



## EDINA YOUTH HEALTH UPDATE 2005 - 2006

ALCOHOL · MARIJUANA · PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & NUTRITION · TOBACCO · TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION

The teenage years are usually the healthiest years of life. Most risks to a teen's health are attributed to behavior choices such as:

- Tobacco use
- Drinking alcohol
- Drug abuse
- Sexual activity
- Poor nutrition
- Physical inactivity
- Violence
- Unintentional accidents

When parents and other adults help teens avoid these risks, they set the stage for life long health.

YOUTH HEALTH UPDATES are one way to share information about what youth in the community are doing. Public health, schools, and other community organizations can use this information to help reduce and/or prevent risky behavior choices by youth.

### TOGETHER, WE MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

#### ALCOHOL

Alcohol is the most frequently used drug among adolescents.<sup>1</sup>

Research indicates that the human brain continues to develop into a person's early 20s. Exposing the developing brain to alcohol may have long-lasting effects on intellectual capabilities. It may increase the likelihood of alcohol addiction.<sup>2</sup>

People who begin drinking alcohol before age 15 are more than 5 times as likely to develop alcohol dependence or abuse than persons who wait until age 21 or older.<sup>3</sup>

Underage alcohol use is associated with traffic fatalities, violence, unsafe sex, suicide, educational failure, and other problem behaviors that diminish the prospects of future success, as well as health risks. The earlier teens start drinking, the greater the danger.<sup>4</sup>

1 - Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Admin., 2004

2 - Brown, Tapert, Granholm, Delis, 2000.

3 - Grant & Dawson, 1997

4 - Institute of Medicine, 2004

#### MARIJUANA:

Marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug among America's youth.<sup>1</sup>

People 18 years old and younger who use marijuana have lower achievement than non-users, more delinquent behavior and aggression, greater rebelliousness, poorer relationships with parents, and more associations with delinquent and drug-using friends.<sup>1</sup>

The marijuana of today is not the marijuana of the 1970s. It is more potent and more dangerous.<sup>2</sup>

Marijuana is easy to find. Twenty-one percent of 12 to 17 year-olds can buy marijuana in an hour or less; 40% can buy marijuana within a day.<sup>2</sup>

1 - National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), *Monitoring the Future Study 2004*

2 - National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) 2004

#### HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Youth often feel they're not valued members of the community because they are not given useful roles and responsibilities. Despite our perceptions, youth have a lot to offer. They have a great capacity for original thinking and creativity - they just need the opportunity to show it.

By sharing the decision making process rather than doing it for them, adults can positively impact young people's choices and what types of behaviors they will develop.

Regardless of the image portrayed, youth want to be acknowledged for who they are and what they can offer. Even the simple act of waving and saying "hi" gives youth a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Adults are role models to youth. With guidance and understanding, youth will grow up to be competent parents, neighbors, and citizens.

Most young people take responsibility seriously because they know what's at stake. Youth struggle daily to be included with their peers, so why would they purposefully try and exclude themselves from the rest of the community?

Sources: [www.Americaspromise.org](http://www.Americaspromise.org)

*Your Child and Self-Esteem* by Drew W. Edwards; Compass Labs, Inc., 2000

*Developmental Assets* by Peter C. Scales and Nancy Leffert

## TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION

It's easy to be misled by movies and television shows into thinking that every teen in America is having sex, but the fact is that virgins *outnumber* sexually active teens in the nation. In 2001, 54.4% of teens in grades 9-12 said they had not had sex.<sup>1</sup>

Nationally, three million teens, or 1 in 4 sexually experienced teens, get a sexually transmitted disease every year.<sup>2</sup>

Almost two-thirds of teens who have had sex (63%) wish they had waited longer.<sup>3</sup>

79% of teens do not think it is embarrassing for teens to admit they are virgins.<sup>3</sup>

Teens, particularly those ages 12-14, cite parents as much more influential (31%) than friends (8%) when it comes to making decisions about sex.<sup>3</sup>

Nearly seven out of ten teens (69%) agree it would be much easier for them to postpone sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents.<sup>3</sup>

One out of four teen girls say their parents have discussed sex, love, and relationships with them "not nearly enough."<sup>3</sup>

Abstinence is the only 100% effective means of birth control.

