

# Vermont High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey

## Data Brief

### Racial and Ethnic Minority High School Students in Vermont

This summary presents highlights from an analysis of 2011 Vermont High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data by two distinct categories – racial or ethnic minority students compared to white, non-Hispanic students. In the 2011 YRBS, 8 percent of Vermont high school students in grades 9-12 identified as being part of a racial or ethnic minority group, defined as American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black/African American, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or multiple races.

We reviewed the survey responses of these two groups to ascertain important differences. Based on the size of the differences between the two groups and the potential for current or future issues resulting from the behaviors, we identified five areas of concern: personal safety and harm; substance use; sexual behavior; exercise and nutrition; and assets.

#### *Personal Safety and Harm*

Racial or ethnic minority high school students were more likely to report being in a physical fight. They were nearly twice as likely to report driving after drinking, more than twice as likely to report rarely or never wearing a safety belt when riding in a car, and three times as likely to report a suicide attempt.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Rarely or never wear safety belt when riding in a car	13	6	*
In past 30 days:			
Drove after drinking	12	7	*
Drove after marijuana use	18	13	
In past 12 months:			
In a physical fight	32	22	*
Purposefully hurt self by cutting or burning	17	12	
Felt sad or hopeless for at least 2 weeks	25	19	
Made suicide plan	11	8	
Attempted suicide	9	3	*

#### *Sexual Behavior*

There were no differences in the proportion of students reporting they have ever had sex. However, racial or ethnic minority students were three times more likely to report having sex before age 13 and three times more likely to report that they did not use birth control or they were not sure of the type of birth control used.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Had sex ever	46	41	
Had sex before age 13	12	4	*
Among sexually active in the past 3 months:			
Used drugs or alcohol before last sex	34	22	
Used condom for last sex	57	63	
Used no birth control or not sure of birth control	21	7	*

*Tobacco, Alcohol, or Marijuana Use*

Racial or ethnic minority students were about twice as likely to report using cigarettes, alcohol, or marijuana before age 13. They were also more likely to report smoking cigarettes in the past 30 days.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Before age 13:			
Smoked whole cigarette	14	6	*
Drank alcohol (other than sips or tastes)	22	14	*
Used marijuana	14	6	*
In past 30 days:			
Smoked cigarettes	19	13	*
Drank alcohol	37	35	
Binged on alcohol (5 or more drinks in a row)	24	21	
Used marijuana	27	24	

*Attitudes and Perceptions about Alcohol, Tobacco, and Marijuana Use*

Attitudes and perceptions about substance use are largely the same among students, with just a few noted differences. Racial or ethnic minority students were significantly less likely to report parental disapproval of cigarette use or to think people risk harm from smoking one or more packs of cigarettes a day. Additionally, they are less likely to report that it was easy to get alcohol.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Wrong or very wrong for someone your age to:			
Smoke cigarettes	69	75	
Drink alcohol	50	47	
Smoke marijuana	60	58	
Parents would think it is wrong or very wrong for you to:			
Smoke cigarettes	84	91	*
Drink alcohol	69	74	
Smoke marijuana	80	84	
Think people your age are at great risk of harming themselves (physically or otherwise) if they:			
Smoke one or more packs of cigarettes a day	49	60	*
Drink one or two alcoholic beverages nearly every day	36	38	
Smoke marijuana regularly	36	34	
Easy or very easy to get:			
Cigarettes	65	67	
Alcohol	65	74	*
Marijuana	56	62	

### Exercise and Nutrition

Racial or ethnic minority students were more likely to eat five servings of fruit and vegetables every day. However, they were also more likely to consume at least one serving of soda every day as well as one serving of both soda and a sugar sweetened beverage (SSB) every day. They were also less likely to be active for at least 60 minutes, 5 days per week.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Active for at least 60 minutes on 5 of the last 7 days	42	48	*
Watch TV, use computer, or play video games for 3 or more hours on an average school day	40	36	
Overweight or obese	24	23	
Ate breakfast every day in the past week	43	44	
Ate 5+ fruits and vegetables every day	31	24	*
Drank at least 1 serving of soda per day	22	16	*
Drank at least 1 serving of an SSB per day	21	16	
Drank at least 1 serving of both soda and an SSB per day	13	7	*

### Assets

Results were mostly the same for students reporting on assets, with two differences. Racial or ethnic minority students were significantly less likely to report that their parents talk to them about school at least weekly and were less likely to report getting mostly As or Bs in school.

	Racial or ethnic minority (%)	White Non-Hispanic (%)	Statistically Different
Parents talk to you about school at least weekly	63	77	*
Volunteer 1+ hours per week	58	55	
Get mostly As or Bs	73	82	*
Agree or strongly agree that students help decide what goes on in school	51	52	
Agree or strongly agree that you matter to your community	51	55	
Agree or strongly agree that that teachers really care and give a lot of encouragement	57	62	

For more information on this data brief, contact Katie Jones, M.S. (Katherine.Jones@state.vt.us; 802-651-1516).

For the YRBS Data Brief Archive, visit: [http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data\\_briefs.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs/data_briefs.aspx)