

# OVERVIEW OF THE 2009 HEALTHY KIDS COLORADO SURVEY RESULTS



In the fall and winter of 2009, a total of 1,511 students in 36 public high schools throughout Colorado completed the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, nationally known as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The YRBS consists of questions related to health risk behaviors including tobacco use, physical activity, nutrition, alcohol and other drug use, risky sexual behaviors, and behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries and violence. Results from the survey provide a snapshot of these issues among Colorado's youth<sup>1</sup>. Colorado achieved high enough participation in 2009 from selected schools and students that data was able to be weighted and can be considered representative of students in Colorado in grades 9-12.

Colorado Connections for Healthy Schools is Colorado's Coordinated School Health initiative.

## What Did the Survey Reveal About the Prevalence of Risk Behaviors Among High School Students?

### Weight Management and Nutrition

- Approximately **2 out of 10** Colorado high school students are overweight or obese<sup>2</sup> and approximately **2 out of 10** describe themselves as slightly or very overweight.
- Approximately **6 out of 10** exercised to lose weight or prevent weight gain during the past 30 days; this differed between males (approximately **5 out of 10**) and females (approximately **7 out of 10**).
- Approximately **2.5 out of 10** report that they ate fruits and vegetables five or more times per day during the last 7 days.

### Physical Activity

- Approximately **4.5 out of 10** high school students were physically active for at least 60 minutes per day on five or more of the past seven days; this differed between males (approximately **5.5 out of 10**) and females (approximately **4 out of 10**).
- Approximately **4.5 out of 10** students attend PE class on one or more days per week, and approximately **2 out of 10** attend every day in an average week.
- Approximately **6.5 out of 10** students played on one or more sports teams in the past year.

### Mental Health

- Approximately **2.5 out of 10** high school students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities during the past 12 months; this differed between males (approximately **2 out of 10**) and females (approximately **3 out of 10**).
- Approximately **1 out of 10** students attempted suicide one or more times during the past 12 months; this did not differ by gender.



### Injury and Violence

- Approximately **3 out of 10** Colorado high school students were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 12 months; this differed between males (approximately **4 out of 10**) and females (approximately **2 out of 10**) as well as between Hispanic students (approximately **4 out of 10**) and non-Hispanic White students (approximately **3 out of 10**).
- Approximately **2 out of 10** students were bullied on school property during the past 12 months.
- Approximately **1 out of 10** students were physically forced to have sex during their lifetime; this differed between males (approximately **0.5 out of 10**) and females (approximately **1 out of 10**).

### Substance Use

- Approximately **7 out of 10** Colorado high school students report ever drinking alcohol and approximately **4.5 out of 10** report ever smoking marijuana in their lifetime.

<sup>1</sup>Estimates were generated from weighted data from the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). All estimations are approximations as a result of rounding from the weighted data. Estimates of the rate out of "10 people" were derived from rounding weighted percentage values to the nearest .5/person.

<sup>2</sup>Overweight or obese refers to individuals at or above the 85th percentile for body mass index, by age and sex. Body mass index is calculated based on self-report height and weight.

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Data tables are available on the CDE website: [http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/CSH\\_home.htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/CSH_home.htm)
- National YRBS data will be available in early June: [www.cdc.gov/yrbs](http://www.cdc.gov/yrbs)
- A full report for the State of Colorado will be available in August.

### Substance Use, continued

- Approximately **4 out of 10** students drank alcohol and approximately **2.5 out of 10** used marijuana during the past month.
- Approximately **2 out of 10** students had their first drink of alcohol (other than a few sips), before age 13.
- Approximately **2.5 out of 10** consumed five or more alcoholic beverages in a row on one or more days during the past month.
- Approximately **2.5 out of 10** were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property during the past 12 months.

### Tobacco Use

- Approximately **4.5 out of 10** Colorado high school students reported ever trying cigarette smoking.
- Approximately **2 out of 10** high school students reported smoking cigarettes on at least one day in the previous month; of these users, over half reported attempting to quit smoking.
- Approximately **2.5 out of 10** reported any tobacco<sup>3</sup> use in the past month.

### Sexual Risk Behavior

Approximately **4 out of 10** Colorado high school students report having sexual intercourse in their lifetime; approximately **6 out of 10** students in 12th grade report ever having sex. Approximately **2.5 out of 10** students report having sex in the past 3 months; of these individuals, one-quarter report using drugs or alcohol before their last sexual encounter and close to two-thirds report using a condom the last time they had sex.

### Applications of the Data

These data are intended to create awareness about priority health-risk behaviors of youth in Colorado, as well as to provide a tool to assess how risk behaviors change over time.

Data can be used by key stakeholders including legislators, boards of education, school administrators, students, parents, community members and school staff to better understand risk behaviors, to set program goals, to develop programs and policies, to support health-related legislation and to seek funding.

Schools and communities that participate in local surveillance efforts will also be able to compare their data to these state data as well as national data to better understand what priorities may exist in their community and to monitor health behavior trends.



<sup>3</sup>Tobacco includes cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff or dip.