



QUESTION and ANSWER FACT SHEET

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2023

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/HYS/HYSInformation.

Q: Why is the survey conducted?

A: The survey is used to identify and monitor factors that affect the health of youth in Washington. Healthy Youth Survey has been conducted across the state since 2002. 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. Grades 6 and 7 receive a simpler and shorter version of the questions that are asked in grades 8 through 12. This option is intended to provide more reliable data to schools with very few students. Private schools can participate upon request. Schools who are unable to administer the survey in-person (e.g., Alternative Learning Experiences, online learning, virtual, etc.) will also be able to participate upon request and will be allowed to administer the survey remotely.

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 abuse. Schools can submit an exemption request during registration if they don't want to ask questions about one or both topics.

The survey administered to younger students (grades 6 and 7) does not include 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.

We take confidentiality very seriously. There are several steps we use to ensure that the sensitive information collected on the survey remains anonymous and that there is no unauthorized access to raw data.

1. The survey materials and process are all reviewed and approved by the Washington State Institutional Review Board (WSIRB).
2. All technology involved in collecting, storing, and transferring survey data complies with state data security requirements and has been evaluated by Washington Technology Services (WaTech).
3. No names, dates of birth, addresses, or contact information are linked to survey responses.
4. All results shared publicly are aggregated and suppressed so that no individual student's responses can be viewed.
5. Only trained and approved individuals have access to datasets. They must either be study staff members or maintain a Data Sharing Agreement with the Washington State Department of Health. Anyone using the data for research must also receive approval from the WSIRB.
6. If there is ever a deviation from the strict rules for how the survey is administered and data safety is maintained, the study team immediately works to correct the situation and inform affected parties, and the WSIRB is notified to help ensure that the corrective actions are adequate.

While sometimes mistakes can happen throughout the survey process, there has never been a reported incident of a student's personal identity being discovered or used inappropriately. We are confident that these robust safety measures effectively help to protect student privacy and we are always evaluating how to further strengthen these measures throughout our process.

Q: How is the survey coordinated at each school?

A: Each participating school has a designated survey 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 review the questions on www.askhys.net.

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

A: Students will have one class period (about 50 minutes) to complete the survey. 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 2023. Results will be available in February/March, 2024.

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, only a subset of questions are asked of all students in grades 8-12. The remaining questions are randomized so that approximately half of the students respond to one set of questions and the others respond to the other set. All students in grades 6 and 7 receive a shorter questionnaire.

Copies of past surveys are available at www.AskHYS.net/Resources/SurveyQuestionnaires.

The major difference from past surveys is that the survey will be administered electronically this year. The survey will still be administered in person at school. Alternative Learning Environment schools (e.g., online or virtual) who are unable to administer the survey in-person will be allowed to administer the survey remotely

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:

HYS Principal Investigator (DOH):	healthy.youth@doh.wa.gov	(877) HYS-7111
• Tyler Watson (DBHR):	Tyler.Watson@hca.gov	(360) 725-5259
• Doua Kha (OSPI):	Doua.Kha@k12.wa.gov	(608)-320-9140
• Mary Segawa (LCB):	Mary.Segawa@lcb.wa.gov	(360)-522-0421
• Susan Richardson (contractor)	surveyadmin@askHYS.net	(877) HYS-7111
• AskHYS.net website:	www.AskHYS.net	