

# *NEBRASKA ADOLESCENTS*

The Results of the 2007  
Youth Risk Behavior Survey of  
Nebraska Public High School  
Students (Grades 9-12)

THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

# Youth Risk Behavior Survey 2007 Highlights

Of the 1,201 Nebraska high school students who completed this survey . . .



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**Due to the low student response rate of the 2007 YRBS,  
these results are representative of only those students who  
completed the questionnaire and not of students statewide.**

# NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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Dear Nebraskans:

Our children's health is at the core of the health of Nebraska. When our children's health is threatened, it is the responsibility of adults—parents, educators, and community leaders—to take action. The choices made by young people can affect them throughout their lifetimes. The Nebraska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) shows that many choices young people make are not only risky, but adversely affect themselves, their families, and their communities. These choices also affect their physical well-being and can impact their ability to learn and grow into successful, responsible adults.

YRBS results estimate the levels of risky behaviors among young people in a number of areas, including: intentional and unintentional injuries, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behavior, nutrition, and physical activity. These behaviors can cause or contribute to the greatest number of premature deaths and disabilities.

The results of past surveys have been used to generate support for health promotion initiatives, to plan public health and educational programs, to generate funding for state and local programs, and to assist community leaders and parents in developing ways to help young people.

Over time these results indicate that we are making strides in some areas and falling behind in others:

- Youth tobacco use rates are declining, yet tobacco use continues to be the principal cause of premature death in our society.
- More young people die in motor vehicle accidents than from any other cause. Too many drink. Too many drink and drive. Too many are passengers in vehicles where the driver has been drinking. And, too many do not use their seatbelts.
- More students carry a weapon now than at any time in the recent past.
- A number of young people are sexually active. Sexual activity increases the risks of sexually transmitted diseases and/or an undesired pregnancy.
- Too many young people drink more than a quart of soda a day, watch too much TV, and don't engage in enough physical activity.

We encourage you to review this report, talk to your children about the importance of making healthy choices, and support and become involved in state and local community efforts to make our communities healthier and safer for our young people and people of all ages.

Sincerely,

Marge Harouff, Ed.D  
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Nebraska Department of Education

Joann Schaefer, MD  
Chief Medical Officer  
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# Nebraska Adolescents: Their Risks of Illness, Disability and Premature Death

This report is produced every other year to assist the Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services to monitor and track trends in Nebraska youth health risk behaviors. It is based on the self-reported health behaviors of a random sample of 1,201 Nebraska youth, in grades 9–12, enrolled in a sample of public schools in the spring of 2007.

## Background

To meet the nation's health goals for the year 2010, people need to behave in ways that reduce their personal health risks. For young people, reducing risky behaviors will reap lifelong benefits. This report provides data for planning programs to help young people reduce their health-related risks.

In 1990, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) initiated a program of national and state surveys to provide estimates of behaviors related to poor health, disability, and premature death among young people. These surveys are known as the Youth Risk Behavior Surveys (YRBS). The YRBS is part of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, established by the CDC, and has been completed nine times in Nebraska: 1991, 1993, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, and 2007.

## The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

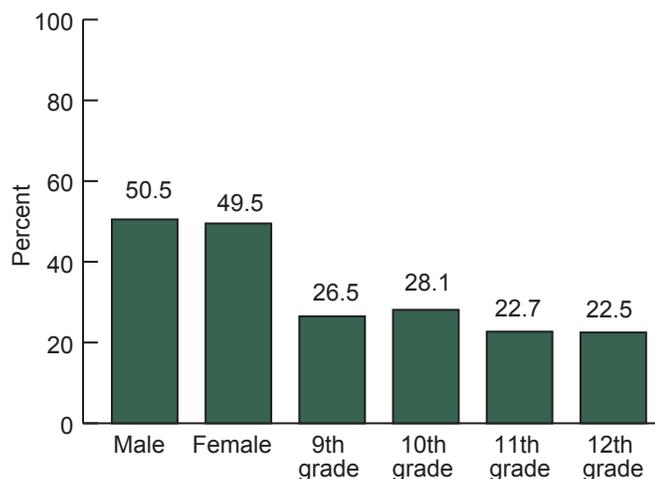
The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System was established and is managed by the Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at the CDC.

Priority health-risk behaviors are assessed in six areas:

- Behaviors that result in unintentional and intentional injuries
- Tobacco use
- Alcohol and other drug use
- Sexual behaviors that result in HIV infection, other sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies
- Dietary behaviors
- Physical activity

YRBS results are used by state and local health and education agencies to: 1) monitor progress toward the national health goals; 2) focus comprehensive school health education, teacher training, and instructional programs; 3) support comprehensive school health programs; and 4) encourage community and parental understanding of the health challenges faced by schools and their teachers.

### Demographic Characteristics of the 2007 Nebraska Youth Risk Behavior Survey Sample\*



\*0.2% of students did not indicate grade

### The Nebraska 2007 YRBS

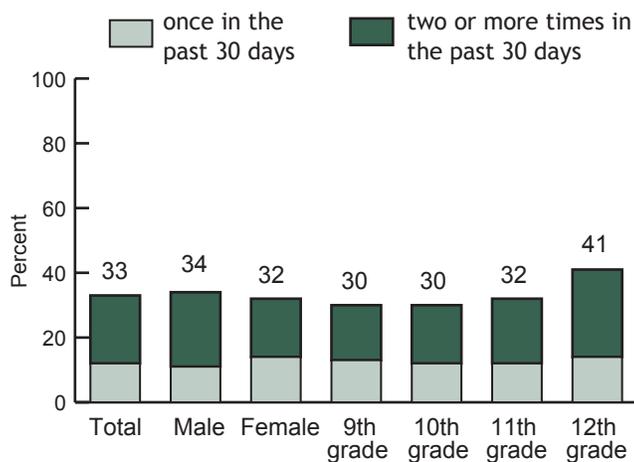
In the spring of 2007, 65 schools with 9-12 grade students were randomly selected from all Nebraska public schools with students in these grades. Fifty-two percent of these schools agreed to participate in the YRBS, with 68% of the students participating, resulting in an overall response rate of 36%. Due to the low response rates, these results are representative of only those students who completed the questionnaire and not of students statewide.

Students completed a self-administered, anonymous, 96-item questionnaire. Survey procedures were designed to protect the privacy of students by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. Local parental permission procedures were followed before survey administration.

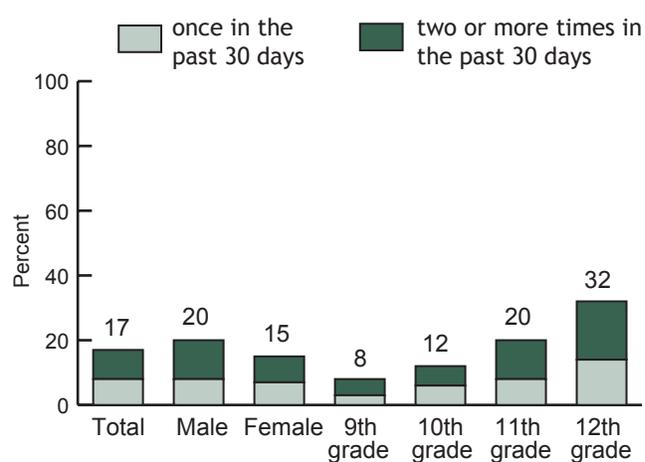
## Alcohol and Motor Vehicle Crashes ...

- ◆ In Nebraska in 2007, 33% of participating high school students had ridden in a vehicle in the previous 30 days driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol; 21% had done so on two or more occasions.
- ◆ In the United States in 2007, among high school students 29% had ridden in a car in the previous 30 days with a driver who had been drinking.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Nebraska's young people, on average, are more likely to ride in a car driven by a driver who had been drinking than young people in the rest of the country.

