



**YRBS**  
Youth Risk Behavior Survey  
Suburban Cook County

Cook County DEPT. of Public Health  
A division of Cook County Health

**BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES**

DATA SUMMARY & TRENDS REPORT

# 2020 Suburban Cook County Youth Risk Behavior Survey

EXPLORE SURBURBAN COOK COUNTY  
YOUTH DATA TRENDS

For more information visit:  
[www.cookcountypublichealth.org](http://www.cookcountypublichealth.org)

SEPTEMBER 2024



Cook County DEPT. of Public Health



Cook County Department of Public Health would like to acknowledge the following partners for their participation in this work:

- ICF, International Survey Research Services
- CCDPH Epidemiology Staff
- Council State and Territorial Epidemiologists, Applied Epidemiology Fellows
- SCC CCDPH Partners
- Cook County Public Schools

Citation:

Cook County Department of Public Health. Reformatted(2025). Suburban Cook County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (SCC-YRBS) 2020 Summary Report. Bridgeview, IL: Epidemiology Unit.

**YRBS**  
Youth Risk Behavior Survey  
Suburban Cook County



The Cook County Department of Public Health envisions a healthy Cook County where all people and communities thrive in safe, health-promoting conditions.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

## **III. RESPONSE RESULTS**

## **IV. DISCUSSION**

## **V. 2020 STUDENT BEHAVIOR: AT-A-GLANCE**

### **TOPIC AREAS**

#### **SAFETY CHARACTERISTICS**

*Vehicle*

*Violence*

*Bullying*

*Suicide-Related*

#### **SUBSTANCE USE**

*Cigarettes*

*Vaping*

*Other Tobacco*

*Alcohol*

*Marijuana*

*Other Substances*

#### **SEXUALLY ACTIVITY**

*Sexually Transmitted Diseases*

#### **WEIGHT, EXERCISE & DIET**

*Bodyweight*

*Healthy Food Intake*

*Physical Activity and Leisure*

#### **OTHER HEALTH AREAS**

# INTRODUCTION



The 2020 Suburban Cook County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (SCC YRBS), conducted by ICF on behalf of the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), is a survey of students attending public schools in grades 9 through 12 that assesses priority health risk behaviors, including behaviors that result in unintentional injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that could contribute to sexually transmitted diseases, and unintended pregnancies; dietary behaviors and physical activity.

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), upon which the SCC YRBS was based, was designed in cooperation with federal agencies and numerous state and local departments of education and health and is conducted at the national, state, and local levels. Cook is the largest county in Illinois with over 5 million residents, half of which reside in the suburbs of Chicago. SCC YRBS results help describe the extent to which youth are engaging in risky behaviors in the 125 suburban municipalities that comprise CCDPH's jurisdiction. The last local YRBS conducted in Suburban Cook County occurred in 2010.

The SCC YRBS was originally intended to start and complete fielding during the spring 2020 semester. However, the unprecedented effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led to an abrupt and early end to spring fielding. A shift in methodology allowed data collection to resume and conclude in the fall of 2020. As a result, data was collected by two modes (paper questionnaire and web survey), in two settings (in-school proctored by trained field staff and via distance learning administered by teachers), and in two seasons across two academic years (spring 2020 and fall 2020).

A total of 1,310 surveys were collected from 1,448 students in randomly selected classes across 13 participating schools. The student response rate was 90.4% and the school response rate was 52.0%. The overall response rate (percentage of schools x percentage of students) was 47.0%.



## **SAMPLE SELECTION**

A representative sample of 25 schools, and a random selection of three to five classes (about 100 students) within those schools, was selected to participate. Invitation materials were sent to superintendents before approaching selected schools about their participation.

## **SURVEY ADMINISTRATION**

Once a school agreed, a survey coordinator worked with the school's point of contact to complete class selection and schedule a survey date. Parental opt-out forms were provided and distributed following established school protocols. In the spring, a trained data collector led in-person survey administration. Students completed the standard 2019 State and Local Youth Risk Behavior Survey 89-question YRBS paper and pencil questionnaire using a scannable answer sheet. In the fall, teachers were provided with step-by-step instructions to lead remote survey administration, as students were attending class through distance learning. Students completed the same 89-question web survey using a desktop or laptop computer, smartphone or tablet. In both spring and fall, students were informed participation was anonymous, voluntary and any questions could be skipped.

## **SURVEY PROCESSING**

ICF, Macro (survey vendor) collect all completed surveys and prepared them for data analysis.

### ***Survey Implementation Key facts***

- *Survey participation is confidential and anonymous.*
- *Most surveys are completed within 30-40 minutes.*
- *Survey administration is scheduled to minimize disruption to the school.*



## RESPONSE RESULTS

School participation was voluntary and, because of COVID-19, lower than expected. However, student participation was high. Overall participation (percentage of schools x percentage of students) was 47%.