- 1- *Centers for Disease Prevention & Control, Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System*
- 2- *MOAPPP, 2005 Minnesota State Adolescent Sexual Health Report*
- 3- *The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy; "With One Voice 2002: America's Adults and Teens Sound Off About Teen Pregnancy"*

## TOBACCO

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of death in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

Each day in the United States, approximately 4,000 youth, aged 12-17, try their first cigarette.<sup>2</sup>

Several studies have found nicotine to be addictive in ways similar to heroin, cocaine, and alcohol.<sup>3</sup>

Teens who smoke are more likely than nonsmokers to use alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine.<sup>4</sup>

- 1 - *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001*
- 2 - *The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2001*
- 3 - *Minnesota Department of Health, 2002*
- 4 - *Centers for Disease Prevention & Control, 1994*

## NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

As a group, adolescents have extremely poor eating habits which result in nutritional deficiencies.

Adolescents are:

- not eating enough fruits, vegetables, and calcium-rich foods
- drinking too much soda
- practicing unsafe weight-loss methods
- excessive in their intake of fat and sodium, resulting in high cholesterol

In addition, many girls have iron-deficiency anemia and a high tendency towards eating disorders.

Data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey indicate that approximately 25 percent of American adolescents, between the ages of 12 and 19, are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. Studies show that 20 to 40 percent of American youngsters are physically unfit.

People tend to think of nutrition and weight issues as personal matters that are controlled by the individual and the family. However, adolescents live in an environment that makes it easy to live and be entertained with almost no physical effort.

Adolescents are surrounded by easily available, cheap, attractive, and great-tasting food that is high in sugar and fat and low in nutrients. The places where teens hang out — school, parks, fast food restaurants, concession stands, movie theaters, and malls — offer food choices that are usually high in fat and sodium.

Television viewing has been linked to negative health effects in adolescents, such as obesity, poor body image, violent or aggressive behavior, substance use, sexual activity, and decreased school achievement.

One-third of adolescents rarely eat meals with their families. Family meals have a positive impact on the diets of adolescents. When teens and adults share dinner meals together, there is:

- greater intake of fruits and vegetables and other nutrients, including calcium and iron
- decreased risk for unhealthy weight control practices
- increase in academic performance
- reduced risk of smoking, drinking, or using illegal drugs.

In addition, family meals can facilitate family interaction, communication, and a sense of unity.

Survey responses* from 9th grade students in Edina		1995	1998	2001	2004	MN '04
Alcohol	Answered one or more to "During the last 30 days, on how many occasions have you had any alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, wine coolers, or liquor) to drink?"	na	31%	20%	18%	28%
	Among those who used alcohol in the last 30 days, percent who got alcohol from family members.	na	35%	24%	26%	28%
	Binge drinking (5 or more drinks in a row) in the past 2 weeks.	12%	15%	9%	9%	15%
	Student use of alcohol or drugs is a problem at this school (agree & strongly agree)	68%	49%	70%	46%	62%
	Answered yes to "Do you ever use alcohol or other drugs before school?"	10%	7%	4%	5%	9%
Marijuana & other drugs	During the last 30 days, used marijuana.	na	10%	13%	7%	12%
	Used someone else's prescription drugs in the past 12 months? Percent who answered "yes."	10%	5%	7%	4%	8%
	During the last 12 months, has anyone offered, sold, or given you an illegal drug on school property? Percent who answered "yes."	32%	23%	21%	20%	20%
Tobacco	Smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days.	34%	25%	10%	6%	15%
	Of those who used tobacco in the last 30 days, percent who got tobacco from friends.	na	69%	60%	62%	60%
Healthy Youth Development	Can talk most or some of the time to your mother about your problems?	81%	84%	82%	83%	78%
	Can talk most or some of the time to your father about your problems?	65%	73%	67%	70%	62%
	How many of your teachers are interested in you as a person? (answered most or all)	45%	47%	41%	49%	37%
	Agree or mostly agree that "I usually feel good about myself."	89%	85%	84%	85%	82%
	Answered "Yes, almost more than I could take" to the question, "During the last 30 days, have you felt you were under any stress or pressure?"	13%	16%	21%	19%	14%
	Students who reported they mostly agree or agree feeling that their life is not very useful.	10%	14%	17%	15%	19%
	Students who reported they feel adults in the community care about them.	na	na	31%	37%	29%
Physical Activity	Active 5 or more days of last week for 30 minutes a day (moderate activity).	na	58%	48%	59%	53%
	Spent 11 or more hours in a typical school week playing sports on a school team.	17%	22%	20%	17%	20%
	Spent 11 or more hours in a typical school week watching TV or videos (not including playing video or computer games).	15%	14%	16%	16%	22%
Nutrition	Had 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables yesterday.	na	23%	19%	15%	15%
	Had no milk yesterday (girls only).	na	na	22%	26%	24%
	During the last year, smoked cigarettes to control weight (girls only).	na	12%	4%	2%	7%
	Students who used unhealthy methods to lose weight (e.g., fasting, cigarettes, diet pills, vomit, laxatives).	na	25%	21%	21%	30%
	At the present time, do you think you are overweight? Percent who answered "yes."	19%	16%	17%	17%	22%
Sex	Received most of your information about sex from friends.	na	68%	83%	73%	68%
	Have you ever had sexual intercourse ("gone all the way")?	16%	11%	10%	11%	19%
Violence	Answered yes to, "Has any adult in your household hit you so hard that you had marks or were afraid of that person?"	8%	9%	7%	7%	12%
	Students who believe illegal gang activity is a problem at school (Agree or strongly agree)	7%	7%	9%	8%	20%
	During the last 12 months, have you been pushed, shoved, or grabbed on school property? Percent who answered "yes."	36%	42%	42%	38%	45%



