



QUESTION and ANSWER FACT SHEET

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2021

Q: What is the focus of the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS)?

A: The HYS focuses on health risk behaviors, such as violence and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use that can result in injury and impact positive development among youth. The survey also includes questions about risk and protective factors, which are attitudes and opinions that research has shown to be correlated with these health risk behaviors. A document with a description of the survey questions, Rationale and Description of Survey Content, is available at: www.AskHYS.net/Recruitment.

Q: Why is the survey conducted?

A: The survey is used to identify and monitor factors that affect the health of youth in Washington. Similar school-based youth surveys have been conducted across the state since 1988. Survey results can indicate changes in health behaviors over time and schools can use the results to identify important areas of need.

Q: Which schools are allowed to participate?

A: Any Washington public school with students in Grades 6, 8, 10, or 12 is eligible to participate, except for detention facilities. Small school districts with fewer than 150 students enrolled in Grades 6, 8, 10 and 12 can survey additional grades 7, 9 and 11. Grade 7 will receive Form C and Grades 9 and 11 will receive Forms A/B. This option is intended to provide more reliable data to schools with very few students. Private schools can participate on request.

Q: Does my school have to participate?

A: School participation in the survey is voluntary.

Q: Why should my school participate?

A: This survey provides important information about students in Washington which can be used to guide school policy and programs. Each school will receive a summary of its results (provided that student anonymity is protected by having at least 15 valid surveys completed per given grade level). Statewide results are also included for comparison. Schools decide whether or not to receive their results at the time they register to participate. School building and district results are provided to the district superintendent for release. This Healthy Youth Survey information is provided at no cost to the schools. The survey also provides very useful data to state agencies, county prevention coordinators, community mobilization coalitions, community public health and safety networks, and others so they can support students and school programs.

Q: Are sensitive questions asked?

A: The survey includes questions related to unintentional and intentional injuries; physical activity and dietary behaviors; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; and related risk and protective factors. Unless questions in these topic areas are asked honestly and straightforwardly, we cannot know the degree to which Washington's youth engage in these health risk behaviors.

For grades 8, 10 and 12, surveys include questions about sexual behavior and sexual abuse. Schools, however, can opt out from asking these questions on their surveys. The survey administered to Grade 6 students does not include the sexual behavior and abuse-related questions.

Q: Is student participation voluntary? Are answers anonymous?

A: Student participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. The administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy and anonymity. Students are not asked for their names or identification numbers. When they finish the survey, students directly submit their survey anonymously. Schools must plan an alternative activity for students who choose not to take the survey.

Q: How is the survey coordinated at each school?

A: Each participating school has a designated survey coordinator and a backup coordinator, to help organize local survey efforts. These persons have additional information about the survey, including administration instructions.

Q: Can I review the survey?

A: Yes, parents or guardians can contact their school office to see a copy of the 2021 survey. Since 2018 and 2021 surveys are similar, schools can also email a hyperlink to parents for the 2018 survey questions on AskHYS.net.

Q: How long does it take to complete the survey?

A: One class period is needed to complete the survey (about 50 minutes). All questions are self-report and no physical tests or examinations are involved.

Q: Do students answer the questions truthfully?

A: Both national research and experience in Washington indicate that the data collected are accurate when students are informed of the importance of the survey and their responses are completely anonymous. Internal reliability checks are also used to help identify surveys that obviously have been answered carelessly and these surveys are not included in the results. In addition, students always have the option of not answering questions to which they do not feel comfortable responding.

Q: When is the survey conducted? When are results available?

A: The survey will be administered during the Fall of 2021. Results will be available in mid-March 2022.

Q: How does this HYS compare to surveys that have been administered in the past?

A. This HYS will be similar to past surveys. To accommodate the large number of items, there are two versions of the questionnaire for Grades 8, 10 and 12, called Form A and

Form B. All of the questionnaires for Grades 8, 10 and 12 contain a core set of around 30 identical items.

All students in Grade 6 receive a shorter questionnaire, Form C. It does not contain any potentially sensitive questions. Copies of past surveys are available at www.AskHYS.net/Survey.

The major difference from past surveys is that most schools will be administering the survey online instead of the traditional paper-pencil administration. The questions asked online are the same as on the paper and pencil version.

Q: How can I find out which schools have registered to participate in the HYS?

A: You can visit the HYS web site (www.AskHYS.net) to check on school registration status or past participation.

Q: How will the survey results be used?

A: Information from the Washington State HYS can be used to meet a variety of needs at the school, community, and state levels. The survey provides information that can be used to identify the importance of various health risk behaviors. This information can inform resource and policy decisions, such as how to target interventions. Those who receive the survey results may choose to share them with other community organizations.

The items that were asked in previous years can be used to identify trends or changes in the patterns of behavior over time. The state-level data can be used to compare Washington results to the results from other states that conduct similar surveys and to national results.

Legitimate researchers and educational and health officials can request access to the anonymous data. At the state and federal levels, a variety of interests are competing for limited resources. The results of this survey can and have been used to provide evidence for the high priority of the important health issues identified.

Q: Who sponsors the survey?

A: The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); Department of Health (DOH); Health Care Authority Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR); and Liquor and Cannabis Board (LCB).

Q: Where can I get more information about the survey?

A: The following is a list of contact persons who will be happy to answer questions and the web site where you can find out more about the survey:

- Kevin Beck (DOH): healthy.youth@doh.wa.gov (877) HYS-7111
- Tyler Watson (DBHR): Tyler.Watson@hca.gov (360) 725-5259
- Emily Maughan (OSPI): Emily.Maughan@k12.wa.us (360) 725-6030
- Sara Cooley Broschart (LCB): Sara.Broschart@lcb.wa.gov (360) 664-1771
- Susan Richardson (contractor) surveyadmin@askHYS.net (877) HYS-7111
- AskHYS.net Web site: www.AskHYS.net