

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS)

Coordinator:

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State Website: [https://www.education.ky.gov/curriculum/WSCC/data/Pages/Youth-Risk-Behavior-Survey-\(YRBS\).aspx](https://www.education.ky.gov/curriculum/WSCC/data/Pages/Youth-Risk-Behavior-Survey-(YRBS).aspx)

National Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?scid=hy-homepage-002>

Why is it used?

- Used to monitor priority health-risk behaviors of youth that contribute substantially to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults.
- To determine the prevalence and co-occurrence of health risk behaviors among middle and high school students.
- To assess whether health risk behaviors increase, decrease or stay the same over time.
- Provides comparable data among subpopulations of youth.

What Data is Collected?

Information about the prevalence of health-risk behaviors among middle and high school students including:

- Tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.
- Sexual behavior.
- Dietary behavior / eating habits.
- Physical activity.
- Items related to unintentional injury, violence and suicide.

How is data collected?

- Biennial survey administered to representative samples of students in grades 9 – 12 during the spring of odd-numbered years.
 - Personal identifying information, such as name and address are not collected.
- Kentucky also administers a middle school YRBS for grades 6-8.
- Schools participating in the survey are selected randomly and participation is voluntary.

Data Strengths:

- The schools utilizing the YRBSS are selected using double random sample selection.
- In two test-retest reliability studies of the YRBSS questionnaire done by the CDC, a majority of the prevalence estimates were not significantly different.
- The 2003, and 2007-2023 YRBSS had an overall combined school and classroom response rate of over 70%, making this data statistically representative of students in typical public high schools throughout Kentucky.
- The middle school data was statistically representative in 2009-2023.
- The YRBSS has been conducted in Kentucky since 1991.



Data Limitations:

- Data are self-reported, and the extent of over-reporting or underreporting behaviors cannot be determined.
- The data apply only to youth who attend school and are not representative of all persons in this age group.
- Parental permission procedures are not consistent throughout the state.
 - Due to the passage of SB 150 in 2023, active parental permission will not be required in all schools.
- There is no federal or Kentucky mandate that requires data collection.

How is the system evaluated?

- Before each biennial survey, sites (states and districts) and the CDC work together to revise the YRBSS questionnaire to reflect site and national priorities.

Data Set Availability:

- YRBSS data from 2005 - 2023 for high schools, and 2009 - 2023 data for middle schools are available to the public.
- The data is available in SPSS and comma delimited formats.
- In 2021 the sample size included 1,925 high school students and 1,481 middle school students.
- Contact the YRBSS coordinator if requesting raw data sets.
- Visit the state web site for data reports and data request forms.
- Smallest geographic level released is the state.
- There is no cost for the data.

Data Release Policy:

- Due to confidentiality, the names of participating schools are not available.

Data Publications:

- Once surveys are complete, the CDC includes results for all states that conduct the YRBSS in the MMWR.
- The 2021 Kentucky YRBSS results are highlighted in the latest report and can be found on the YRBSS website: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/index.htm>.
- The website also includes a tool called Youth Online that can analyze and create tables and graphs and perform statistical tests on high school and middle school results from 2001-2023 by site and health topic.

Suggested Citation:

Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Kentucky Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. Frankfort, Kentucky: Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Kentucky Department of Education, [Survey Year].

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