



INFORMATION CAPSULE

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2003 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) monitors health-risk behaviors that lead to unintentional injuries and violence; sexual behaviors that contribute to unintended pregnancy, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted diseases; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; dietary behaviors; and physical inactivity. YRBS data are used to assess trends in students' health-risk behaviors, to set health education goals, to support legislation that promotes health, and to seek funding for new initiatives.

The survey, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is administered to a sample of students in grades 9-12 every two years. In Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS), the survey was administered at all senior high schools and at all middle schools housing grade 9 students. Classes of students were randomly selected within each school. Survey data were collected for 1,953 students in Miami-Dade County and 15,214 students nationwide. The reader should be cautioned that the generalizability of the study may be in question because the results are based on self-reported responses and the random sample consisted of classes, as opposed to individual students. However, the information from the survey is deemed pertinent to staff working with students on a daily basis.

The following table compares the reported frequency of selected behaviors for students in M-DCPS and for students nationwide. Highlights of this information include:

- A lower percent of M-DCPS students reported engaging in behaviors that contribute to unintentional injuries or violence (such as driving under the influence of alcohol or carrying a weapon) than students nationwide.
- One hundred eighty-two M-DCPS students (9.3 percent of the students sampled) reported that they had attempted suicide within the past 12 months.
- Although more M-DCPS students, compared to students nationwide, said they had missed school because they felt unsafe, they reported fewer incidents of stolen or damaged property at school and of being threatened or injured with a weapon at school.
- The percentage of M-DCPS students reporting that they used tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs was lower than the percent of students nationwide who reported using these substances.

- More M-DCPS students reported having sexual intercourse and becoming pregnant or getting someone pregnant than students nationwide. In fact, 53.7 percent of the M-DCPS sample reported they had sexual intercourse and 7.7 percent said they either became pregnant or got someone else pregnant.
- Only 68.5 percent of M-DCPS students reported using a condom during their last sexual intercourse; however, reported condom use was higher for students in M-DCPS than for students nationwide. Fewer M-DCPS students said they used birth control pills when compared to students nationwide.
- Although more M-DCPS students reported having sexual intercourse than students nationwide, a lower percentage of M-DCPS students said they had been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school.
- A lower percentage of M-DCPS students stated they followed healthy dietary habits and engaged in physical activities regularly than students nationwide. For example, a lower percentage of M-DCPS students reported they ate fruits and vegetables in the past seven days and a higher percentage reported watching three or more hours of television a week.

When comparing the responses of M-DCPS students from the last two survey administrations (2001 and 2003), no significant differences were noted in the percentage of students reporting they engaged in high risk sexual behaviors or in behaviors that contributed to unintentional injuries or violence. The percentage of students that reported they smoked cigarettes in the past 30 days decreased significantly (by 3.4 percent), but no significant differences were found in the percentage of students reporting that they used alcohol and other drugs. The percent of overweight students increased by 3.3 percent, although the percentage of students who reported having healthy dietary habits (eating less to lose weight, exercising to lose weight, and eating sufficient quantities of fruits and vegetables, for example) and engaging in physical activities (such as exercising regularly and attending PE class) remained relatively stable.

For a comparison of 2001 and 2003 M-DCPS results for all survey questions and for comprehensive data and statistics on the YRBS, the reader is directed to the CDC's web site (www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm). A comprehensive statistical manual, produced by the Office of Evaluation and Research and containing complete 2003 YRBS results, will be disseminated to secondary schools after the start of the 2004-05 school year.

Selected Items from the 2003 YRBS: M-DCPS vs. United States

	M-DCPS	U.S.	Difference
Unintentional Injuries and Violence			
Drove under influence of alcohol in past 30 days	7.7%	12.1%	-4.4%*
Carried a weapon in past 30 days	12.1%	17.1%	-5.0%*
Didn't go to school because they felt unsafe in past 30 days	10.3%	5.4%	4.9%*
Threatened or injured with a weapon at school in past 12 months	6.8%	9.2%	-2.4%*
Had property stolen or damaged at school in past 12 months	24.7%	29.8%	-5.1%*
In a physical fight in past 12 months	31.8%	33.0%	-1.2%
Seriously considered suicide in past 12 months	12.9%	16.9%	-4.0%*
Actually attempted suicide in past 12 months	9.3%	8.5%	0.8%
Tobacco Use (in past 30 days)			
Smoked cigarettes	13.5%	21.9%	-8.4%*
Used chewing tobacco or snuff	2.4%	6.7%	-4.3%*
Smoked cigars	10.2%	14.8%	-4.6%*
Alcohol and Other Drug Use			
Had at least one alcoholic drink in past 30 days	37.4%	44.9%	-7.5%*
Used marijuana in past 30 days	15.8%	22.4%	-6.6%*
Used any form of cocaine in past 30 days	3.2%	4.1%	-0.9%
Sniffed glue/inhaled paint or spray in past 30 days	3.4%	3.9%	-0.5%
Used heroin	2.5%	3.3%	-0.8%
Used methamphetamines	3.8%	7.6%	-3.8%*
Used ecstasy	8.2%	11.1%	-2.9%
Took steroids without a prescription	3.1%	6.1%	-3.0%*
Sexual Behaviors			
Had sexual intercourse	53.7%	46.7%	7.0%*
Used a condom during last sexual intercourse	68.5%	63.0%	5.5%*
Used birth control pills during last sexual intercourse	6.6%	17.0%	-10.4%*
Became pregnant or got someone pregnant	7.7%	4.2%	3.5%*
Taught about AIDS or HIV in school	84.4%	87.9%	-3.5%
Dietary Behaviors			
Overweight	12.9%	13.5%	-0.6%
Exercised to lose or maintain weight in past 30 days	56.4%	57.1%	-0.7%
Ate less to lose or maintain weight in past 30 days	38.8%	42.2%	-3.4%*
Ate fruit one or more times in past 7 days	80.8%	85.2%	-4.4%*
Ate vegetables one or more times in past 7 days	68.6%	83.5%	-14.9%*
Drank 3 or more glasses of milk in past 7 days	11.1%	17.1%	-6.0%*
Physical Activity			
Exercised 20 minutes on 3 or more of the past 7 days	53.5%	62.6%	-9.1%*
Did not exercise in the past 7 days	15.6%	11.5%	4.1%*
Watched 3 or more hours of TV a day	53.7%	38.2%	15.5%*
Attended PE class one or more days a week	42.7%	55.7%	-13.0%*

Differences marked with an asterisk () are significant at the p<.05 level as reported by the CDC.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Surveillance Summaries*, May 21, 2004. MMWR 2004:53 (No. SS-2).