Percentage of students who rode in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol

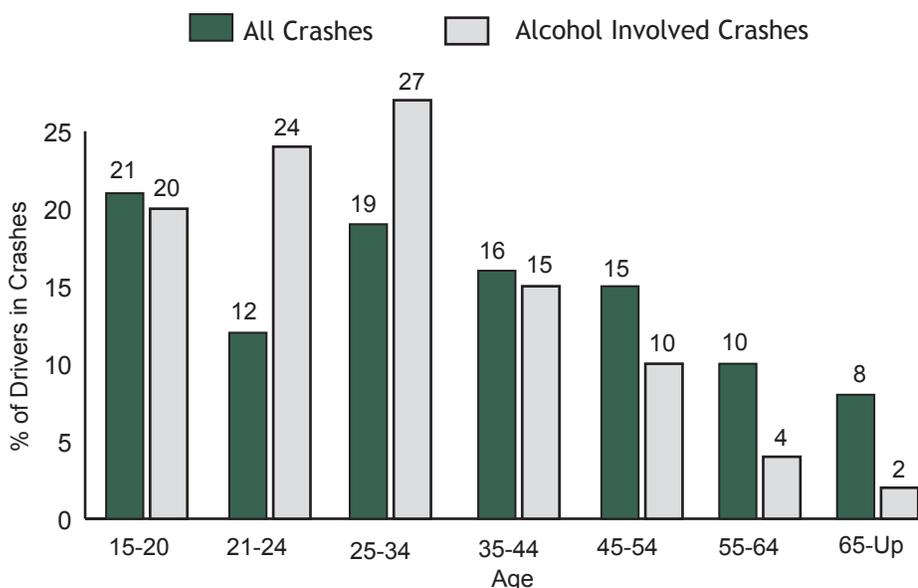


Percentage of students who drove a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol



## Alcohol, Automobiles and Inexperience: A Fatal Mix

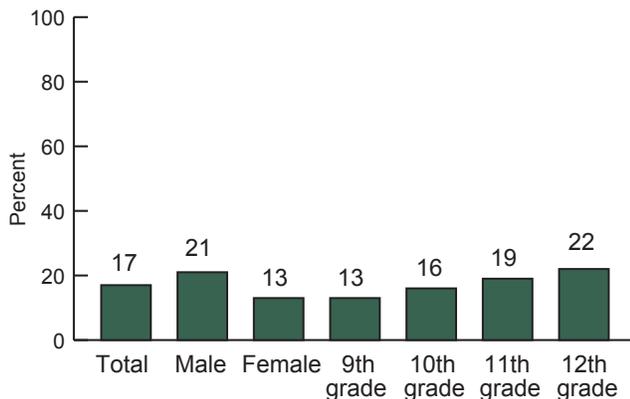
In Nebraska, alcohol use is illegal for persons under age 21. Yet in 2007 20% of all alcohol-related crashes involved drivers aged 15 to 20 years. Drivers aged 21 to 24 are the most over represented in alcohol-involved crashes, being involved in 24% of alcohol-related crashes but only 12% of all crashes.<sup>2</sup>



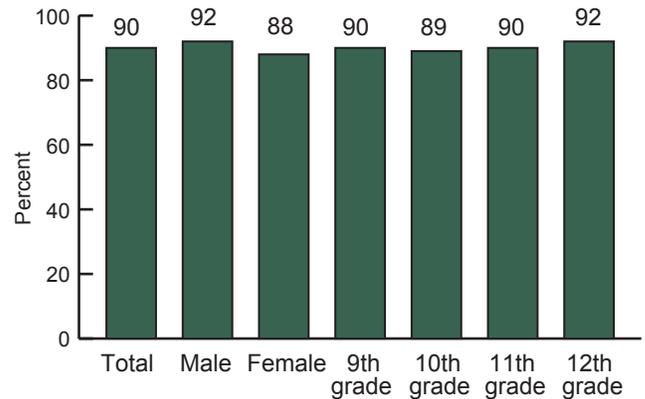
## Unintentional Injuries ...

- ◆ Deaths due to injuries made up 6% of total deaths to all Nebraskans for the years 2001-2005. However, among 14-19 year olds, 78% of all deaths were due to injuries.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ Of all injury deaths to 14-19 year olds in Nebraska, 59% were due to motor-vehicle crashes, 22% were due to suicide, 13% were due to other causes of injury, and 6% were homicide.<sup>3</sup>
- ◆ In Nebraska in 2007, 90% of high school students never or rarely wore a helmet when riding a bike.

Percentage of students who never or rarely wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else



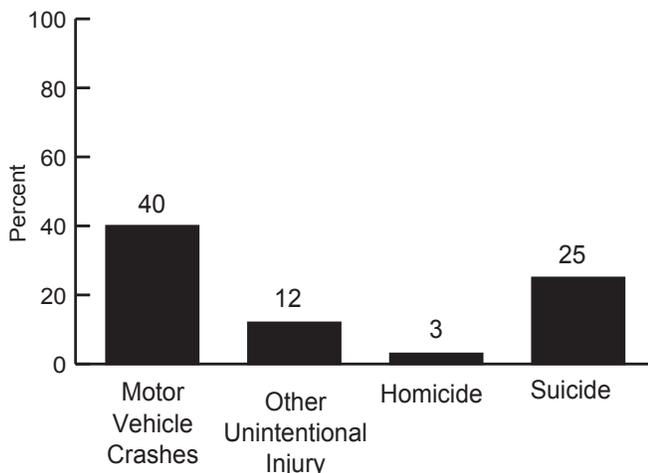
Among students who rode a bicycle during the past 12 months, the percentage who never or rarely wore a helmet



**The single most effective way to reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle crashes is to wear seat belts at all times when riding in or driving a vehicle.**

### Deaths Among 14-19 Year Olds

Injury and violence were the leading cause of death among Nebraskans aged 14-19 in 2005.<sup>4</sup>



### Nebraska Teen Driver Facts<sup>5</sup>

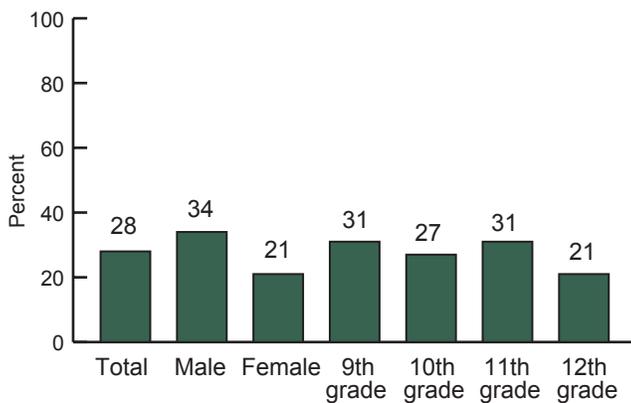
- ◆ Licensed drivers 16 to 19 years of age represent 7% of all licensed drivers (includes all LPD, SCP and POP permits)
- ◆ 39% of teen drivers involved in fatal and serious injury crashes were not using their safety belts
- ◆ 2007 Nebraska teen drivers were involved in:
  - ◆ 24% of all reported crashes
  - ◆ 29% of all crashes between 9:00 p.m. and midnight
  - ◆ 20% of all crashes between midnight and 3:00 a.m.
  - ◆ 33% of all crashes involving cell phone distraction
  - ◆ 43% of crashes where exceeding the speed limit was the major cause

# Violence ...

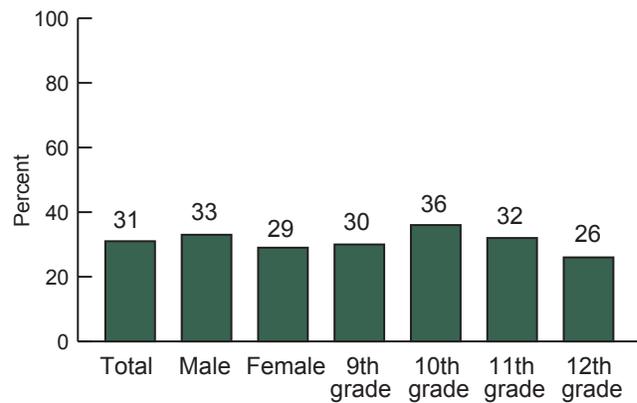
- ◆ *There are three types of violence: 1) violence against another person as in fights and assaults; 2) violence against oneself, as in suicide; and 3) violence against property, as in vandalism.*
- ◆ *Males are most at risk of violence against another person; females are most at risk for violence against oneself.*

## Physical Fights and Vandalism

Percentage of students who were involved in a physical fight during the past 12 months



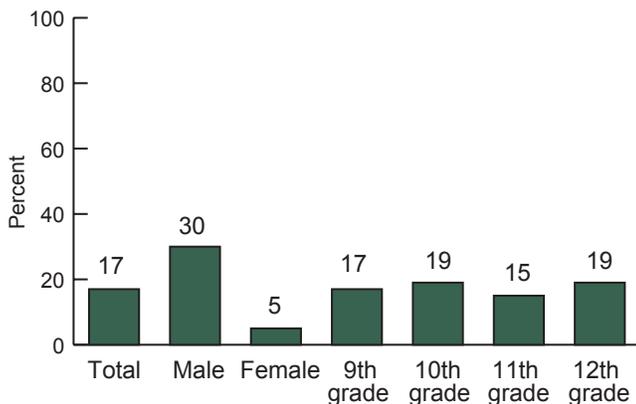
Percentage of students who had property, such as their car, clothing, or books stolen or damaged on school property during the past 12 months



## Weapons and High School Students

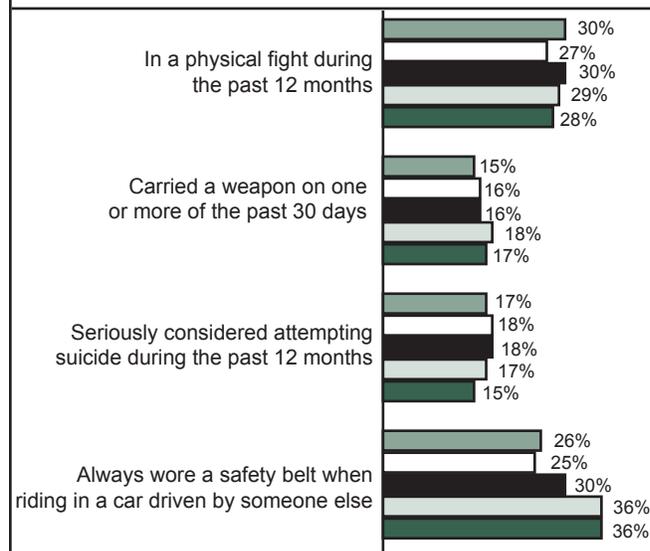
Adolescent homicides are more common in the U.S. than in any other developed country in the world. About nine out of every ten homicide victims are killed by a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club.<sup>8</sup>

Percentage of students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on one or more of the past 30 days



## TRENDS...

1999\* 2001\* 2003 2005 2007\*



\*Data was not weighted to represent all students statewide.

