

Youth Risk Behavior Survey For Muskegon County 2008-2009



What is the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)?

YRBS was developed in the early 1990's as part of a national initiative to gather data for a "picture" of youth health-related activities and to monitor over time priority health risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth. In 1996, a YRBS questionnaire based on the national model was developed by the Muskegon County Health Department with input from school districts and agencies for the first County-wide survey.

Who takes the survey?

Survey participants include 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in Muskegon County. The survey is anonymous and parents have the opportunity to excuse their child from participation.

What kinds of questions are asked?

The survey provides a glimpse into the life of youth and the kinds of behaviors, or perceptions of behaviors, in which our youth are engaged. Questions range from alcohol use to the amount of exercise they get. It also includes questions on other risky behaviors such as substance use, violence, nutrition, sexual behavior, and emotional health. The survey also measures risk and protective factors most predictive of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

Why give the survey in schools?

Our schools provide the best opportunity to reach large numbers of youth in a setting that is designed for thoughtful assessment and reflection. Further, schools use the data to determine if programs being provided are "working" and to guide decisions about needed programs. YRBS is essential to meet the requirements of the Title IV, Safe and Drug Free Schools program, which requires specific needs assessment and results reporting. The YRBS meets this requirement as well as that needed for other prevention and health programming.

How often is the survey given?

When the YRBS was first made available, Muskegon County administrators took the leadership and committed to giving the survey every four years to determine whether health risk behaviors increased, decreased or stayed the same over time. Previous to this year, the last time the survey was given was 2004. Due to lack of grant funding for the survey, this year area agencies and school districts have pooled funds to conduct the survey one more time. Conducting the survey this year was important as the current 12th graders participated in the survey as 8th graders thus providing an excellent opportunity to determine if prevention programs have made a difference.

Who else uses the YRBS results?

The health of our youth is a community issue, not just a school issue. Schools work with several agencies – many that provide services in the community and in the schools – who are required to report results just as schools are. Over \$3 million in funds for Muskegon County agency programming require data available from YRBS to maintain funding levels. Further, with new results, evidence provided by the 8th through 12th grade cohort group, it is estimated that additional funding – which may go to other communities – could be garnered for additional prevention services for Muskegon County youth.

YRBS Overview

The Muskegon County YRBS survey is a county wide, school-based, confidential survey. This report contains findings from the 2008 YRBS in the following five priority areas:

- Unintentional and Intentional Injuries
- Tobacco Use
- Sexual Behaviors
- Alcohol and Other Drug Use
- Nutrition, Physical Activity and Weight

The YRBS has been conducted every four years since 1996. The 2008 YRBS was administered between January and February 2009 to 8th, 10th and 12th grade students in all of the county public school districts including an Alternative Education Center and one K-12 Charter School. Students who attended school on the survey days were encouraged by school administration to participate. Parents were notified of the survey and were provided an opportunity to excuse their child from participation.

Throughout the State, most surveys of this type use a statistical sampling approach. In Muskegon County a total sample approach has been used to ensure reliability of the results. In 2008 a total of 5,142 surveys were collected. Given an estimated 6,800 student enrollment for these grades in these schools, the student capture rate was 75.5%.

Two survey instruments were provided to school districts, one contained 95 questions. The other included the same questions with an additional eight (8) questions related to sexual behaviors and activities. Most districts selected the latter survey resulting in 4,262, or 83% of students responding to the entire questionnaire.

Survey Methodology

Procedures: Survey procedures were designed to protect the privacy of students by allowing anonymous and voluntary participation. Students (and their parents) were informed that they could decline to take the survey and could skip questions that they preferred not to answer.

Data Analysis:

All questionnaires were administered by professional staff who worked for or were retired from area agencies and educational institutions. Students recorded their responses on answer sheets that were then computer scanned.

Data were “cleaned” and edited in accordance with established statistical and scientific criteria which consisted of checking responses for range, plausibility, and logical consistency. Thus, the edit criteria compared two questions at a time. If responses from the two questions conflicted logically, both variables were eliminated.

Calculation for “at risk of being overweight” and “overweight” was based on self-reported weight and height, which were used to determine body mass index (BMI) by age and sex in accordance with Center for Disease Control, National Center for Health Statistics standards.

Analysis of survey data were conducted to:

1. Examine differences in risk behavior by demographic variables such as grade, gender and race/ethnicity, and
2. Determine trend or changes in risk behaviors that have occurred in Muskegon County over time.