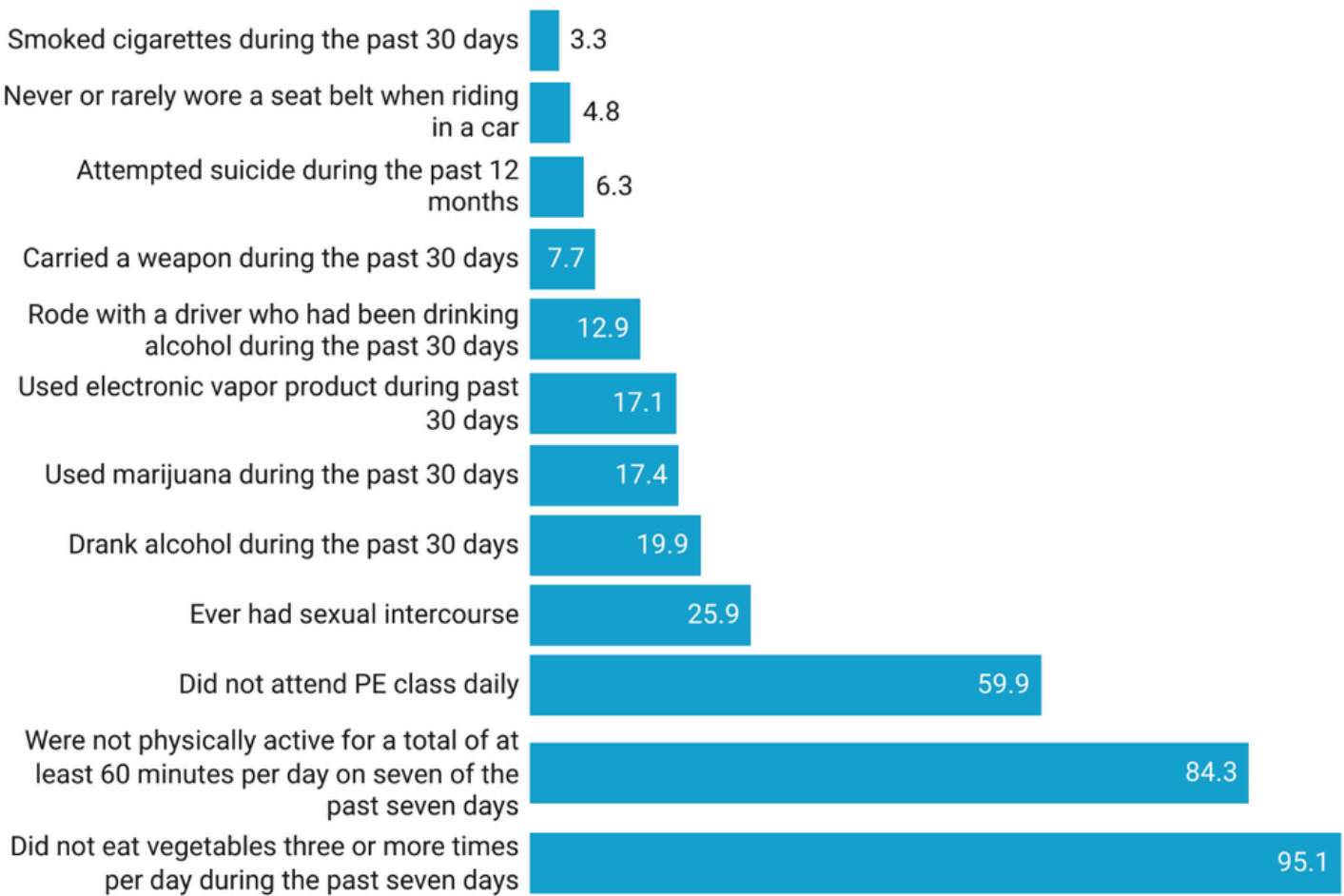
Given the unusual effect COVID-19 had during data collection and the lower than expected school response rate, ICF conducted additional analyses to examine potentials for school and student nonresponse bias. Nonresponse bias refers to the potential for systematic under-representation and consequent bias in survey estimates due to nonresponse. The findings were used to inform statistical adjustments to the response data (i.e., more robust nonresponse adjustments to the weights) to inform users about the representativeness of the data. Overall, the variability in the weights was small and the overall variances were also relatively small

## DISCUSSION

The goal of the 2020 SCC YRBS was to help describe youth risk behaviors and inform prevention efforts. The study was interrupted by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. As a result of widespread school closure, half the data was collected in the spring, in-person, led by a trained data collector using a paper and pencil instrument; the other half was completed in the fall through distance learning, led by teachers via a web survey. Overall participation was 47%. A nonresponse analysis determined the data to be generalizable to the high school student population attending schools in Suburban Cook County.

