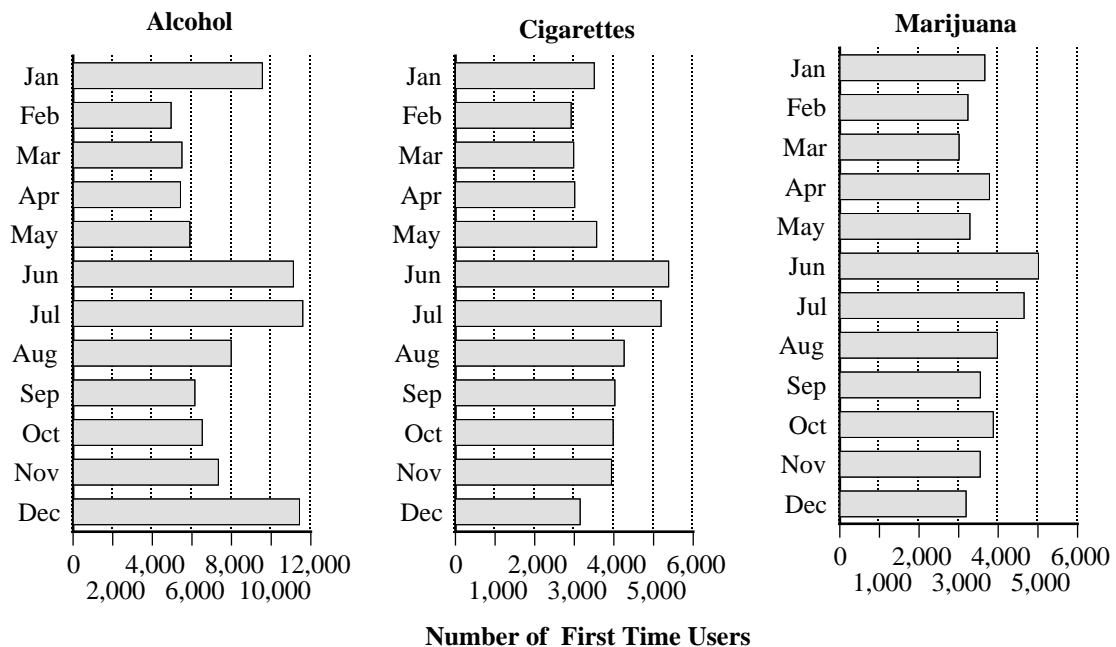


A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research
University of Maryland, College Park

Youth Initiation of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana Highest in Summer Months

First-time use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana by youth peak during the months of June and July, according to data from the National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). On an average day in June, July, or December, more than 11,000 youths ages 12 to 17 used alcohol for the first time, and about 9,600 used for the first time in January, compared to 5,000 to 8,000 new users each day in other months. Similar peaks in June and July occur for cigarettes and marijuana (see below), as well as for cigars and smokeless tobacco (data not shown). According to the authors, “these months include periods when adolescents are on break from school and may have more idle time, fewer responsibilities, and less adult supervision” (p. 6). In contrast, the initiation of other substances—cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, and prescription drugs used nonmedically—remain relatively constant over the course of a year. The authors suggest that alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana prevention efforts, such as media campaigns, alternative activities and events, and law enforcement campaigns, may be more effective during June and July.

Number of Youths Ages 12 to 17 Reporting First Time Alcohol, Cigarette, or Marijuana Use on an Average Day, by Month
(2002 to 2010 Annual Averages Combined)



SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), “Monthly Variation in Substance Use Initiation Among Adolescents,” *The NSDUH Report*, 2012. Available online at <http://www.samhsa.gov/data/2k12/NSDUH080/SR080InitiationSubstanceUse2012.pdf>.