

# Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey



**Preliminary  
2017 Highlights**

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## About the Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is part of an epidemiological surveillance system established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1990 and first implemented in Alaska in 1995. The YRBS is a biennial, anonymous, and voluntary survey that is used to monitor the prevalence of health risk behaviors among youth in grades 9-12. Youth are asked to report health behaviors that directly lead to illness, disease, and death among youth and adults. The statewide traditional high school survey includes students in public traditional high schools (excluding boarding, correspondence, home study, alternative, and correctional schools). The Alaska YRBS is administered by the Department of Health and Social Services, with support from the Department of Education and Early Development. Participation requires written parental consent.

## Alaska YRBS Preliminary 2017 Highlights

This report provides a brief summary of 2017 YRBS results for Alaska traditional high school students and a selection of short- and long-term trends. Long-term trends inform and help to evaluate programmatic activities, while short-term trends can provide more immediate, actionable information. A final Alaska YRBS 2017 Highlights report that will include U.S. and Alaska alternative high school results will be published in summer 2018.

## Accessing Survey Data

More detailed 2017 Alaska YRBS results are available online: [dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbsresults.aspx](https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbsresults.aspx).

Alaska YRBS data also are available online by year, sex, race/ethnicity, and geographic region. For more information, maps, and a database that can be queried, visit: [dhss.alaska.gov/dph/InfoCenter/Pages/ia/default.aspx](https://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/InfoCenter/Pages/ia/default.aspx).

## 2017 Alaska YRBS Traditional High School Sample

In 2017, 43 schools from 19 school districts were randomly chosen for the statewide traditional high school YRBS sample to provide results that are representative of Alaska high school students. Forty (93%) of the selected schools participated, and 1,343 (66%) students in selected classes submitted surveys. The overall response rate was 62%.

## Healthy Alaskans 2020

Eight YRBS measures are among the 25 Healthy Alaskans 2020 leading health indicators. These measures assess overweight, obesity, physical activity, tobacco use (exclusive of e-cigarettes), alcohol abuse, social support, mental health, and interpersonal violence. More information and current Healthy Alaskans 2020 reports are posted online: [hss.state.ak.us/ha2020/default.htm](https://hss.state.ak.us/ha2020/default.htm).

## Summary of the 2017 Alaska Traditional High School Results\*

### Weight Status, Physical Activity, and Nutrition


- Nearly 18% of students are overweight, an increase since 2013, and 13.7% have obesity.
- Short- and long-term trends show decreasing soda consumption. In 2017, 14.7% of students drank a soda 1 or more times per day, compared to 21.8% in 2007.
- The percentage of students who drank a sports drink 1 or more times per day also decreased (13.1% in 2015, 10.2% in 2017).
- These trends do not capture consumption of other sugary drinks.
- A decrease in overweight and obesity prevalence is not expected until overall consumption of sugary drinks declines for an extended period.
- The percentage of students who meet the national recommendations for physical activity of 60 minutes every day (18.4% in 2017) has not changed significantly since 2011.
- Up from 23.4% in 2007, 40.6% of students now spend 3 or more hours each day (on an average school day) playing video or computer games, or using a computer, smartphone, or tablet for something other than school work.

### Tobacco

- Since 2007, there have been declines in daily (2.1% in 2017), frequent (2.8% smoked 20 of the past 30 days), current (10.9% smoked during the past 30 days), and initiation of (34.0% ever tried smoking) cigarette smoking. Between 2015 and 2017, there were no significant changes in any of these measures.
- Nearly 54% of students think there is a great risk of harm in smoking 1 or more packs of cigarettes per day; this is a decrease since 2013 and 2015.
- There has not been significant change in initiation (39.9% in 2017) or current use (15.7%) of electronic vapor products since 2015.


### Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Nearly 14% of students report current binge drinking (4 or more drinks for females, 5 or more drinks for males in a row during the past 30 days).
- Since 2007, there have been declines in initiation of drinking alcohol (56.5% ever drank in 2017) and current drinking (22.8%).
- The percentage of students who have ever used marijuana (41.5% in 2017) has decreased since 2007, while current use (21.5% in 2017) has not changed significantly.
- More than 38% of students think there is great risk of harm in consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks 1 to 2 times per week, an increase since 2015.
- Almost 19% of students think that there is great risk of harm in using marijuana 1 to 2 times per week.


 Signifies that 2017 was the first year this question was a part of the survey.

\* Trends noted as increases or declines are statistically significant,  $p < 0.05$ .

## Opioids

**7.0%** Have used prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it in the past 30 days 



 **1.8%** Currently use heroin

**48.7%** Think people greatly risk harming themselves if they use prescription pain medicine without a doctor's prescription or differently than how a doctor told them to use it 


### Student Connectedness

- Nearly 56% of students report that they do not feel alone in their life, a decline from 65.2% in 2007.
- The percentage of students who feel that their teachers care about and support them (59.0% in 2017) has increased since 2007.
- Fifty-two percent of students feel like they matter in their community.

### Safety

- Riding in a car or other vehicle with a driver who has been drinking (16.4% in 2017) has decreased since 2007, but increased since 2013.
- Among students who ride a bicycle, the percentage of students who rarely or never use a bicycle helmet (71.2% in 2017) has decreased since 2007, but increased since 2015.
- Among students who drive a car or other vehicle,
  - 37.2% talk on a cell phone while driving. 
  - 28.6% text and email while driving.
  - 16.0% drive when they have been using marijuana. 
  - 4.3% drive when they have been drinking alcohol, which has not changed significantly since 2013.


### Violence

- One in 10 students has experienced sexual violence (being forced by anyone to do sexual acts) during the past year. 
- Among dating students, the percentage of students who have experienced physical dating violence during the past year (7.3% in 2017) has not changed significantly; however, sexual dating violence (5.5%) has decreased since 2013.
- Bullying on school property has remained flat (23.3% in 2017), but electronic bullying (19.8%) has increased since 2011.