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## WHAT YOU CAN DO

Be a role model.

Stay involved in your child's life. Teens are less likely to smoke or use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs when they feel parents are involved in their lives.

Be active and live a healthy lifestyle. Invite your children to walk, bike, or do other activities with you.

Limit the number of hours your children spend on sedentary activities such as watching TV and playing video/computer games.

Make it a habit to greet your children when they arrive home at night. If they are aware that you're waiting for them when they get home, they can more easily refuse alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

Discuss with your children ways to avoid drinking in difficult situations. Set a good example with your own alcohol use and response to underage drinking.

Be aware of your children's plans and whereabouts. Establish rules and responsibilities about underage drinking and drug use, curfew, and other behaviors. Follow through with consequences if rules are broken.

Know your child's friends' parents; discuss common expectations and help each other maintain them.

Adults often fear giving young people responsibility, so we often deprive them of it. Adults need to learn how to react to those one or two youth who do not want responsibility without punishing and marginalizing the whole youth population.

Get involved. Stay involved.

## WHAT TRI-CITY PARTNERS HAS DONE

Tri-City Partners for Healthy Youth and Communities (TCP) is a collaboration of individuals working together to promote health, reduce risks, and build assets in our youth and communities.

Formed in 1995 as part of a tobacco-grant initiative, Tri-City Partners has increased its focus area and membership. Along with public health/health promotion staff, TCP has a Steering Committee consisting of Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield community members representing the faith community, parents, law enforcement, youth service organizations, city governments, youth, business, media, school districts, and other citizens.

In addition, action groups exist which focus on specific high risk behaviors such as tobacco use and other chemical use. Each action group works to create healthy environments for youth to grow.

Tri-City Partners works to reduce youth risk behaviors and increase developmental assets. Some examples of the risk reduction initiatives include:

"Let's Talk Conversation Starter Tins," a communication tool for parents and other adults to begin conversations with youth.

"Together We Stand," a year-round education campaign, reaches out to adults and community members with information, resources, and prevention messages on teen alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.

*Walkable Communities* is an initiative to get communities redesigned for pedestrian traffic, which promotes a healthy lifestyle for all ages.

Policy work in such areas as increasing health snacks and beverages choices for youth; tobacco-free parks and recreation, tobacco-free restaurants and bars; increasing the amount of physical activity within the school day.

**Youth Health Information Cards** are a publication of Bloomington Public Health, in collaboration with Tri-City Partners for Healthy Youth and Communities. Information in the publication includes data from the 1995, 1998, 2001, and 2004 Minnesota Student Surveys.

Tri-City Partners for Healthy Youth and Communities focus areas are alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs, physical activity & nutrition, teen pregnancy prevention, and healthy youth development.

For more information call 952-563-8900 or go online at [www.tricitypartners.org](http://www.tricitypartners.org).

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