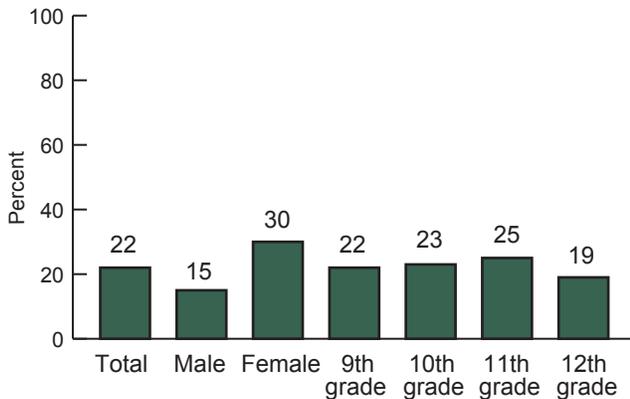
◆ *In Nebraska in 2007 . . .*

- *34% of male high school students were involved in a physical fight during the previous 12 months and 33% reported that they had personal property stolen or damaged while at school.*
- *15% of high school boys and 30% of high school girls reported that during the previous year they felt so sad or helpless almost every day for two weeks or more that they stopped doing some of their usual activities.*

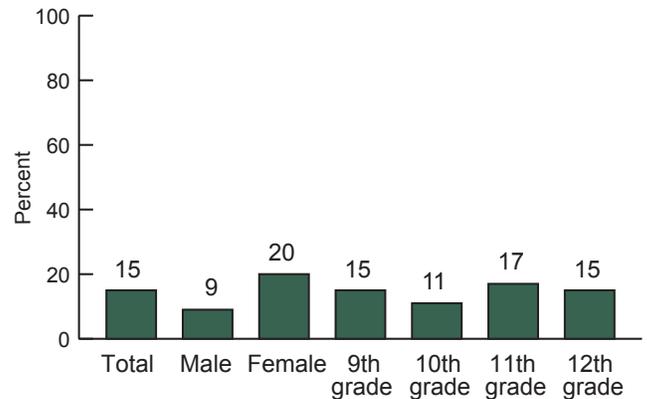
**Suicide is violence against oneself . . .**

**Percentage of students who . . .**

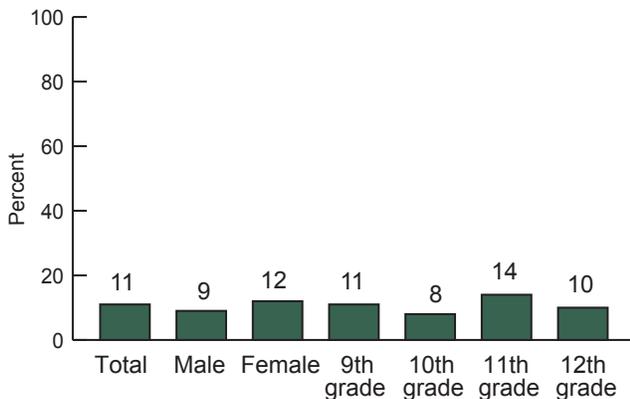
Felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing some usual activities during the past 12 months



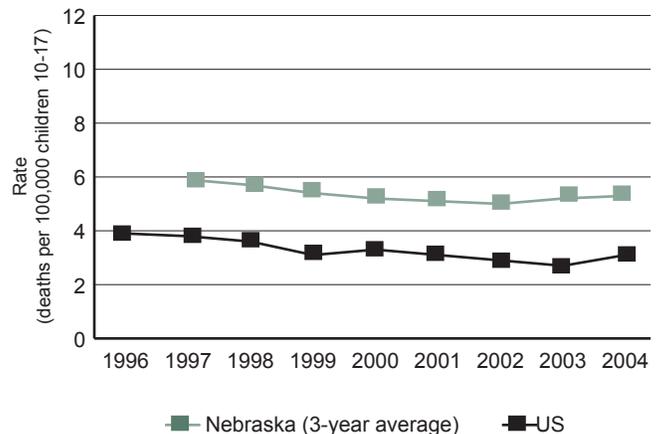
Seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months



Made a plan about how they would attempt suicide during the past 12 months



**Suicide Rates, Children Ages 10-17  
US and Nebraska, 1996-2004<sup>6</sup>**

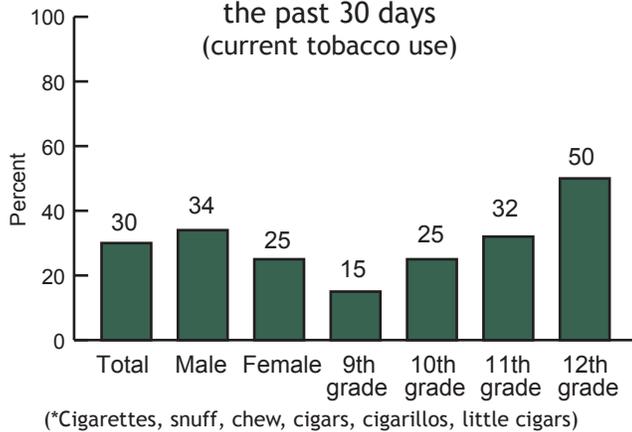


Nebraska rates are three year average. Nebraska rates are significantly higher than US rates for 1999 and 2002-2004.

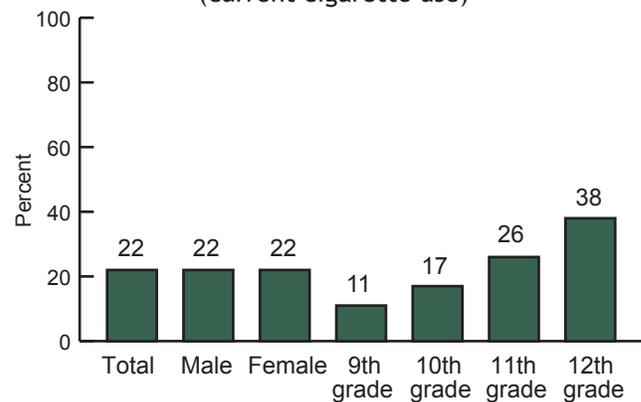
# Tobacco—It Kills The Most People ...

- ◆ *One third of Nebraska high school males used some form of tobacco in the last 30 days, as did one quarter of the females.*
- ◆ *All tobacco products, including chew; cigars; and cigarettes, damage health.*
- ◆ *Tobacco-related disease, disability and death is 100% preventable.*

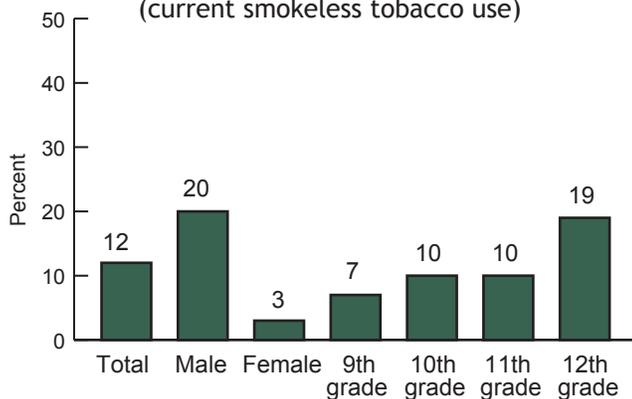
Percentage of students who used any form of tobacco\* one or more times during the past 30 days (current tobacco use)



