

## **2011 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results**

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The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is part of a national surveillance system developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assist with assessing and addressing the health risks of youth. It is conducted in Alaska every other year by the Department of Education & Early Development and the Department of Health and Social Services in cooperation with public high schools.

**In spring 2011, the department surveyed 1,327 students from 40 high schools that were scientifically selected to represent all public high schools (excluding boarding schools, alternative schools, correspondence and home study schools, and correctional schools) in Alaska. These results are representative of Alaska's high school students grades 9-12 in traditional public high schools. At the same time and for the second time, 969 students from 16 alternative high schools (defined as serving high-risk students) in Alaska were surveyed to evaluate and address the health risks of this unique population.**

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The 2011 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results are summarized in the presentations available below. The 2011 data presentations are displayed by gender and grade.

### **2011 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results Presentations**

- ✓ **Preliminary 2011 YRBS Highlights** (attached)
- [2011 Alaska Traditional High School YRBS Results \(by sex, grade and race\)](#)
- [2011 Alaska Alternative High School YRBS Results \(by sex, grade and race\)](#)

# Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Preliminary 2011 Highlights

### Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Trends 1995-2011

| Prevalence of Selected Risk Behaviors for Students in Traditional High Schools (grades 9-12)                 | 1995  | 1997 | 1999 | 2001 | 2003  | 2005 | 2007  | 2009  | 2011  | Trend from 1995-2011** |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| Rarely or never wore a seat belt:                                                                            | 19.5% |      |      |      | 15.1% |      | 7.0%  | 12.1% | 8.7%  | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times:                                          |       |      |      |      | 25.0% |      | 23.5% | 21.3% | 18.6% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Carried a weapon on school property on at least one day:                                                     | 12.3% |      |      |      | 7.1%  |      | 8.4%  | 7.8%  | 5.7%  | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| In a physical fight during the past year:                                                                    | 35.8% |      |      |      | 27.1% |      | 29.2% | 27.8% | 23.7% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least 1 day: | 3.6%  |      |      |      | 4.1%  |      | 5.5%  | 6.0%  | 4.7%  | No change              |
| Seriously considered attempting suicide:                                                                     | 23.9% |      |      |      | 16.7% |      | 16.5% | 13.9% | 14.5% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Attempted suicide one or more times during the past year:                                                    | 9.4%  |      |      |      | 8.1%  |      | 10.7% | 8.5%  | 8.7%  | No change              |
| Current smoking:                                                                                             | 36.5% |      |      |      | 19.2% |      | 17.8% | 15.7% | 14.1% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Current smokeless tobacco use:                                                                               | 15.6% |      |      |      | 11.2% |      | 10.4% | 13.6% | 8.4%  | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Current drinking:                                                                                            | 47.5% |      |      |      | 38.7% |      | 39.7% | 33.2% | 28.6% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Binge drinking:                                                                                              | 31.3% |      |      |      | 26.5% |      | 25.8% | 21.7% | 16.7% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Current marijuana use:                                                                                       | 28.7% |      |      |      | 23.9% |      | 20.5% | 22.7% | 21.2% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Ever had sexual intercourse:                                                                                 | 47.2% |      |      |      | 39.6% |      | 45.1% | 43.5% | 38.3% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Currently sexually active:                                                                                   | 30.5% |      |      |      | 27.6% |      | 30.9% | 30.4% | 25.2% | No change              |
| Had sexual intercourse with 4 or more people:                                                                | 17.1% |      |      |      | 12.1% |      | 13.4% | 11.4% | 9.7%  | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Used a condom before last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active):                      | 53.7% |      |      |      | 62.3% |      | 60.8% | 62.2% | 59.6% | ⊕ Increasing           |
| Percentage of students who were overweight or obese: (Question added in 2003)                                |       |      |      |      | 25.4% |      | 27.3% | 26.2% | 25.8% | No change              |
| Ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day: (Question added in 2003)                                  |       |      |      |      | 16.1% |      | 15.7% | 17.2% | 21.4% | ⊕ Increasing           |
| Drank 1 or more sodas every day in past week:                                                                |       |      |      |      |       |      | 21.8% | 20.1% | 17.6% | ⊖ Decreasing           |
| Attended physical education daily in an average week:                                                        | 26.4% |      |      |      | 18.2% |      | 17.7% | 17.7% | 17.4% | ⊖ Decreasing           |

\*Data only presented in years when statewide representative data were obtained. \*\*Statistically significant linear trend.



[www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm)



# Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Alaska's Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is part of an epidemiological surveillance system that was established in 1990 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to monitor the prevalence of health-risk behaviors among youth. The survey was first implemented in Alaska in 1995. The YRBS is a biennial, anonymous and voluntary survey of students grades 9 - 12 in public traditional high schools (excluding boarding, correspondence, home study, alternative, and correctional schools). The YRBS is a joint project between the Department of Education & Early Development and the Department of Health and Social Services, in cooperation with the CDC.

