



Healthy Kids Colorado Survey FAQ's

What is HKCS?

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey focuses on priority health-related behaviors that are often established during childhood and adolescence and that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. The survey is administered to measure the prevalence of these priority health-related behaviors among middle school and high school students. This survey is based on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey administered by the United States Department of Human Services Centers for Disease Control and on Hawkins and Catalano's Risk and Protective Framework.

Why is the HKCS administered?

Data collected from the HKCS will:

- Monitor how the priority health-related behaviors among middle and high school students increase, decrease, or remain the same over time
- Create awareness to improve school and community health education policies and programs
- Allow for comparison data to national and state-level data
- Demonstrate the need for funding new and ongoing initiatives addressing these behaviors

How will the participation in this survey effort be helpful to my school?

Data from the HKCS can be utilized to:

- *Provide data* to support funding requests
- *Create* school health teams for program planning
- *Coordinate* prevention messages
- *Implement* district wellness policies
- *Enforce* tobacco-free and drug-free school policies
- *Monitor* changes in student behavior over time

Are the students' confidentiality protected?

Yes! Students are asked not to put any identifying information on the surveys. Furthermore, the results will be sealed before being returned to us to prevent tampering. All data will be aggregated across all students who participate and no individual's data will be released. Additionally, the aggregate data for your school will only be released to your school unless the principal provides permission to release it to someone else.

How long does the survey take?

One class period is needed to administer the surveys; including distribution of the surveys, providing directions to the students, and completion of the surveys. The process typically takes 40-50 minutes.

Can answering these questions cause students to engage in the behavior?

A common concern is whether youth who are exposed to survey questions that ask about health-related behaviors, such as drug use or sexual behavior, show increases in these behaviors. There is absolutely no research evidence that completing surveys that include sensitive questions impacts behavior among young people. Researchers have explored this topic across a variety of behaviors, such as sexual

behavior, drug use, and suicide ideation, and have not found any evidence that questionnaire completion affects behavior or experimentation. This holds true even when there is repeated administration of the questionnaire. Additionally, trend data shows that the prevalence of many health-related behaviors (including sexual behaviors, tobacco use, and many violence-related behaviors) has declined since 1991, even though many students nationwide have taken surveys about health-related behaviors.

Can I obtain a copy of the Survey?

Yes. We would be happy to send you a sample survey, either electronically or via mail or you can visit our website: <http://hkcs.omni.org>.

What about parental permission?

All parents should be notified of the survey effort in your school. Consent forms should be handed out to students prior to the survey administration. If your school or district does not require that you use active consent (parents have to give their students permission to participate) then it is recommended that you use passive consent (parents have to opt their students out of the sample). We have examples of both passive and active parent permission forms on our website: <http://hkcs.omni.org>. If you are not sure which type of consent to use you can contact OMNI's survey team at survey@omni.org.

What types of questions are included in the HKCS?

The Healthy Kids Colorado Survey focuses on priority health-related behaviors that are often established during childhood and adolescence and that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States.

Specifically, the questions pertaining to unintentional injuries and violence, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behavior, nutrition, physical activity, and other health-related topics.

Why does the high school survey ask about sexual behavior?

Questions pertaining to sexual behavior measure the prevalence of sexual activity, number of sexual partners, age at first intercourse, alcohol and other drug use related to sexual activity, condom use, contraceptive use, and whether high school students received HIV prevention education. Early initiation of sexual intercourse is associated with having a greater number of lifetime sexual partners. In addition, adolescents who initiate sexual intercourse early are less likely to use contraception and are at higher risk for pregnancy. Each year there are an estimated 9.1 million cases of sexually transmitted diseases among persons aged 15-24 years.

Students are informed that their answers are completely anonymous and that they can skip any questions they do not feel comfortable answering.

Why are the questions worded in the way they are?

The structure and wording of the questions are based on extensively researched methodologies that allow the data to be collected in a meaningful and valid manner. For example, the items are constructed so as to reduce the potential of response distortion and social desirability that can occur when posing questions in sensitive subject areas. For example, some questions related to substance abuse are phrased in the following manner: "During the last 30 days, how many times did you" This question allows for a response to be recorded without making the respondent feel that his or her answer may be undesirable or negative. It is also important to note that the response option "0 Times" is available on all questions of this nature.