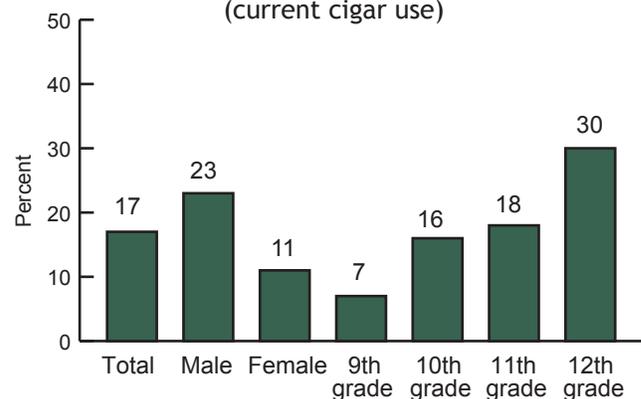
Percentage of students who smoked cigarettes one or more times during the past 30 days (current cigarette use)



Percentage of students who used chewing tobacco or snuff on one or more of the past 30 days (current smokeless tobacco use)



Percentage of students who smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on one or more of the past 30 days (current cigar use)

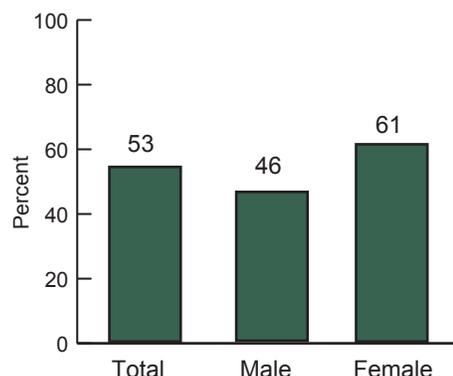


- ◆ *More than half of Nebraska high school smokers have tried to quit at least once in the past 12 months.*
- ◆ *The smoking rates among high school students, which had been in decline for over five years, has stalled in 2007.*

### How Smokers Usually Get Their Cigarettes . . .

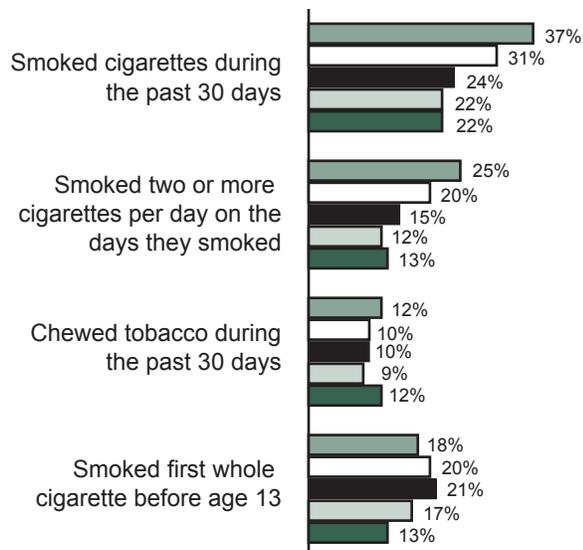
- 30% Purchase
- 17% Get someone else to buy
- 24% Borrow
- 29% Others

Percentage of students who were current smokers and tried to quit smoking at least once during the past 12 months



### TRENDS...

1999\* 2001\* 2003  
2005 2007\*



### Youth Initiation

Year	Smoked Cigarettes Before Age 13	Ever Tried Cigarettes
2001*	18%	62%
2003	21%	60%
2005	17%	53%
2007*	13%	53%

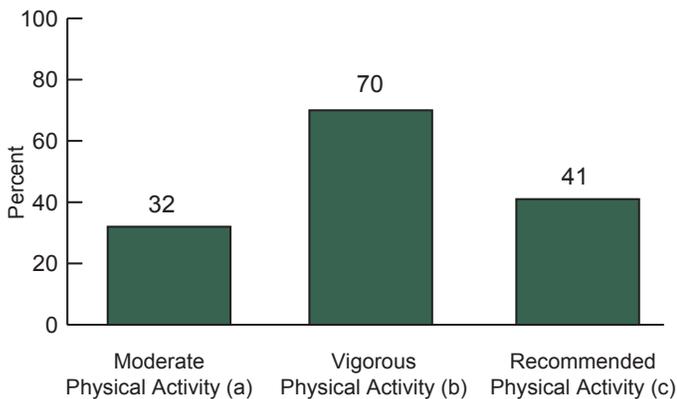
\*Data was not weighted to represent all students statewide

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# Physical Activity ...

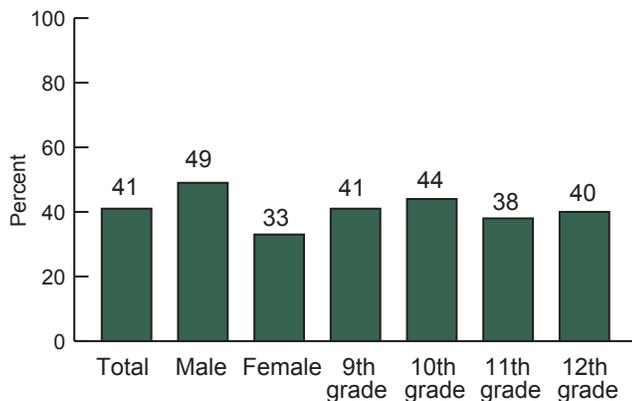
- ◆ *Physical activity has numerous health benefits including less risk of disease; healthier bones, muscles, and joints; better weight control; and less anxiety and depression ... yet in 2007, nearly 60% of Nebraska high school students failed to participate in 60 or more minutes of physical activity on 5 or more days per week (the recommended amount of physical activity for youth).*

Percentage of students who participated in sufficient levels of the following physical activities



- (a) Participated in moderate physical activity for 30 or more minutes on 5 or more of the past 7 days
- (b) Participated in vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes on 3 or more of the past 7 days
- (c) Participated in physical activity for 60 or more minutes on 5 or more of the past 7 days

Percentage of students who participated in physical activity for 60+ minutes on 5 or more of the past 7 days



## How Much Is Enough?

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005<sup>7</sup>, youth should engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. To maximize health, these 60 minutes should be a combination of vigorous, moderate, and strengthening/flexibility exercises.

- ◆ In 2007, only 41% of responding Nebraska students engaged in physical activity for 60 or more minutes on 5 or more of the past 7 days.

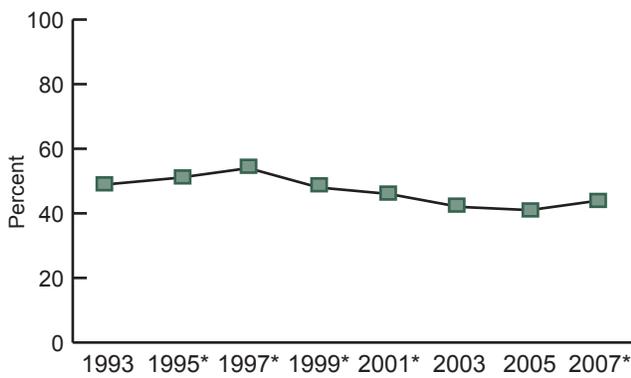
## Physical Activity Among Nebraska High School Students: In 2007 ...

- ◆ Among students who completed the survey, males were 1.5 times more likely than females to engage in the recommended amount of physical activity (60 or more minutes per day on five or more days per week).
- ◆ Among students who completed the survey, 9th graders were 1.4 times more likely than 12th graders to attend physical education class daily and exercise for more than 20 minutes during an average class.
- ◆ Among students who completed the survey, 9th graders were 1.4 times more likely than 12th graders to have participated on two or more sports teams during the past year.

- ◆ Participation on a sports team can promote better health and can teach youth important life skills ... yet in 2007, just 2 in every 5 Nebraska high school students (42%) participated on two or more sports teams during the past 12 months, a decline from roughly 50% observed in the mid 1990's.
- ◆ Physical Education classes teach youth (especially those not involved in organized athletics) the skills necessary to engage in lifelong physical activity ... yet in 2007, only 1 in every 3 of the high school students completing the survey attended PE daily and engaged in physical activity for more than 20 minutes during class.

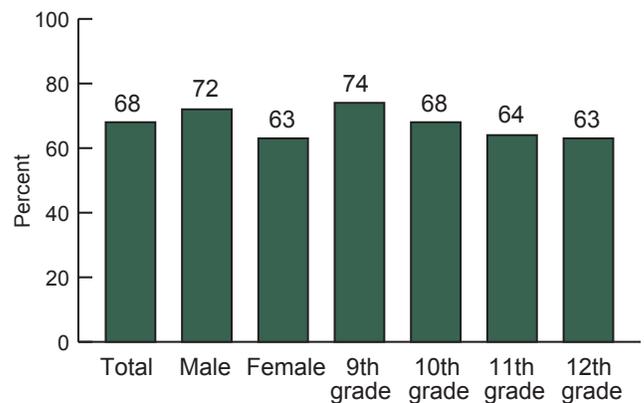
### Trends in Sports Team Participation...

