
2023 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey Results

Key Takeaways by Topic

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS) is the state's most comprehensive survey on the health and well-being of young people. The purpose of the survey is to better understand youth health and the factors that help young people make healthy choices. In the fall of 2023, we surveyed 120,239 young people at 344 middle and high schools across Colorado. The results below, organized by topic with statistically significant changes from 2021 noted, represent youth who attend public middle and high schools in Colorado.

The HKCS results consistently illuminate disparities in health outcomes for some youth of color and LGBTQ+ youth. Analyses of the HKCS results also consistently show when all young people have access to protective factors - like trusted adults who can help with problems, clear family rules, and feeling safe and connected at school - they can thrive. For all results, including results that are stratified by geography, age, grade, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender identity, [visit healthykidscolo.org](https://www.healthykidscolo.org).

Protective Factors - 2023 High School Results

- 75% of youth have an adult to go to for help with a serious problem (no change from 2021)
- 94% of youth feel the rules in their family are clear (no change from 2021)
- 70% of youth think their teacher notices when they do a good job and lets them know about it (increase from 59% in 2021)
- 92% of youth feel safe at school (no change from 2021)
- 67% of youth feel like they belong at their school (no change from 2021)
- 31% of youth sleep eight or more hours per night on average school nights (increase from 26% in 2021)

Mental Health and Suicide - 2023 High School Results

- 58% of youth agree that their stress level is manageable most days (increase from 53% in 2021)
- 28% of youth most of the time or always had poor mental health during the past month (new question in 2023)
- 26% of youth reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year (decrease from 40% in 2021)
- 11% of youth seriously considered suicide in the past year (decrease from 17% in 2021)
- 6% of youth attempted suicide in the past year (decrease from 7% in 2021)

Sexual Health and Consent - 2023 High School Results

- 27% of youth have ever had sex (no change from 2021)
- 66% of sexually active youth used a condom during sex the last time (increase from 59% in 2021)
- 10% of youth had a sexual experience where they were unsure if they gave their fully-granted consent to the other person (decrease from 12% in 2021)
- 3% of youth had a sexual experience where they were unsure if they received fully-granted consent from the other person (no change from 2021)

Alcohol Use - 2023 High School Results

- 21% of youth drank alcohol within the past month (decrease from 24% in 2021)
- 12% of youth binge drank one or more times in the last month (no change from 2021)
- 51% of youth feel it would be easy to get alcohol if they wanted (no change from 2021)
- 71% of youth think it is wrong for someone their same age to drink alcohol regularly (increase from 65% in 2021)
- 85% of youth think their parents/guardians would feel it is wrong if they drank alcohol regularly (no change from 2021)

Marijuana Use - 2023 High School Results

- 13% of youth used marijuana within the past month (no change from 2021)
- 8% of youth used THC concentrates, hash oil, or waxes in the past month (no change from 2021)
- 40% of youth feel it would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted (no change from 2021)
- 71% of youth think it is wrong for someone their same age to use marijuana (no change from 2021)
- 90% of youth think their parents/guardians would feel it is wrong if they used marijuana (no change from 2021)

Tobacco Use - 2023 High School Results

- 3% of youth smoked cigarettes within the past month (no change from 2021)
- Among youth who smoked in the past month, 29% of youth smoked menthol cigarettes (no change from 2021)
- 9% of youth vaped within the past month (decrease from 16% in 2021)
- 49% of youth feel it would be easy to get electronic vapor products if they wanted (decrease from 51% in 2021)

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- 79% of youth think it is wrong for someone of the same age to vape (increase from 70% in 2021)
 - 95% of youth think their parents/guardians would feel it is wrong if they vaped (increase from 94% in 2021)

Prescription Pain Medication & Other Drugs - 2023 High School Results

- 4% of youth took prescription pain medicine not prescribed to them or differently than prescribed within the past month (decrease from 6% in 2021)
- 23% of youth feel it would be easy to get prescription pain medicine not prescribed to them (increase from 19% in 2021)
- 4% of youth have ever used stimulants not prescribed to them or differently than prescribed (new question in 2023)
- 4% of youth have ever used psychedelics (new question in 2023)

