

Table 4.22A Numbers (in Thousands) of Persons Who Initiated Illicit Drug Use in the United States, Their Mean Age at First Use, and Rates of First Use (Per 1,000 Person-Years of Exposure): 1965-2003, Based on 2002-2004 NSDUHs

YEAR	NUMBER OF INITIATES (1,000s)			MEAN AGE	AGE-SPECIFIC RATES ¹	
	All Ages	Under 18	18 or Older		12-17	18-25
1965	898	384	514	18.4	17.9	25.2
1966	1,047	393	654	19.1	17.1	29.4
1967	1,635	671	964	18.6	30.9	40.9
1968	2,281	939	1,342	18.6	43.0	60.5
1969	2,623	1,149	1,474	18.5	53.5	69.0
1970	2,920	1,382	1,538	18.5	63.6	69.7
1971	3,031	1,444	1,587	18.6	67.3	75.0
1972	3,346	1,736	1,610	18.4	81.5	71.8
1973	3,397	1,741	1,656	18.5	81.3	79.6
1974	3,344	1,970	1,374	18.1	93.6	65.5
1975	3,312	1,977	1,335	18.0	95.9	65.5
1976	3,394	1,977	1,417	18.5	101.1	70.4
1977	3,423	2,054	1,369	18.3	106.3	70.7
1978	3,374	2,049	1,325	18.3	109.0	70.8
1979	3,143	1,887	1,256	18.5	103.9	67.0
1980	2,725	1,681	1,043	18.4	93.8	54.6
1981	2,565	1,548	1,017	18.1	88.5	60.7
1982	2,481	1,491	989	19.0	83.9	51.8
1983	2,481	1,538	943	18.1	86.5	57.5
1984	2,327	1,474	852	18.1	85.2	50.3
1985	2,347	1,444	903	18.3	83.7	54.8
1986	2,261	1,384	877	17.8	83.0	56.1
1987	2,024	1,276	748	18.0	73.7	47.4
1988	1,983	1,219	764	18.0	73.2	50.0
1989	1,897	1,095	802	18.5	64.5	47.9
1990	1,793	1,040	753	18.6	59.8	44.1
1991	1,953	1,164	789	18.4	65.7	45.6
1992	2,249	1,360	889	18.0	74.2	52.5
1993	2,371	1,515	856	17.4	82.4	52.0
1994	2,711	1,754	957	17.4	94.0	57.1
1995	2,893	1,835	1,058	17.2	96.5	64.8
1996	2,840	1,800	1,041	17.7	93.4	61.4
1997	2,959	1,987	973	17.2	101.5	61.0
1998	3,118	2,036	1,081	17.6	100.0	65.1
1999	3,258	2,136	1,122	17.8	104.2	67.0
2000	3,649	2,417	1,231	17.8	119.8	71.6
2001	3,597	2,380	1,217	18.0	121.1	69.8
2002 ²	3,513	2,441	1,072	17.8	125.2	60.6
2003 ³	3,462	2,254	1,208	18.1	117.6	61.9

*Low precision; no estimate reported.

-- Not available.

NOTE: Illicit Drugs include marijuana/hashish, cocaine (including crack), heroin, hallucinogens, inhalants, or prescription-type psychotherapeutics used nonmedically.

NOTE: Comparisons between years, particularly between recent estimates and those from 10 or more years prior, should be made with caution due to potential bias from reporting and other sources.

¹ The numerator of each rate is the number of persons in the age group who initiated use of the drug in the specified year, while the denominator is the person-time exposure of persons in the age group measured in thousands of years.

² Estimated using 2003 and 2004 data only.

³ Estimated using 2004 data only.

Source: SAMHSA, Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002, 2003, and 2004.