Percentage of students who participated on 2 or more sports teams during the past 12 months\*

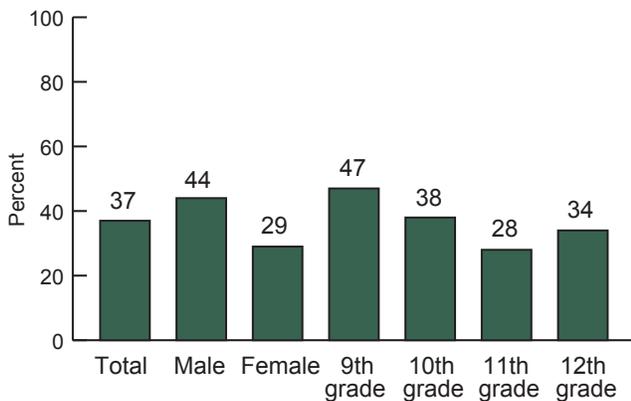


\*Data was not weighted to represent all students statewide

Percentage of students who played on one or more sports teams during the past 12 months



Percentage of students who attend PE class daily and exercise for more than 20 minutes during an average PE class (Quality daily PE)



#### Playing For Fun

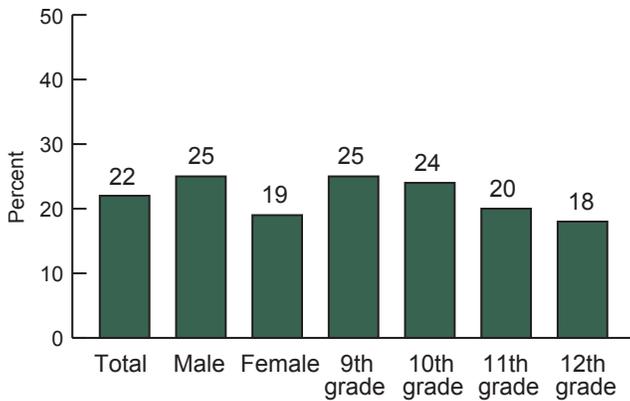
Not long ago kids played outdoors—just for the fun of it. Today, between time spent on the computer and competitive sports teams, "just for fun" pick-up games of basketball, baseball, soccer and such are becoming a thing of the past. As a result, unless it's an organized team sport, high school students typically do not participate in physical activities. The older a student gets, the opportunities to participate on a sports team decrease. The challenge is to promote physical activity as a fun and healthy lifestyle, rather than limiting a student's physical activity level to competitive play or activity.

## Sedentary Behaviors ...

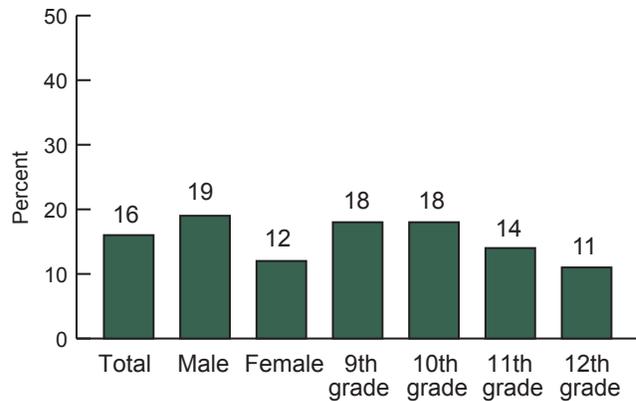
- ◆ *In 2007, more than a quarter of Nebraska high school students spent three or more hours during an average school day watching television.*
- ◆ *Excessive time spent engaging in electronic sedentary behavior takes away opportunities for physical activity and academics, and often promotes unhealthy eating.*

### TV and Computers—The Other Exercise

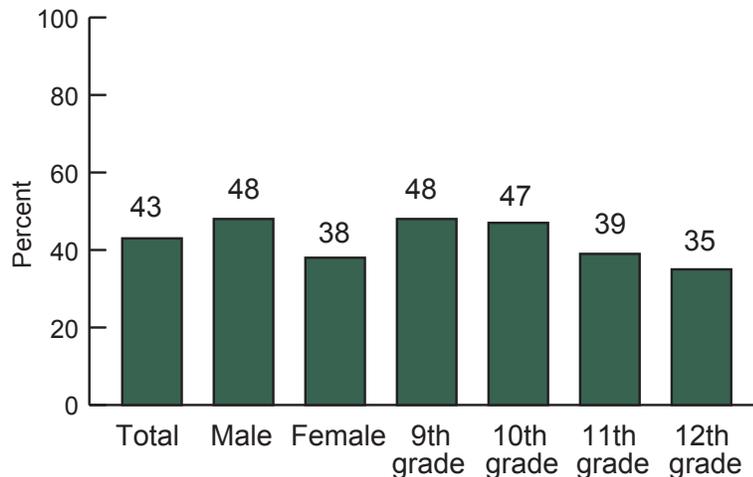
Percentage of students who watched three or more hours of TV on an average school day



Percentage of students who played video or computer games or used the computer for something not school work related three or more hours on an average school day



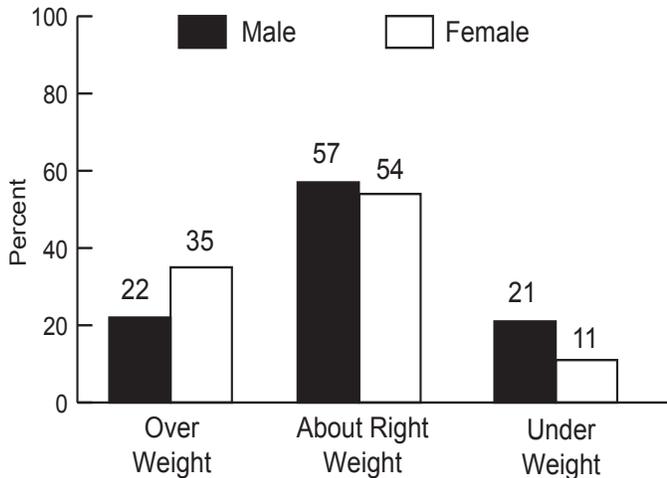
Percentage of students who watched TV, played video or computer games, or used the computer for something that was not school work three or more hours on an average school day



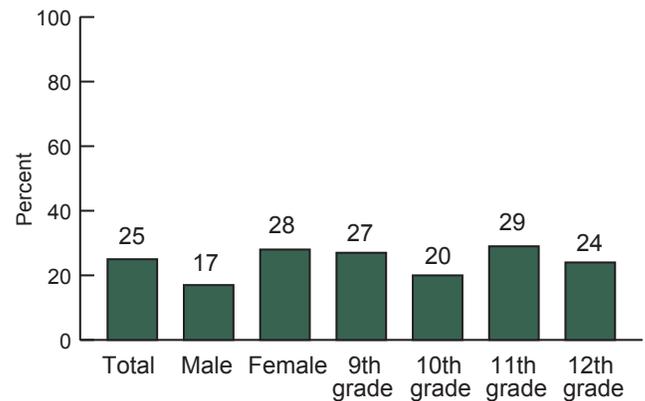
# Overweight, Dieting, and Eating Disorders ...

- ◆ *The desire to lose weight appears to be much more common among high school females in Nebraska, where 61% reported that they were currently trying to lose weight in 2007, compared to 27% of males.*
- ◆ *Among Nebraska high school students trying to lose weight in 2007, 1 in every 4 used a high risk weight loss method (fasting, supplements without doctors advice, or vomiting/laxatives use) to try and lose weight during the past 30 days.*

**How Students Describe Their Weight**

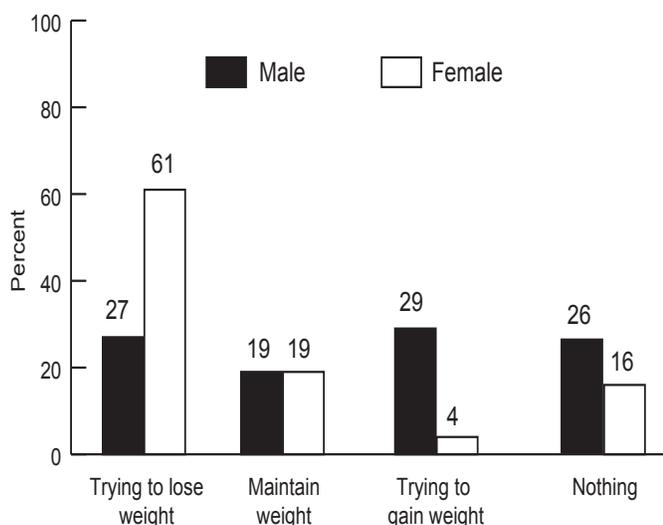


Among students that are currently trying to lose weight, percentage that used one or more high-risk weight loss methods\* to try and lose weight



\* Fasted for 24 hours or more, took diet pills or supplements without a doctor's advice, vomited, or used laxatives during the past 30 days.

