

Student Health Survey FAQs

What is the Student Health Survey?

The Student Health Survey (SHS) survey is a comprehensive, school-based, anonymous and voluntary survey about health behaviors. It is a key part of state-wide efforts to help local schools and communities ensure that all Oregon youth are healthy and successful learners who contribute positively to their communities.

Why are you doing the survey?

Because Healthy Kids Learn Better.

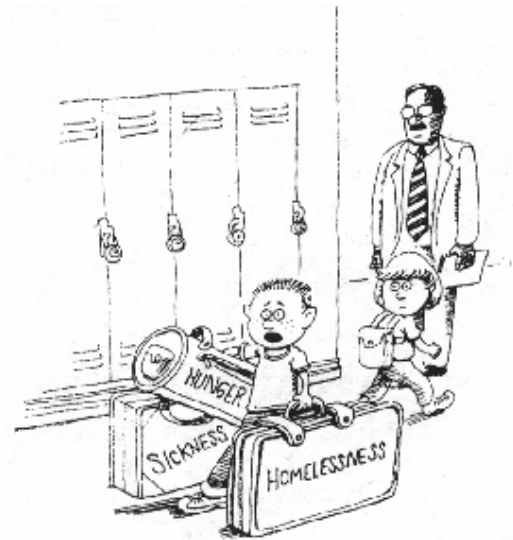
No curriculum is brilliant enough to compensate for a hungry stomach or a distracted mind. Good health is an essential educational tool.

Research shows that healthy students have better attendance, get higher grades and test scores and are less likely to skip school, drop out, or engage in risky behaviors.

Survey Methods

The Student Health Survey (SHS) is open to 6th, 8th and 11th graders in Oregon public schools.

The SHS will now be administered in schools every year in the fall in a web-based format.



*"Could someone help me with these?
I'm late for math class."*

What is the SHS used for?

Many state and local agencies rely on SHS data for adolescent programs and services that address important student health issues. The SHS is a comprehensive survey that asks about the whole child to get a more complete picture of students' health. Getting data on many different health-related topics helps to find the link between protective factors, risk, and outcomes.

The SHS asks about resilience factors and risk behaviors that directly impact students' health and well-being, such as:

- General health (physical, emotional and mental health, and oral health)
- Health conditions and access to care
- Support at school
- Community engagement
- Absenteeism
- Emerging public health issues, such as the use of e-cigarettes/vaping
- School climate
- Bullying (online and at school)
- Substance use (tobacco, e-cigarettes/vaping, alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs)
- Individual, peer, and family influences on risk behaviors
- Violence-related behaviors
- Injury prevention, including impaired driving, school safety, and suicide
- Diet and exercise
- Sexual behavior relating to the prevention of unintended pregnancies and STDs
- Demographics, including race, ethnicity, disabilities, socio-economic indicators, sexual orientation and gender identity to address health disparities

Does asking kids about risky behaviors encourage them to try it?

No. Asking youth about sensitive topics does not harm them and does NOT encourage these behaviors.

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) states that there is **no evidence** that simply asking students about health risk behaviors encourages that behavior:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/faq.htm> The only way to determine if adolescents are at risk is to ask.

Questions are age-appropriate and presented in a straightforward and sensitive manner. Students can choose not to answer any question that may make them uncomfortable

Are students forced to take the survey?

No. Students may choose not to take the survey or may refuse to answer any question on the survey. A parent may also opt their student out of participating in the SHS. As outlined in HB 2656, a parental notification form is required to be sent to parents by schools at least 5 days before the survey is administered; we strongly recommend giving at least 10 days notice. The notification includes information about the SHS, a link to the questionnaire, and instructions on how to inform the school if they do not want their child to participate.

Are we required to administer the SHS?

Yes. HB 2656 requires districts to make the SHS available to students. The SHS is administered to students in 6th, 8th and 11th grade.

How accurate is the survey? What if students lie on the survey?

Protecting student confidentiality and anonymity is paramount to getting truthful answers.

Surveys are more accurate when students believe their answers cannot be linked to them. The SHS does **not** ask for any identifying information, and it is not possible to link survey responses to a particular student, parent or family.

Sometimes students do exaggerate. But survey data from adolescents are as reliable as data collected from adults. Internal reliability and logic checks help identify the small percentage of exaggerated or falsified answers.

Who do I contact for more information?

Have questions about the survey? Email StudentHealth.Survey@odhsoha.oregon.gov and we'll respond as quickly as we can.