

Oregon's 1997 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Summary Report: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall, Oregon students' behaviors were relatively healthy. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) identified many statewide strengths, while also pinpointing areas for improvement.

Awareness of the risks of HIV was high and most students did not use drugs. About half reported healthy eating habits, eating fruit and vegetables and avoiding fatty meats, and more than half maintained a healthy level of physical activity.

Key areas for needed improvement include, but are not limited to, alcohol and drug use, physical violence, cigarette smoking, and vehicle safety. During the previous 30 days: 46 percent drank at least one drink of alcohol, 23 percent used marijuana, and 23 percent smoked cigarettes. During the past year: 29 percent had been involved in a physical fight and 33 percent had property stolen or deliberately damaged at school. Fifty percent of motorcyclists and 83 percent of bicyclists didn't always wear a helmet.

The following summaries highlight Oregon students' responses on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in key areas, and provide an overview of Oregon students' current activities which impact their health.

FINDINGS RELATED TO VEHICLE SAFETY

- Within the 30 days preceding the survey, 28 percent of the YRBS students had been a passenger in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking.
- Forty-seven percent of the students did not always wear a seatbelt while riding in a car driven by someone else.
- Twenty-six percent of the students had ridden a motorcycle in the 12 months prior to the survey. Fifty percent of those who rode motorcycles did not always wear a motorcycle helmet.
- Seventy-nine percent of the students rode a bicycle in the 12 months preceding the survey, but 83 percent of them did not always wear a bicycle helmet.

FINDINGS RELATED TO WEAPON CARRYING AND VIOLENCE

- During the 30 days preceding the survey, six percent of the YRBS students reported carrying a gun as a weapon. During that same period, seventeen percent of the students reported carrying a weapon other than a gun.
- During the 30 days preceding the survey, two percent of the students carried a gun (as a weapon) on school property and 11 percent of students carried a weapon other than a gun on school property. Seven percent of the students reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property at least once in the previous year. Thirty-one percent of the students reported being harassed at school. Three percent of the students did not go to school on one or more days during the previous month because they felt they would be unsafe at school or on their way to and from school.
- Twenty-nine percent of the students were in a fight and 13 percent were in a fight on school property, during the year prior to the survey.

FINDINGS RELATED TO PHYSICAL AND SEXUAL ABUSE AND SUICIDE

- Twenty-seven percent of the YRBS students reported being physically abused at some time.
- Seventeen percent of the students had been sexually abused ("touched sexually when you did not want to be, or forced to have intercourse when you did not want to") at some time during their life.
- Twenty-two percent of respondents had considered suicide and nine percent had attempted suicide, during the prior 12 months.

FINDINGS RELATED TO TOBACCO USE

- Twenty-one percent of the YRBS students smoked a cigarette for the first time before the age of 13.
- Twenty-two percent of the students under the age of eighteen smoked in the 30 days preceding the survey.
- Sixty-nine percent of the students who had ever smoked had quit for three months or longer.
- During the 30 days prior to the survey, 12 percent of the students used chewing tobacco or snuff.

FINDINGS RELATED TO ALCOHOL

- Twenty-nine percent of the YRBS students had their first drink of alcohol prior to age 13.
- During the 30 days prior to the survey, 46 percent of the students had at least one drink of alcohol, 31 percent had five or more drinks of alcohol in a row, and 6 percent reported drinking alcohol on school property.

FINDINGS RELATED TO MARIJUANA, COCAINE, AND OTHER ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- During the 30 days preceding the survey, 23 percent of the YRBS students used marijuana and 7 percent used marijuana on school property. Eleven percent of the students had tried marijuana before age 13.
- Three percent of the students ever tried cocaine during their life. Less than one percent tried cocaine prior to age 13.
- Two percent ever took steroid pills or shots without a doctor's prescription.
- Fifteen percent of the students used other illegal drugs, such as LSD, PCP, ecstasy, mushrooms, speed, ice, heroin, or pills without a doctor's prescription, one or more times during their life.
- Thirty-three percent of the students had someone offer, sell, or give them an illegal drug on school property during the 12 months prior to the survey.

FINDINGS RELATED TO SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND PREGNANCY

- Thirty-five percent of the YRBS students reported having had sexual intercourse. Five percent of the students had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13.
- Of the students who had sexual intercourse during the three months preceding the survey, 58 percent used a condom, or their partner used a condom.
- Seventy-two percent of the students who had sexual intercourse during the three months prior to the survey reported that they or their partner used a method of birth control to prevent pregnancy.
- Four percent of the students had ever been pregnant or made someone pregnant.

FINDINGS RELATED TO HIV KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

- Ninety-five percent of the YRBS students reported that they have been taught about AIDS/HIV infection in school: 93 percent of ninth graders, 95 percent of tenth graders, 96 percent of eleventh graders, and 97 percent of twelfth graders.

KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO EATING BEHAVIORS, NUTRITION, AND EXERCISE

- Less than half (47%) of the YRBS students thought they were either over or underweight.
- Sixty percent of female students and 23 percent of male students were trying to lose weight.
- The day before being surveyed, 38 percent of all students surveyed ate raw or cooked vegetables two or more times and 64 percent ate fruit or drank fruit juice two or more times.
- The day before being surveyed, 21 percent of the students surveyed had consumed hamburgers, hot dogs, sausage, french fries, or potato chips two or more times and 25 percent had consumed pie, cake, cookies, or doughnuts two or more times.
- Sixty-four percent of the students participated in 20 minutes of aerobic activity three or more times in the seven days preceding the survey.
- Twenty-one percent of the students went to physical education class every day in an average school week.
- During the year prior to the survey, 55 percent of the students played on one or more sports teams.

KEY FINDINGS RELATED TO HEALTH CARE

- Seventy-eight percent of the YRBS students saw a doctor or nurse in the past year.
- Twenty-five percent of the participants received their last health care at some location other than a doctor's office: a health clinic, emergency room, or school based health center.
- Seventy-eight percent of the students saw a dentist in the previous year.