YRBS Participation

Schools	1996	2000	2004	2008
Public School Districts	11	12	12	12
Charter Schools	0	0	1	1
Private Schools	2	0	0	0
Alternative Education	0	1	1	1
Student Capture Rates	80%	82%	82%	76%
Whole Questionnaires	85%	60%	74%	83%
Total Students	5,455	5,595	5,870	5,142

Highlights of Findings

Behaviors Contributing to Unintentional Injuries/Violence

- 5.9% of students had rarely or never worn a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else. This is an improvement over 2000 (8.9%) and 2004 (7.8%). (Question was not asked in 1996.)
- The number reporting that they had ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol was slightly less (27.9%) as compared to 2000 (30.2%) and 2004 (30%). (Not asked in 1996.) The Muskegon rate is lower than 2007 statewide results of 29% for 10th graders and 34% for 12th graders.
- The percent of students who had driven a car in the past 30 days who had been drinking alcohol was relatively consistent over the past three surveys 2008 (10.4%), 2000 (11.9%), 2004 (10.4%). (Question not asked in 1996.) Muskegon 12th grade results (15.7%) are less than statewide 12th grade results (19%)
- The number of students carrying a weapon (knife, gun, club) in the 30 days prior to the survey (15.7%) was higher than that of 2000 (12.2%), but less than that of 2004 (16.3%).
- The number of students carrying a gun in the last 30 days is relatively consistent: 2008 (5%), 2000 (4.4%), 2004 (5.8%).
- The number of students who report missing school due to feeling unsafe has slightly increased: 2008 (6.8%), 2000 (5%), 2004 (5.9%).
- The number of students reporting that they had been in a physical fight in the last 12 months (33.3%) is a slight decrease (1-3 percent) over previous survey reports. This is also true for fights resulting in injury that needed treatment.
- 7.4% of students report that they had been forced to have sex. This is consistent with previous reports in 2004 (7.2%). (Question not asked in 1996 or 2000).
- Survey results show some improvement with regard to depression and suicidal behaviors. 13.2% of students report having considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months as compared to 2000 (16%) and 2004 (15.6%).
- Actual suicide attempts dropped in 2008 (7.4%) as compared to 2000 (8.3%) and 2004 (8.9%).

Sexual Behavior

- Students reporting ever having sexual intercourse is increasing: 2008 (44.1%), 2004 (38.3%), 2000 (37.9%), 1996 (41.6%).
- The number of students reporting four or more partners has remained relatively consistent: 2008 (12.3%), 2004 (14.6%), 2000 (12.7), 1996 (11.8%).
- While condom use (56.2%) has decreased over the past three surveys, the use of birth control pills has increased: 2000 (17.5%), 2004 (15.6%). (Not asked in 1996).
- The number of students reporting that they have had HIV/AIDS instruction in school has decreased from a high of 94.8% in 2000 to 86.5% in 2008.

Tobacco Use

- While still high, the number of students reporting having tried cigarettes (41%) has decreased from previous years. 1996 (58.1%), 2000 (56.6%), 2004 (46.8%).
- Students reporting having smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days (18.3%) are consistent with 2004 data (18.2%), but lower than 1996 (41.3%) and 2000 (26.3%).
- Consistent cigarette smoking has generally declined while use of chewing tobacco and/or snuff has increased over 2004.

Alcohol & Other Drug Use

- The percent of students having had at least one drink in the last 30 days has remained relatively consistent: 2008 (39%), 2004 (33.2%), 2000 (39.3%), 1996 (39.7%).
- Binge drinking (5 drinks over a 2-hour period of time) appears to be increasing: 2008 (22.7%), 2004 (18.5%)
- While the use of marijuana decreased from 1996 and 2004, the percent reporting current use (33.7%) has increased over 2004 (28.6%).
- Cocaine use for the first time (6.3%) and over the 30 day period prior to the survey (10.4%) has remained relative Consistent since 1996.
- Inhalant use ever (10.4%) and during the 30 days prior to the survey (5.3%) has decreased 1% to 6% since 1996.
- Heroin (3.1%), methamphetamines(4.1%), and steroid (3.7%) use have remained relatively consistent since 1996, all under 5%.
- Alarmingly, the percent of students reporting that they had been offered or given an illegal drug during the last 12 months is 36.6%, an increase over 2004 (31.4%).

Weight, Nutrition, Physical Activity

- 13.3% of students were overweight (95% of BMI) and 16.6% are at risk of being overweight. These rates are consistent with 2004 results.
- The percentage of students reporting eating vegetables has increased somewhat over 2004.
- The number of students reporting they ate fruits or drank fruit juice is also slightly increased.
- The percentage of students reporting use of risky behaviors for weight loss (vomiting, diet pills, laxatives) are less than 6.5% but remain consistent over the surveys in which these questions were asked.
- The percentage of students attending physical education classes one or more days during a school week (38.9%) declined from a high of 40.4% in 2004.
- One-third of students (33.3%) report watching TV 3+ hours per school day. This is relatively consistent with 2000 (31.6%) and 2004 (34.3%).
- New on this year's survey: 25.7% of students report that they play video or computer games 3 or more hours per day on an average school day.

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