stockwell T. Alcohol and health in Canada: a summary of evidence and guidelines for low risk drinking. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse; 2011 [cited 2016 Mar 21]. Available from: <http://www.ccsa.ca/Resource%20Library/2011-Summary-of-Evidence-and-Guidelines-for-Low-Risk%20Drinking-en.pdf>.
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- <sup>8</sup> BC Ministry of Justice. B.C. outlines balanced plan for grocery store liquor sales [Internet]. Victoria, BC: BC Ministry of Justice; 2014 Mar 6 [cited 2016 Jun 21]. Available from: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/bc-outlines-balanced-plan-for-grocery-store-liquor-sales>.