Motor Vehicle Safety - 2023 High School Results

- 33% of youth texted, posted, or used their phone in some other way while driving in the past month (no change from 2021)
- 7% of youth drove a vehicle after using marijuana in the past month (increase from 6% in 2021)
- 7% of youth drove a vehicle after using alcohol in the past month (increase from 4% in 2021)

Body Image & Eating Disorders - 2023 High School Results

- 47% of youth most of the time or always felt confident with their body image in the past month (new question in 2023)
- 39% of youth most of the time or always worried about their physical appearance more than they wanted to during the past month (new question in 2023)
- 23% of youth tried to lose weight or keep from gaining weight by going without eating for 24 hours or more, taking any diet pills, powders or liquids, vomiting or taking laxatives, or skipping meals in the past month (new question in 2023)

Gun Access - 2023 High School Results

- 19% of youth could fire a loaded gun without adult permission in less than an hour (no change from 2021)

Protective Factors - 2023 Middle School Results

- 73% of youth have an adult to go to for help with a serious problem (no change from 2021)
- 86% of youth feel safe at their school (new question in 2023)
- 66% of youth feel like they belong at their school (no change from 2021)
- 54% of youth sleep eight or more hours per night on average school nights (new question in 2023)

Mental Health and Suicide - 2023 Middle School Results

- 58% of youth agree that their stress level is manageable most days (no change from 2021)
- 23% of youth most of the time or always had poor mental health during the past month (new question in 2023)
- 24% of youth reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year (decrease from 32% in 2021)
- 17% of youth have ever seriously considered suicide (decrease from 24% in 2021)
- 7% of youth have ever attempted suicide (decrease from 9% in 2021)

Alcohol Use - 2023 Middle School Results

- 24% of youth ever had a drink of alcohol (increase from 11% in 2021)
- 7% of youth drank alcohol within the past month (increase from 4% in 2021)
- 14% of youth had their first drink of alcohol before age 11 (increase from 5% in 2021)
- 29% of youth feel it would be easy to get alcohol if they wanted (no change from 2021)
- 91% of youth think it is wrong for someone their same age to drink alcohol regularly (no change from 2021)
- 92% of youth think their parents/guardians would feel it is wrong if they drank alcohol regularly (decrease from 94% in 2021)

Marijuana Use - 2023 Middle School Results

- 7% of youth ever tried marijuana (no change from 2021)
- 3% of youth used marijuana within the past month (no change from 2021)
- 13% of youth feel it would be easy to get marijuana if they wanted (no change from 2021)
- 93% of youth think it is wrong for someone their same age to use marijuana (no change from 2021)

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- 96% of youth think their parents/guardians would feel it is wrong if they used marijuana (no change from 2021)

Tobacco Use - 2023 Middle School Results

- 7% of youth ever smoked a cigarette (increase from 4% in 2021)
- 2% of youth smoked within the past month (no change from 2021)
- 14% of youth ever vaped (no change from 2021)
- 6% of youth vaped within the past month (no change from 2021)
- 24% of youth feel it would be easy to get electronic vapor products if they wanted (new question in 2023)
- 92% of youth think it is wrong for someone of the same age to vape (no change from 2021)
- 97% of youth think their parents/guardians would feel it is wrong if they vaped (new question in 2023)

Prescription Pain Medication - 2023 Middle School Results

- 8% of youth have ever used prescription pain medicine not prescribed to them or differently than prescribed (no change from 2021)
- 19% of youth feel it would be easy to get prescription pain medicine not prescribed to them (new question in 2023)

Body Image & Eating Disorders - 2023 Middle School Results

- 50% of youth most of the time or always felt confident with their body image in the past month (new question in 2023)
- 32% of youth most of the time or always worried about their physical appearance more than they wanted to during the past month (new question in 2023)
- 22% of youth tried to lose weight or keep from gaining weight by going without eating for 24 hours or more, taking any diet pills, powders or liquids, vomiting or taking laxatives, or skipping meals in the past month (new question in 2023)

Gun Access - 2023 Middle School Results

- 21% of youth could fire a loaded gun without adult permission in less than an hour (no change from 2021)