**What Students Are Doing About Their Weight**



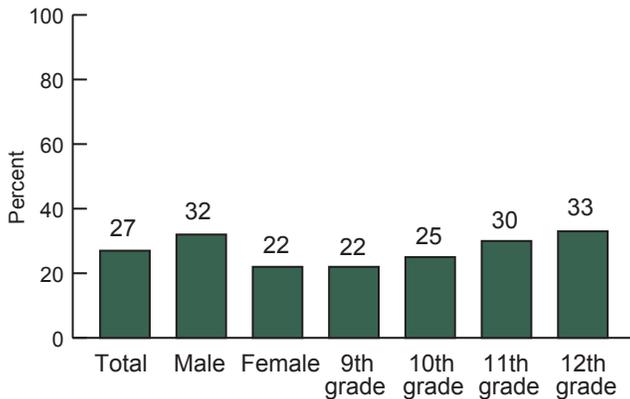
**Methods used to lose weight during the past 30 days among students who are trying to lose weight**

Method	Males	Females
Exercise	86%	90%
Eat less food, fewer calories, low-fat food	54%	74%
Go without eating for 24 or more hours	15%	21%
Take diet pills, powders, or liquids without doctor's advice	7%	9%
Vomit or take laxatives	6%	10%

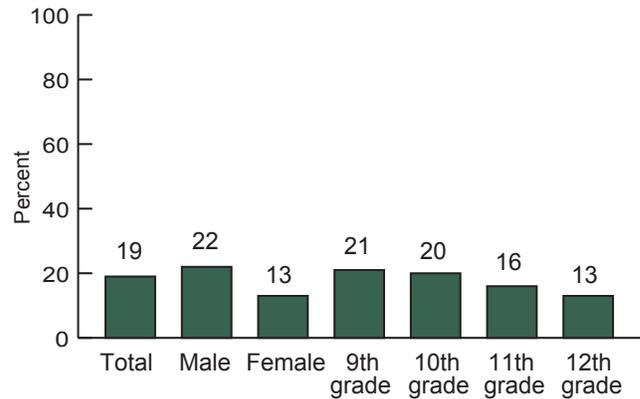
## Nutrition ...

- ◆ *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans<sup>7</sup> recommend limiting the consumption of sugar ... yet in 2007, one third of Nebraska high school students drank 12 or more ounces of soda per day, and among those who drank soda, half drank only regular (non-diet) soda.*
- ◆ *Youth aged 9 and older are encouraged to consume three servings of fat-free or reduced fat dairy products every day ... yet in 2007, less than 1 in every 5 Nebraska high school students drank an average of three or more glasses of milk per day.*

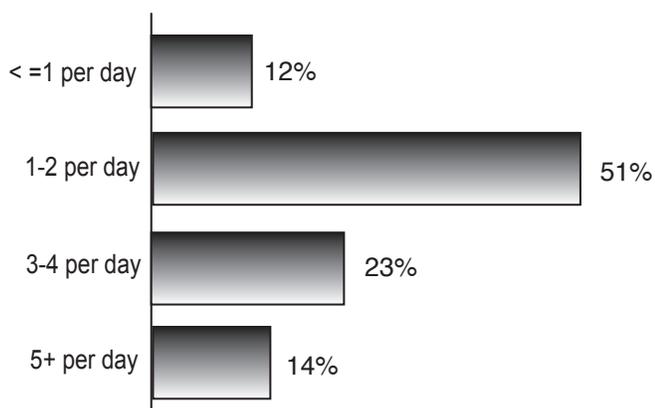
Percentage of students who drank a can, bottle, or glass of soda or pop one or more times **per day** during the past 7 days



Percentage of students who drank three or more glasses of milk **per day** during the past seven days (regular milk consumption)



### Daily Fruit and Vegetable Consumption Among Nebraska High School Students\*



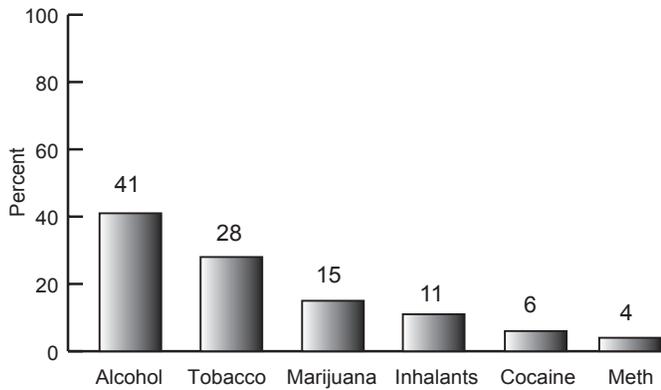
\*Average number of times per day that fruits and vegetables were eaten during the past 7 days

- ◆ Dairy products are important for maximizing bone growth and protecting against future risk of osteoporosis, especially in females. In 2007, male students were 1.7 times more likely than female students to drink an average of three or more glasses of milk per day.
- ◆ The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that youth aged 14-18 consume seven to nine servings of fruits and vegetables per day. In 2007, sixty-three percent of students ate fruits and vegetables two or fewer times per day.

# Drug Use ...

- ◆ Alcohol and tobacco and marijuana are the drugs of choice of Nebraska's high school students.
- ◆ Since 2003, the percentage of students using alcohol and tobacco has declined.
- ◆ Marijuana use today is approximately the same as in 1999\*.

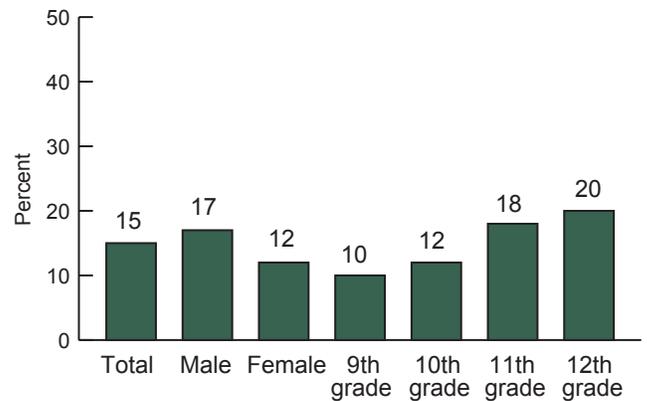
## Percentage of students using ...



Data for alcohol, tobacco (any form), and marijuana use represents the percentage of students who used a substance at least once in the past 30 days. Inhalants, cocaine, and meth use percentages represent lifetime use.

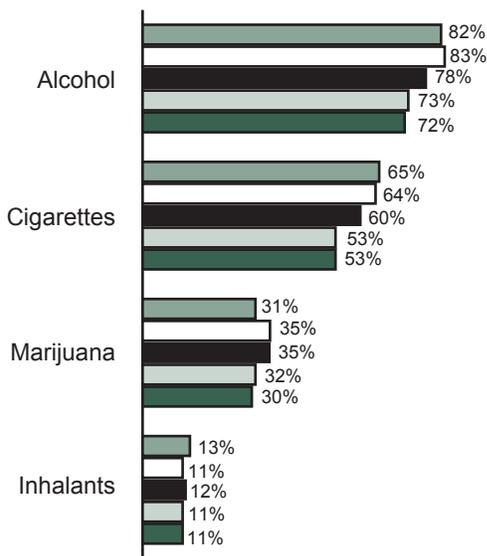
Inhalants included glue, the contents of aerosol cans, paints, sprays, and motor fuels that are inhaled. Cocaine included powder, crack and freebase. Meth refers to methamphetamines (also called speed, crystal, crank, or ice).

Percentage of students who used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days

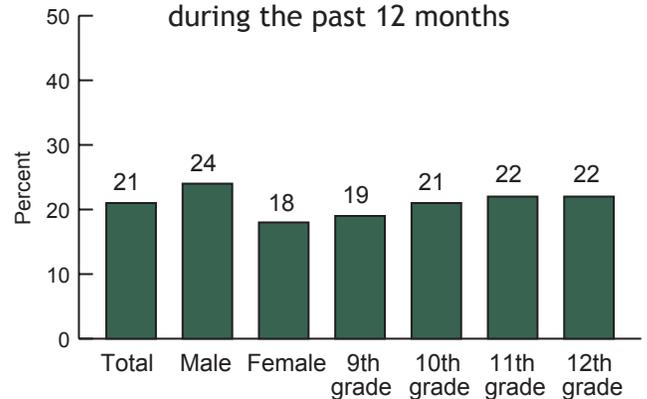


## TRENDS IN LIFETIME USE ...

Legend: 1999\* (lightest), 2001\* (light), 2003 (dark), 2005 (medium), 2007\* (darkest)



Percentage of students offered, sold or given an illegal drug by someone on school property during the past 12 months

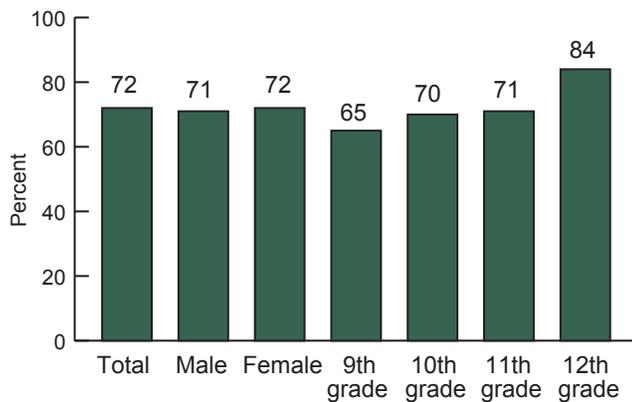


\*Data was not weighted to represent all students statewide.

