

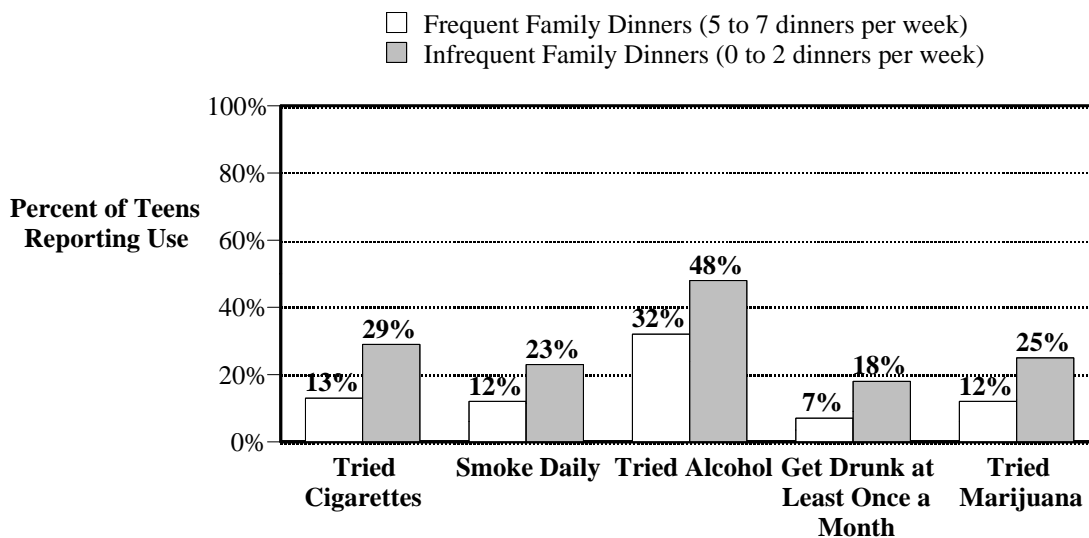
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Teens Who Frequently Have Family Dinners Less Likely to Drink, Smoke, or Use Drugs

The more often teens have dinners with their families, the less likely they are to use alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs, according to a recent national telephone survey of teens. For example, 32% of teens who have dinner with their family five or more times a week report that they have tried alcohol and 7% report that they get drunk at least once a month, compared to 48% and 18%, respectively, of teens who have less than three family dinners a week (see figure below). This relationship can be largely explained by the fact that parents who frequently eat with their children are very involved in their kids' lives. According to the survey, parents who have frequent family dinners are more likely to say they know the parents of their teen's closest friends, know the names of their teen's teachers, believe they have a good relationship with their teen. Overall, 58% of teens report having dinner with their family at least five times a week. The top three reasons given for not having more frequent dinners were that parents work late, being too busy, and having conflicting schedules.

Percentage of U.S. Teens (Ages 12 to 17) Reporting Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana Use, by Frequency of Family Dinners, 2006
(N=1,297)



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (CASA), *The Importance of Family Dinners III*, September 2006. Available online at <http://www.casacolumbia.org/supportcasa/item.asp?cID=12&PID=150>.

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