



## Iowa Youth Risk Behavior Survey Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

### **Q. Why is the survey being done?**

A. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) will use the survey results to measure the percentage of youth who engage in health-related risk behaviors and inform programs that help improve health outcomes. This survey has been conducted since 1991. We know that nationally, youth today are engaging in fewer sexual risk behaviors, and are less likely to use alcohol or other drugs. However, more youth are overweight and obese. These are important trends to analyze.

### **Q. Will students' names be used or linked to the surveys?**

A. No. Students do not put their name on the survey.

### **Q. Do students take the survey more than once to see how their behaviors change?**

A. No. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is administered every other year. However, a different sample of schools and students are selected for each survey. Students who take part one year cannot be tracked because their names are not on the survey.

### **Q. How were schools picked to participate?**

A. Schools are randomly selected from a list of all Iowa public high schools using probability sampling. Because surveying every student in every Iowa high school is costly, burdensome, and logistically unfeasible, a random and representative sample is selected. In Iowa, a total of 32 schools were randomly selected to participate in 2019.

### **Q. If a school declines to participate, can IDPH select another one in its place?**

A. No. Once the sample is selected, no changes can be made to the list of selected schools.

### **Q. Where can I find the results of the survey?**

A. If a sufficient number of Iowa schools participate, a report of the statewide results will be sent to all participating schools and posted on the IDPH webpage. Given that a small proportion of students within each selected school are asked to participate, results are not shared at the school level to protect confidentiality.

### **Q. How long does it take to fill out the survey? Does the survey include a physical test?**

A. One class period is needed to fill out the survey, which has 95 questions. The survey does not include a physical test or exam.



## **Q. What topics are covered on this survey?**

A. A variety of health-related topics are covered on this survey, including some questions that may be considered sensitive. Survey topics include; safety and injury prevention, HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), violence-related behaviors, bullying, attempted suicide, smoking and other tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behavior, and nutrition and physical activity.

## **Q. Why are sensitive questions asked?**

A. The categories of questions asked in this survey are designed to assess the behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death and disability among youth and adults. The only way to understand risks to youth health is to ask questions about these behaviors. Questions are written in a direct but sensitive way. This information is used to monitor progress toward achieving public health goals, improve the effectiveness of public health programs, and identify emerging health risks facing youth.

## **Q. I've heard of the Iowa Youth Survey. Is this survey different?**

A. The YRBS is a different survey than the Iowa Youth Survey. The YRBS is administered to a random sample of Iowa high school students and provides nationally comparable results that help Iowa compete for national health-related funding opportunities. Because of the smaller sample size, the Iowa Department of Public Health cannot provide school-district level data from the YRBS. The Iowa Youth Survey is offered to all Iowa 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and can provide district and county-level information. It is not, however, nationally comparable. The Iowa Department of Public Health works through these two surveys to gather comprehensive information on how we can protect and improve the health of Iowa students.

## **Q. Where can I get more information about this survey?**

A. More information on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey can be found here:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm>.

## **Q. Where can I see examples of how survey data are used?**

A. Results from previous surveys, factsheets, and publications can be found on the CDC's webpage here: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/results.htm>.  
Iowa specific results can be found here: <https://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?LID=IA>