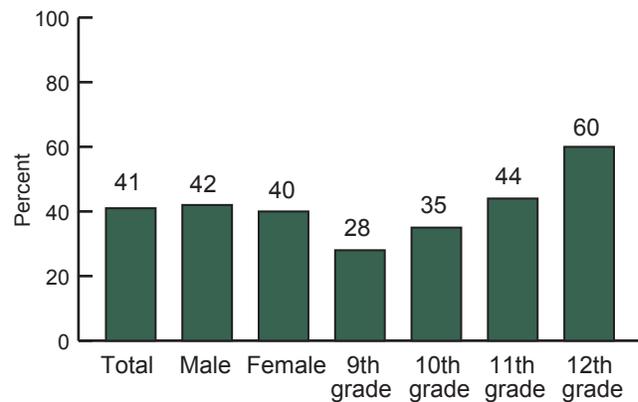
# Alcohol—The Drug That Kills Adolescents Most Often

- ◆ *People who begin drinking before age 15 are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than those who begin at age 21.<sup>9</sup>*
- ◆ *Nearly one in every three Nebraska high school students was a binge drinker in the past 30 days.*
- ◆ *Alcohol abuse is the third leading cause of preventable death in the USA and is a factor in 41% of all deaths in motor vehicle crashes.<sup>10</sup>*

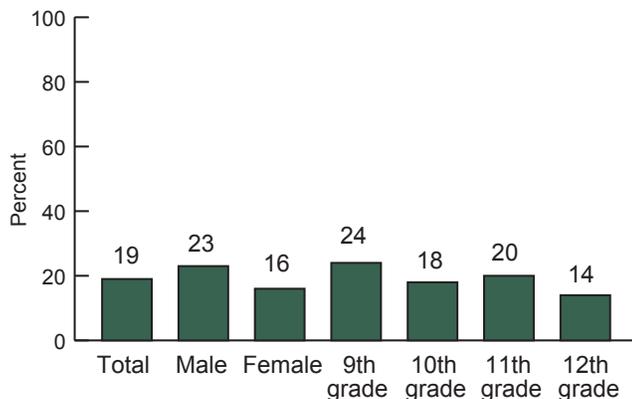
Percentage of students who have had at least one drink of alcohol during their lifetime (lifetime alcohol use)



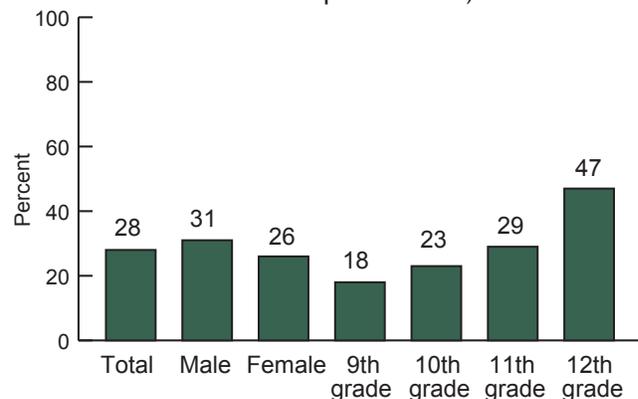
Percentage of students who have had at least one drink of alcohol on one or more of the past 30 days (current alcohol use)



Percentage of students who had their first drink of alcohol, other than a few sips, before the age of 13

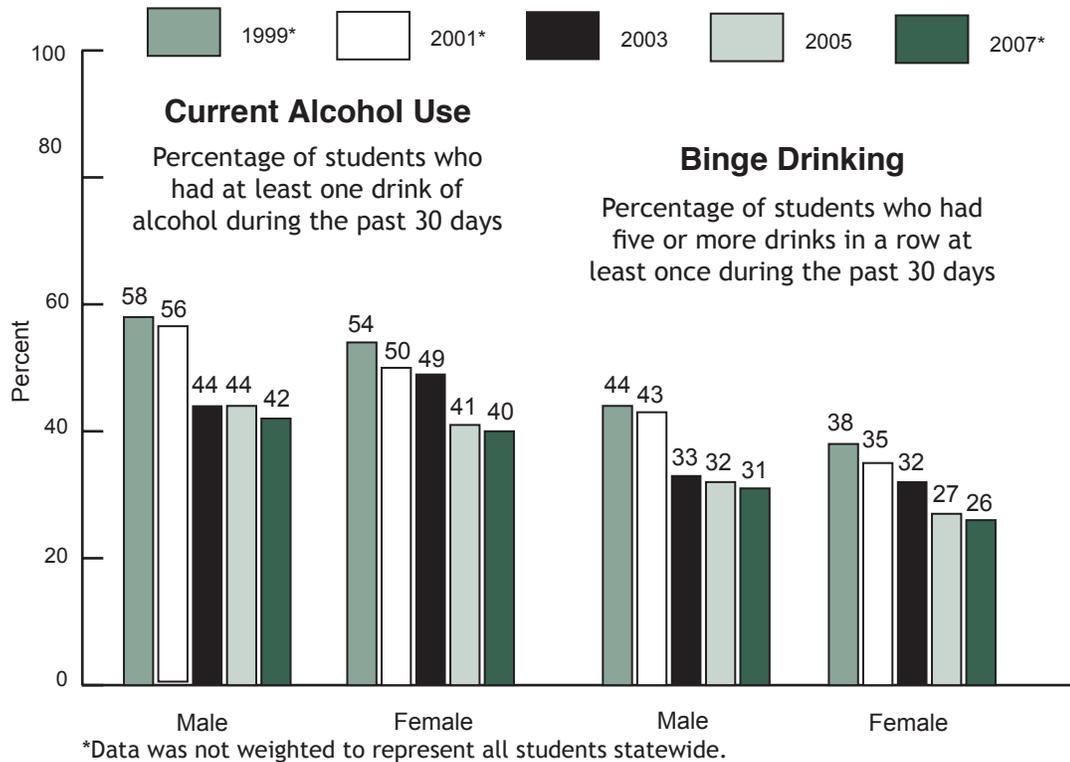


Percentage of students who engaged in binge drinking during the past 30 days (Five plus drinks in a row within a couple of hours)

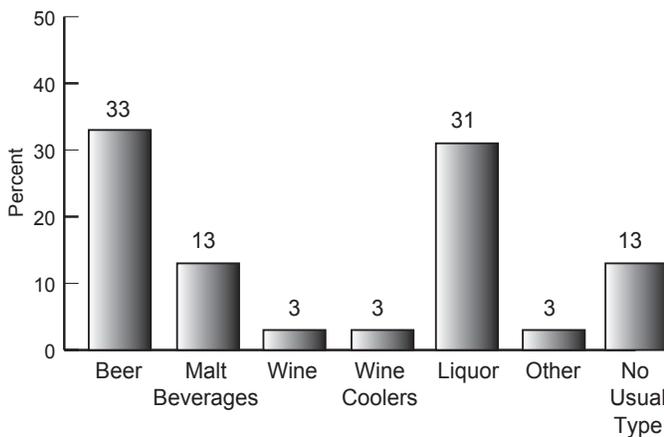


- ◆ Lifetime alcohol dependence declined from more than 40% among individuals who started drinking at age 14 years or younger, to about 10% among those who started drinking at age 20 years or older.<sup>11</sup>
- ◆ Eighty percent of teenagers do not know that a 12 oz. can of beer has the same amount of alcohol as a shot of whiskey; similarly, 55% do not know that a 5 oz. glass of wine and a 12 oz. can of beer have the same amount of alcohol.<sup>12</sup>

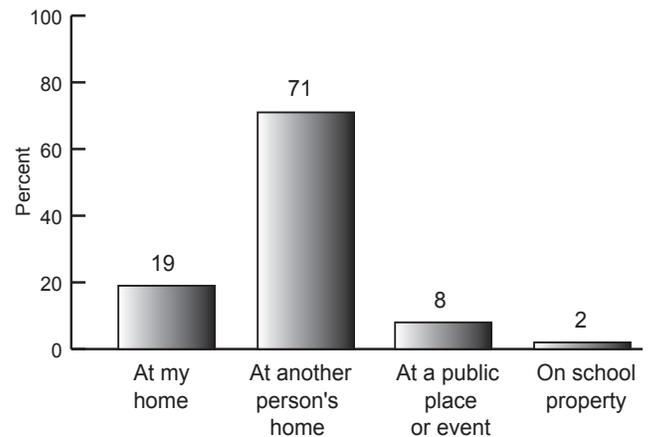
## What's Happening Over Time?



