



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## New Reports Measure Health Risks and Behaviors of Vermonters

*Good and bad news detailed in Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Adult Risk Behavior Survey, and Prevention Status Report*



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BURLINGTON – Two new reports that measure the health risks and behaviors of Vermonters from middle school through adulthood have just been published by the Health Department at [www.healthvermont.gov](http://www.healthvermont.gov).

The *2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey*, administered at school every other year to students in grades six through 12, and the annual phone-based *2012 Adult Behavioral Risk Factor Survey* both detail the prevalence of a wide range of behaviors that affect health – from smoking, drinking and drug use, to physical activity, nutrition and weight, to violence and mental health status.

“We see hope and progress in these reports – and areas where we all need to refocus our efforts,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “While significantly fewer students drink, smoke or misuse prescription drugs, adult habits have not changed. And nearly 30 percent of students and 60 percent of adults are above a healthy weight, putting them at risk for a lifetime of chronic health problems.”

For the first time in 2013, the student survey asked a question about texting and driving. Among high school students who drive, more than one-third (35%) reported they texted or emailed while driving in the past 30 days. That number jumped to 56 percent among seniors.

“Research demonstrates that driving safely is a very complex series of actions, which require the operator’s full focus,” said Ted Minall, chief of the Governor’s Highway Safety Program at the Department of Public Safety. “Vermont state law prohibits texting while driving, and educators and parents have a responsibility to promote a no-texting message.”

The *2013 Prevention Status Report* just published by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention also rates states on the status of public health policies and practices designed to prevent or reduce important health problems. This new report – which covers excessive alcohol use, food safety, healthcare-associated infections, heart disease and stroke, HIV, motor vehicle injuries, nutrition, physical activity and obesity, teen pregnancy, and tobacco use – is available at: [www.cdc.gov/stlpublichealth/psr](http://www.cdc.gov/stlpublichealth/psr)

### Youth and Adult Risk Behavior Survey Highlights:

*Fewer students drink, while adult habits have not changed.*

- 7% of middle school students drink alcohol, down from 9% in 2011
- 33% of high school students drink alcohol, down from 35% in 2011
- 65% of adults drink, higher than 53% for the U.S., and unchanged from 2011
- 19% of adults binge drink, higher than 17% for the U.S., unchanged from 2011
- 8% of adults are heavy drinkers (2+ drinks a day for men, 1+ drink a day for women), significantly higher than U.S. adults (6%), and unchanged from 2011

*Fewer students smoke, while adult habits have not changed.*

- 9% of middle school students have ever tried to smoke, down from 11% in 2011
- 13% of high school students smoke, down from 15% in 2011

- 17% of adults smoked in 2012, similar to 19% of U.S. adult smokers
- 62% of adult smokers tried to quit, similar to 59% of U.S. adult smokers

*Prescription drug misuse is down among students, but remains steady among adults.*

- 3% of middle school students and 13% of high school students have taken a prescription drug without a prescription
- 11% of students have ever used a prescription pain reliever without a prescription, down from 13% in 2011
- 7% of high school students have misused a prescription drug in the past month
- 8% of adults have ever taken a prescription drug without a prescription, the same as in 2011

*Marijuana use among middle and high school students as well as adults has not changed. Fewer students think marijuana use is harmful.*

- 6% of middle school and 39% of high school students have ever used marijuana
- 3% of middle school and 24% of high school students are current users
- 64% of middle and 31% of high school students think that someone their age is at great risk of harm if they smoke marijuana regularly, significantly down from 68% and 34% in 2011
- 8% of adults are current marijuana users, unchanged from 2011

*Nearly one-third of high school students and 60% of adults are over a healthy weight.*

- 16% of students are overweight, a significant increase from 14% in 2011
- 13% of students are obese, a significant increase from 11% in 2011
- 60% of adults are overweight or obese, unchanged from 2011
- 23% of adults are obese, significantly lower than 28% of U.S. adults

**For more information about the surveys, highlights and full reports:**

Youth Risk Behavior Survey – [www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/yrbs.aspx)

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (Adults) – [www.healthvermont.gov/research/brfss/brfss.aspx](http://www.healthvermont.gov/research/brfss/brfss.aspx)

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