(violence continued)

- There has been both a short- and long-term increase in the percentage of students who do not go to or from school because they feel unsafe at school or on their way to school (11.5% in 2017).

### Suicide and Mental Health

- More than 1 in 3 students (36.1% in 2017) report feeling sad or hopeless (almost every day for at least two weeks) during the past year, an increase since 2007.
- At 22.8%, the percentage of students who have seriously considered suicide has increased since 2007.
- The percentage of students who made a suicide plan (20.7% in 2017) has increased since 2007 and since 2015.
- More than 12% of students made at least one suicide attempt during the past year, an increase since 2013.
- Among students who have considered, planned, or attempted suicide during the past year, 46.8% have talked to someone about suicide. 

### Sexual Activity

- Since 2007, there have been decreases in the percentages of students who have ever had sexual intercourse (36.9% in 2017), have had sexual intercourse during the past 3 months (25.2%), and have had sexual intercourse with 4 or more partners during their life (10.4%).
- Among sexually active students,
  - 56.7% report using a condom during last sexual intercourse, which is not a significant change in use since 2007.
  - 10.7% report using an IUD or implant before last sexual intercourse, which is an increase in use since 2013.
- Nearly 86% of students have been taught in school about preventing sexually transmitted diseases.







### Supporters of the Alaska YRBS

Special thanks goes to the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Alaska Division of Behavioral Health, Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, sections within the Alaska Division of Public Health, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital, and United Way of Mat-Su. Additional thanks goes to the participating school districts and students, and to our many community partners.



# Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Traditional High School Trends, 2007-2017, 2015-2017

## Prevalence of Selected Risk Behaviors for Students in Traditional High Schools (grades 9-12)

|   | 2007  | 2009  | 2011  | 2013  | 2015  | 2017  | 2007-2017 Long-term Trend* | 2015-2017 Recent Trend |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Rode with a driver who had been drinking alcohol one or more times during the past 30 days  | 23.5% | 21.3% | 18.6% | 13.1% | 14.3% | 16.4% | ●                          | ↔                      |
| Did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on their way to or from school on at least one of the past 30 days   | 5.5%  | 6.0%  | 4.7%  | 6.2%  | 8.8%  | 11.5% | ●                          | ●                      |
| Were electronically bullied during the past year  | --    | --    | 15.3% | 14.7% | 17.7% | 19.8% | ●                          | ↔                      |
|  Experienced physical dating violence during the past year (among students who dated or went out with someone)   | --    | --    | --    | 9.1%  | 9.5%  | 7.3%  | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Experienced sexual dating violence during the past year (among students who dated or went out with someone)   | --    | --    | --    | 11.4% | 10.1% | 5.5%  | ●                          | ●                      |
|  Felt so sad or hopeless, daily for two weeks in a row, they stopped doing usual activities during the past year | 26.9% | 25.2% | 25.9% | 27.2% | 33.6% | 36.1% | ●                          | ↔                      |
| Made a suicide plan during the past year  | 14.2% | 11.7% | 12.8% | 13.9% | 16.7% | 20.7% | ●                          | ●                      |
| Attempted suicide one or more times during the past year  | 10.7% | 8.5%  | 8.7%  | 8.4%  | 10.7% | 12.1% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Smoked cigarettes on at least one of the past 30 days (current use)   | 17.8% | 15.7% | 14.1% | 10.6% | 11.1% | 10.9% | ●                          | ↔                      |
| Think people greatly risk harming themselves if they smoke one or more packs of cigarettes per day  | --    | --    | --    | 65.3% | 60.0% | 53.6% | ●                          | ●                      |
| Had at least one drink of alcohol on at least one of the past 30 days (current use)   | 39.7% | 33.2% | 28.6% | 22.5% | 22.0% | 22.8% | ●                          | ↔                      |
|  Used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days (current use)  | 20.5% | 22.7% | 21.2% | 19.7% | 19.0% | 21.5% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Used heroin one or more times during their life   | 1.6%  | 3.3%  | 2.4%  | 2.2%  | 2.2%  | 2.2%  | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Ever had sexual intercourse   | 45.1% | 43.5% | 38.3% | 38.6% | 35.9% | 36.9% | ●                          | ↔                      |
| Used a condom during last sexual intercourse (among students who were sexually active)  | 60.8% | 62.2% | 59.6% | 60.4% | 61.9% | 56.7% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
|  Were overweight   | 16.1% | 14.4% | 14.4% | 13.7% | 16.7% | 17.5% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
|  Were obese  | 11.0% | 11.9% | 11.5% | 12.4% | 14.0% | 13.7% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Drank a soda one or more times per day during the past 7 days   | 21.8% | 20.1% | 17.6% | 15.8% | 18.8% | 14.7% | ●                          | ●                      |
|  Were physically active for at least 60 minutes on each of the past 7 days                                     | --    | --    | 21.3% | 20.9% | 20.9% | 18.4% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Feel like they matter to people in their community  | 50.6% | 54.0% | 54.6% | 54.6% | 52.7% | 52.0% | ↔                          | ↔                      |
| Feel that their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement  | 56.1% | 59.4% | 56.7% | 64.1% | 62.1% | 59.0% | ●                          | ↔                      |

\* Trend from 2007 or earliest available data point

 Healthy Alaskans 2020 (HA2020) health indicator.

- Trend shows statistically significant decrease in risk
- Trend shows statistically significant increase in risk
- ↔ Trend shows no statistically significant change in risk

Significance of long-term trend based on logistic regression model controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade,  $p < 0.05$ ; significance of recent trend based on t-test analysis,  $p < 0.05$ .