Among students who drank alcohol during the past 30 days, the type of alcohol they most commonly drank



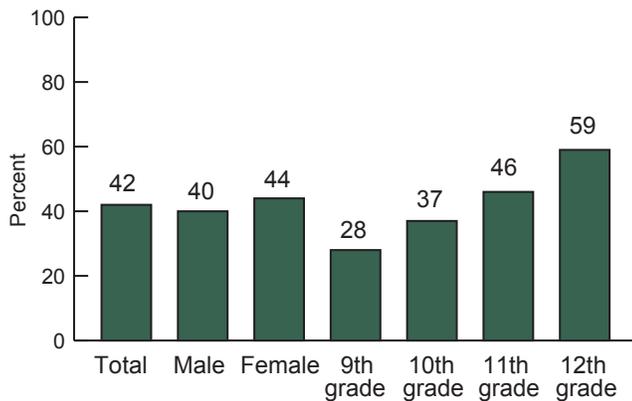
Among students who drank alcohol during the past 30 days, the places where they usually drank alcohol



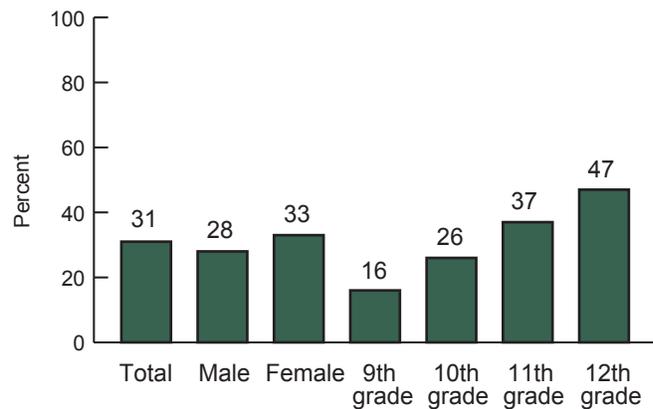
# Sexual Behavior and HIV/AIDS ...

- ◆ *In the United States there are approximately 19 million new people infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) each year. Almost half are among youth aged 15-24 years.<sup>13</sup>*
- ◆ *Abstinence from vaginal and anal intercourse is the only 100% effective way to prevent HIV other STD's and pregnancy.*

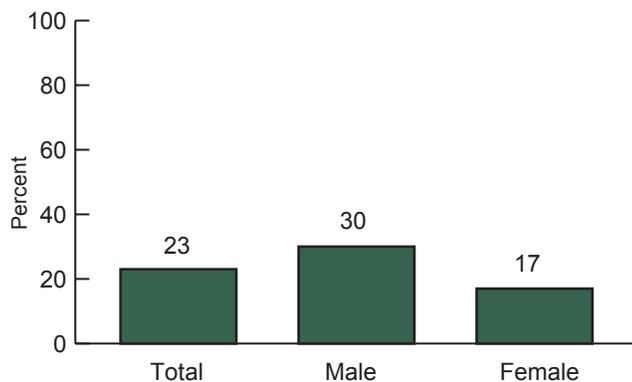
Percentage of students who ever had sexual intercourse



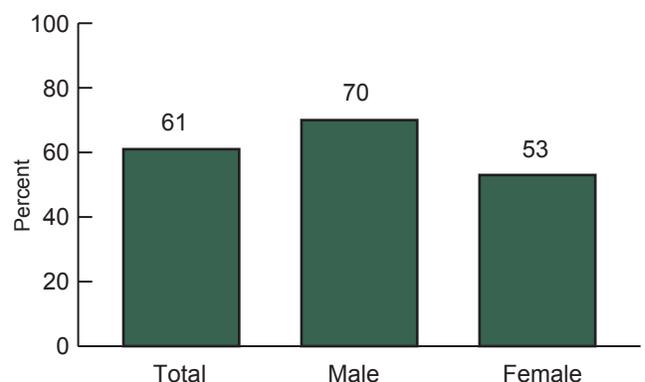
Percentage of students who had sexual intercourse during the past three months (currently sexually active)



Among currently sexually active students, the percentage who drank alcohol or used drugs before last sexual intercourse

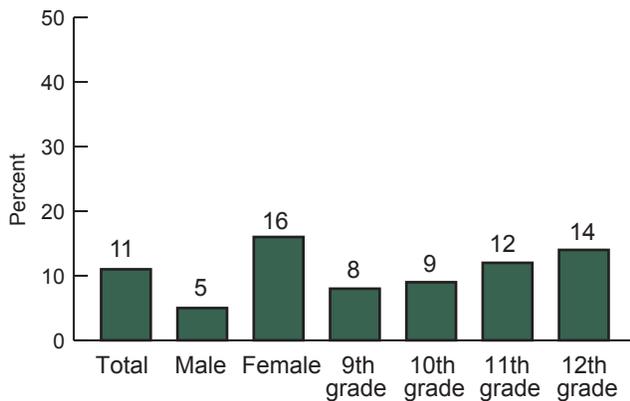


Among currently sexually active students, the percentage who used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse

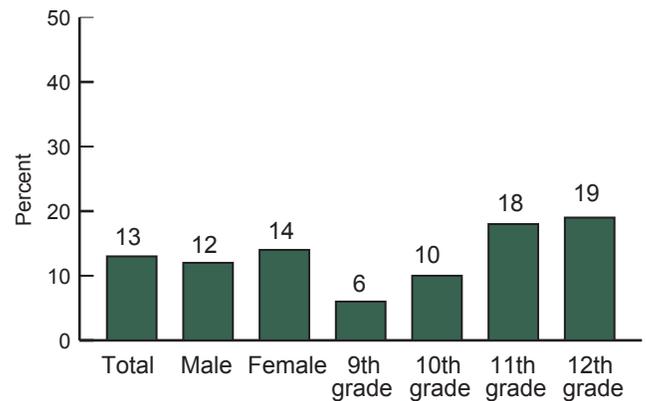


- ◆ *Consistent, correct use of latex condoms by males is highly effective at reducing the risk of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).<sup>14</sup>*
- ◆ *HIV and AIDS are currently impacting female adolescents at equal or greater rates than male adolescents.<sup>15</sup>*
- ◆ *According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the preliminary birth rate for teen girls for 2006 increased for the first time in 14 years.*

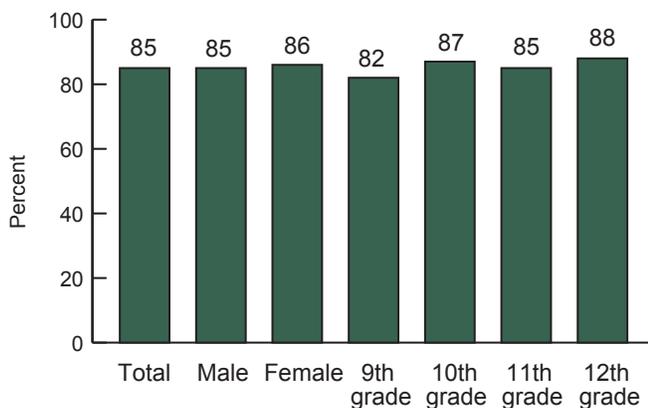
Percentage of students who have ever been physically forced to have sexual intercourse when they did not want to



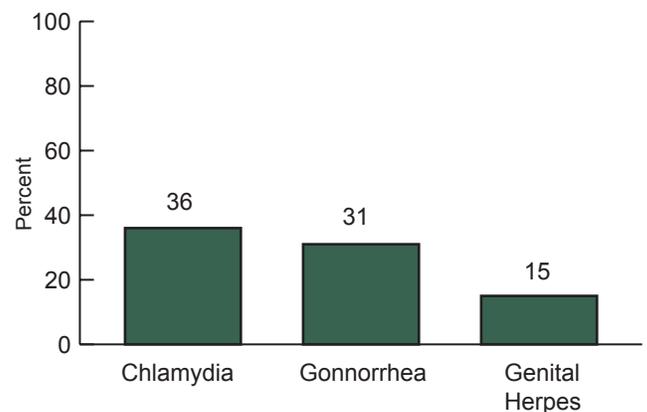
Percentage of students who have had sexual intercourse with four or more people during their lifetime



Percentage of students who have ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school



Percentage of all chlamydia, gonorrhea and genital herpes cases in Nebraska in 2006 that occurred in youth under the age of 19



# References

Many references in this report are available on the Internet. The Internet has much information about adolescent health and the reader is encouraged to look further at references sited. Because websites change from time to time, the date the web site was referenced is noted. Often the data available on a web site is updated regularly, giving the reader the most up-to-date information available.

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