The YRBS asks students to self-report on their behaviors in six major areas of health that directly lead to morbidity and mortality in youth and adult populations within our country. These six areas are:

- behaviors that result in unintentional and intentional injuries;
- tobacco use;
- alcohol and other drug use;
- sexual behaviors that can result in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and unintended pregnancies;
- dietary behaviors; and
- physical activity.

In 2009 and 2011, a statewide survey of alternative high schools in Alaska was also implemented.

For more information on the Alaska YRBS go to:  
[www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm](http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/YRBS.htm)

## 2011 Comparison: Alaska Traditional High School and Alternative High School Students\*\*

| Traditional High Schools                                                                                     | Alternative High Schools | Alternative students were at*: |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Rarely or never wore a seat belt:                                                                            | 8.7%                     | 11.5% = Equal risk             |
| Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol:                                                            | 18.6%                    | 28.1% @ Greater risk           |
| Carried a weapon on school property on at least 1 day:                                                       | 5.7%                     | 9.4% @ Greater risk            |
| In a physical fight during the past year:                                                                    | 23.7%                    | 43.5% @ Greater risk           |
| Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least 1 day: | 4.7%                     | 6.6% @ Greater risk            |
| Seriously considered attempting suicide:                                                                     | 14.5%                    | 21.2% @ Greater risk           |
| Attempted suicide during the past year:                                                                      | 8.7%                     | 13.2% @ Greater risk           |
| Current smoking:                                                                                             | 14.1%                    | 47.7% @ Greater risk           |
| Current smokeless tobacco use:                                                                               | 8.4%                     | 17.4% @ Greater risk           |
| Current drinking:                                                                                            | 28.6%                    | 49.1% @ Greater risk           |
| Binge drinking:                                                                                              | 16.7%                    | 37.9% @ Greater risk           |
| Current marijuana use:                                                                                       | 21.2%                    | 47.6% @ Greater risk           |
| Ever had sexual intercourse:                                                                                 | 38.3%                    | 80.4% @ Greater risk           |
| Currently sexually active:                                                                                   | 25.2%                    | 61.3% @ Greater risk           |
| Used condom before last sexual intercourse:                                                                  | 59.6%                    | 46.9% @ Greater risk           |
| Percentage of students who were overweight or obese:                                                         | 25.8%                    | 32.9% @ Greater risk           |
| Ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day:                                                           | 21.4%                    | 22.2% = Equal risk             |
| Drank 1 or more sodas every day in past week:                                                                | 17.6%                    | 30.6% @ Greater risk           |
| Attended physical education daily in an average week:                                                        | 17.4%                    | 16.5% = Equal risk             |

\*Statistically significant difference.

\*\*Comparable U.S. 2011 YRBS data were not available at the time of the publication of this preliminary 2011 Highlights report. The final 2011 Highlights report, including U.S. comparison data, will be published in 2012.

## Summary of the 2011 Survey Results

On average, in an Alaska high school class of 30 students\*:

- 5 - 6 rode (in the past month) with a driver who had been drinking alcohol
- 1 - 2 had carried a weapon to school
- 7 were in a physical fight in the past year
- 2 - 3 attempted suicide in the past year
- 4 smoked cigarettes and 2 - 3 used smokeless tobacco in the past month
- 8 - 9 drank alcohol in the past month
- 5 engaged in binge drinking in the past month
- 6 - 7 used marijuana in the past month
- 11 - 12 had ever had sexual intercourse
- 8 were either overweight or obese
- 16 - 17 were physically active for less than the recommended total of at least 60 minutes per day (on 5 or more days of the past 7 days).

Many students started engaging in risk behaviors before the age of 13:

- 11.1% had smoked a whole cigarette
- 16.9% had consumed their first drink of alcohol
- 10.4% had tried marijuana.

We also know that:

- 23% were bullied at school last year
- 15.3% were cyber-bullied last year
- 12% were physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past year, and
- 9.2% had ever been forced to have unwanted sexual intercourse

Many high school students are still engaging in unhealthy behaviors, increasing their likelihood of being hurt, fatally injured or developing diseases:

- Some of the goals set forth in Healthy Alaskans 2010 have been achieved and health-risk behaviors have been reduced in the following major areas: tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, violence, and risky sexual behavior.
- Alternative high school students were at significantly greater risk than students in traditional high schools in Alaska for most health-risk behaviors and more likely to have engaged in risky behavior before the age of 13.
- Alternative high school students were more likely than traditional school students to feel that their teachers really cared about them and gave them a lot of encouragement and that their school had clear rules and consequences for behavior.

\*Traditional high schools only.

## Supporters of Alaska's Youth Risk Behavior Survey

- Alaska Association of School Administrators
- Alaska Association of Secondary School Principals
- Alaska Health Education Consortium
- Alaska Mental Health Board
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- Alaska Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
- Alaska Public Health Association
- Alaska School Nurses Association
- Alaska Tobacco Control Alliance
- All Alaska Pediatric Partnership
- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- American Lung Association
- Association of Alaska School Boards
- Governor's Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- United Way of Anchorage
- United Way of Mat-Su
- United Way of Southeast Alaska
- United Way of the Tanana Valley
- And more...



## Preliminary 2011 Highlights