



LIFEGUARD YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®



GUARD YOUR HEART

GUARD YOUR MIND

GUARD YOUR BODY

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- We want to hear from you!

Summary of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Survey



Every year, the Center for Disease and Control (CDC) conducts a national survey to monitor categories of health-risk behaviors among youth and young adults (grades 9—12). The most recent survey results came out a couple months ago, and covers from January to December 2007. The six categories they monitor include: behaviors that contribute to unintentional injury and violence, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), unhealthy dietary behaviors, and physical inactivity. These behaviors are responsible for the leading causes of morbidity and mortality among youth and adults. This is important to look at because oftentimes, behaviors that youth establish will extend into adulthood. It is also important as educators and parents to stay up-to-date with the latest reputable statistics and trends of adolescents because you might find that it's either worse than you think it is or better than you thought it was. This also shows the areas that seem to be improving or getting worse over time which will help parents and educators know which areas to spend more time discussing and educating youth on.

Main findings:

Among high school students nationwide during 2007, in the 30 days before the survey:

- 11.1% had never or rarely worn a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else
- **29.1% had ridden in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking**
- 18% had carried a weapon
- 20% had smoked cigarettes
- 35.4% had watched television 3 or more hours per day on an average school day

During the 12 months before the survey:

- 6.9% had attempted suicide
- **28.5% had felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row**
- 23.8% had drunk alcohol (other than a few sips) for the first time before age 13
- **47.8% has had sexual intercourse**
- 35% were currently sexually active



The Good News:

Since 1991, the prevalence of many health-risk behaviors has decreased! **In fact, from 1991—2007, there were significant linear decreases in the percentage of students who ever had sexual intercourse (54.1%—47.8%), who had sexual intercourse with four or more persons during a lifetime (18.7%—14.9%) and who are currently sexually active (37.5%—35.0%).** There was also a decrease in youth who rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol (39.9%—29.1%), of those that seriously considered attempting suicide (29.0%—14.5%), and those that reported having drunk alcohol for the first time before 13 (32.7%—23.8%).

We think that these positive changes over time show improvement in overall awareness of youth's at-risk behaviors and in the effectiveness of educating youth about the harmful effects of these various behaviors. **It is vital that we continue to discuss with teens the real consequences of all these behaviors to prepare them to make wiser decisions today to ensure healthier and more successful tomorrows—keep it up!**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Surveillance Summaries, June 6th, 2008. MMWR 2008; 57(No. SS-4).

We Want To Hear From You!

We want to know if there are specific topics that relate to teen behaviors and/or current trends that you would like to hear more about! We want this newsletter to be a resource to you, to help you stay up-to-date with today's teens, therefore helping you be a better parent and educator. It is important for you to be educated on all of these topics—just as it is vital that teens are educated on at-risk behaviors and their consequences. Is there something you want to learn more about? Tell us!