

# Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Data Brief

### Bicycle Helmets

Three-quarters of students in grades 8-12 rode bicycles in the past 12 months. However, 63% — over 17,000 students — reported rarely or never wearing helmets. In fact, riders were most likely to report *never* wearing helmets: 48% never; 15%, rarely; 11%, sometimes; 13%, almost always; and 13%, always.

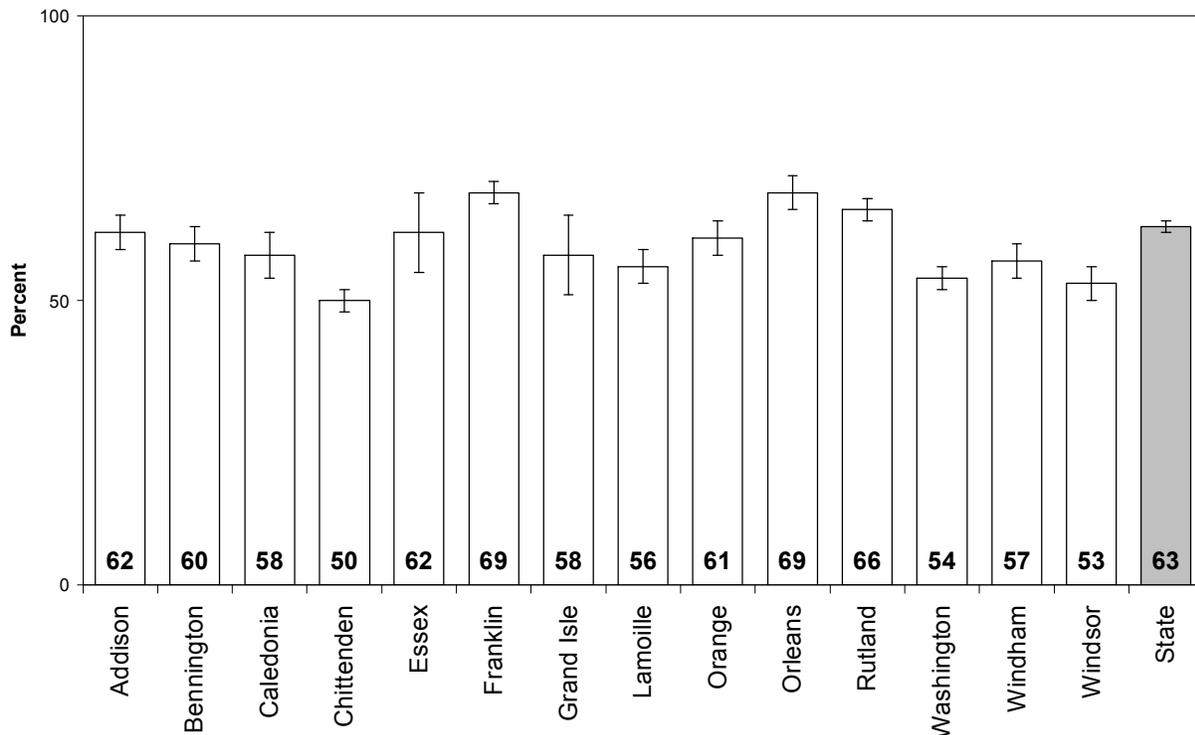
Males, older students, and students from racial or ethnic minority groups were more likely to report rarely or never wearing helmets.

Frequency (percent) of helmet use among bicycle riders

	Grade					Sex		Race/Ethnicity	
	8	9	10	11	12	M	F	White non-Hispanic	Racial or ethnic minority
Rarely or never	58	61	64	66	64	66	58	62	73
Sometimes, almost always, or always	42	39	36	34	36	34	42	38	27

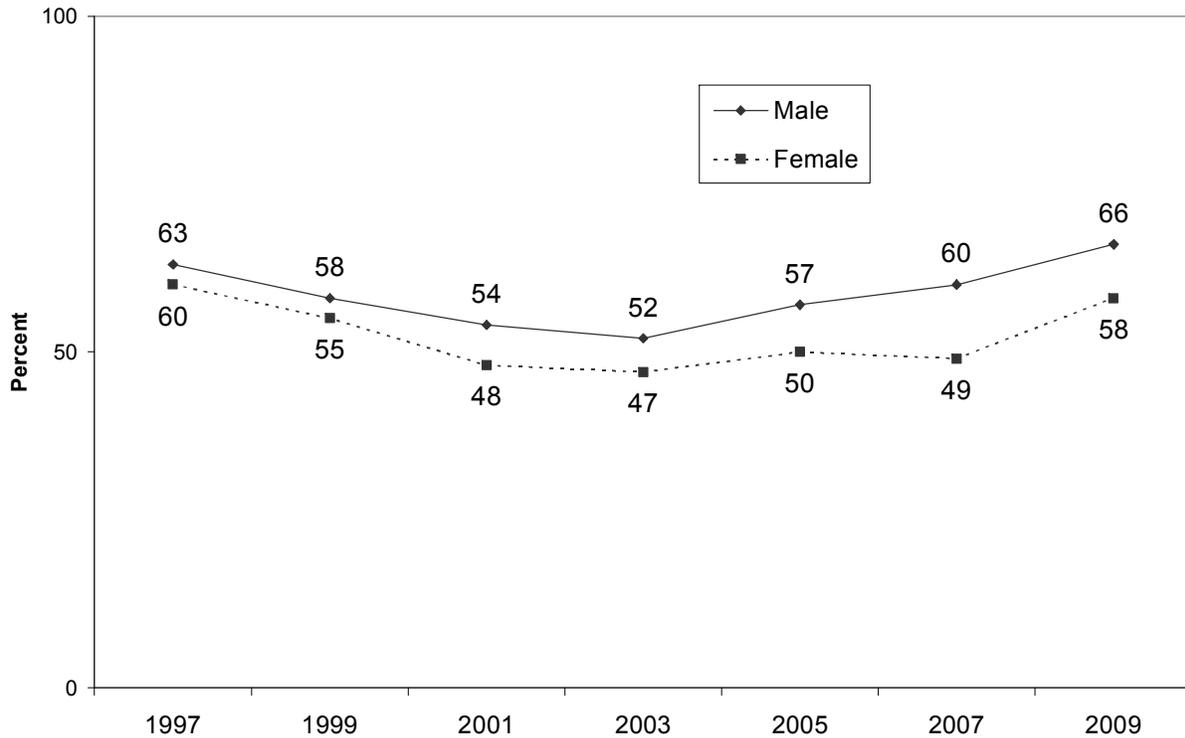
Bicyclists in Chittenden, Washington, Windham, and Windsor counties were less likely to report that they rarely or never wore bicycle helmets compared to the statewide sample, while riders in Franklin and Orleans counties were more likely to report that they rarely or never wore helmets.

Percent of bicycle riders who rarely or never wore a helmet, by county.  
Source: VT YRBS



The percent of bicycle riders reporting that they rarely or never wore helmets decreased for several surveys but has since increased. In 1993, 82% of riders reported rarely or never wearing helmets, compared to 50% in 2001 and 55% in 2007. In 2009, there was a sharp increase in the percent of riders, particularly females, who reported rarely or never wearing helmets.

Percent of bicycle riders who rarely or never wore helmets, by sex.  
Source: VT YRBS



In 2009, students who rarely or never wore helmets were more likely to report other risky behaviors, such as not wearing a seatbelt, fighting, driving a car under the influence, and alcohol, cigarette, and marijuana use, even after controlling for demographic differences.

However, students who rarely or never wore a helmet were *not* significantly more likely to have exercised every day in the last week than those who always or almost always wore helmets (26% v. 24%).

For more information on promoting bicycle safety, please visit:

- Safe Kids Vermont: <http://www.safekids.org/in-your-area/coalitions/vermont-state.html>
- Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Coalition: <http://www.vtbikeped.org>
- Local Motion: <http://www.localmotion.org>
- Center for Health and Learning: <http://www.healthandlearning.org>

For more information on the YRBS, contact Erika Edwards ([erika.edwards@ahs.state.vt.us](mailto:erika.edwards@ahs.state.vt.us); 802-863-7246) or visit: <http://healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs.aspx>