The 2020 YRBS provided some insights to the student population in Suburban Cook County. This survey has given the most up-to-date estimates of the behaviors and risk factors for high schoolers. The following chart displays a quick summary of various youth risk behaviors obtained from the survey.

## PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



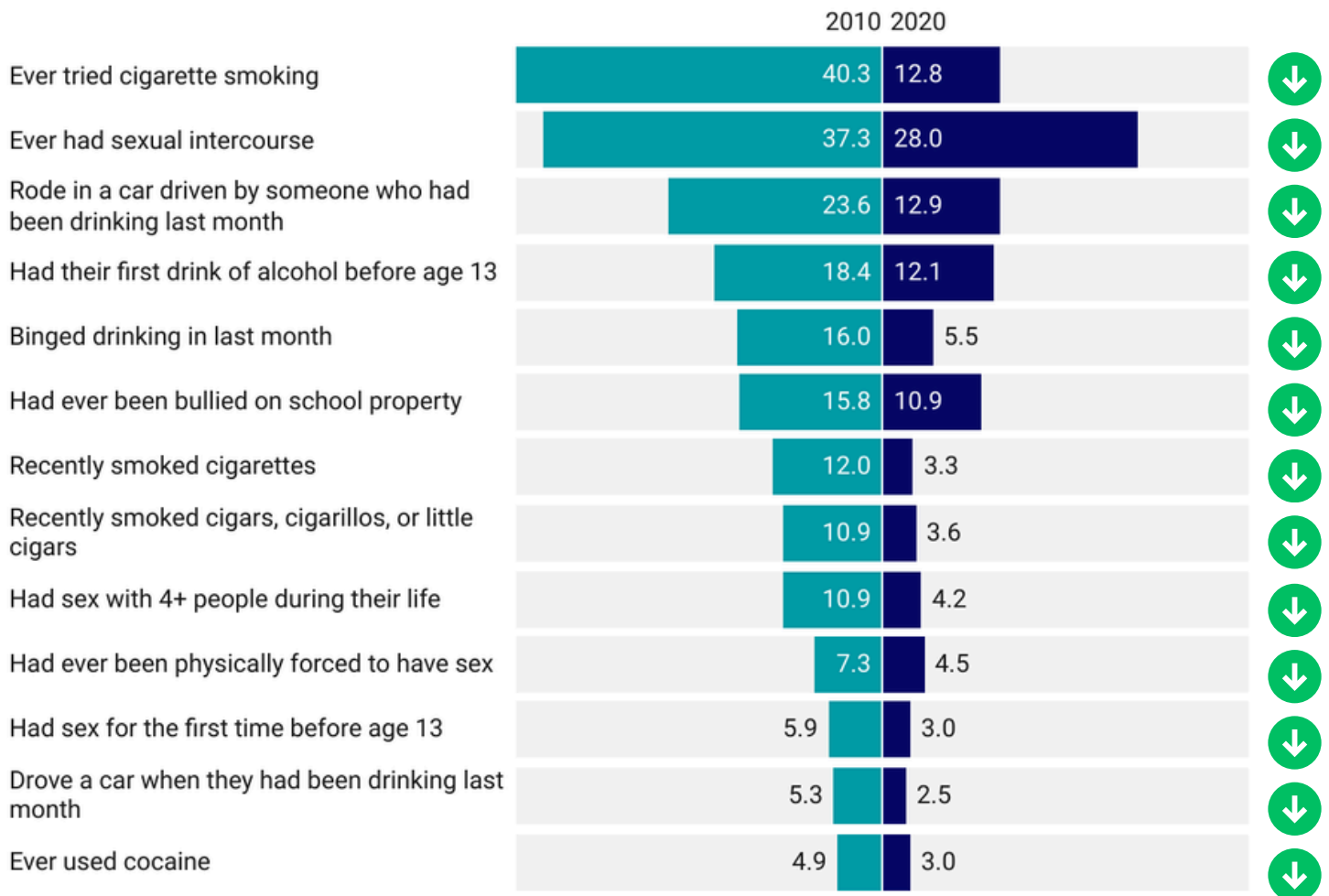
## 20120 & 2020 COMPARISONS

CCDPH had previously completed a version of the YRBS in SCC in 2010. Since then, there were some notable changes to the behaviors of SCC students. When comparing the 2010 survey to the 2020 survey, some differences were notable. This chart displays key risk behaviors that are improving in students from 2010 to 2020. Behaviors reflecting improved health behaviors are indicated in green and red indicates poorer health behaviors, whereas the arrow reflects the direction of change from 2010 to 2020.

## MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:

■ 2010 ■ 2020



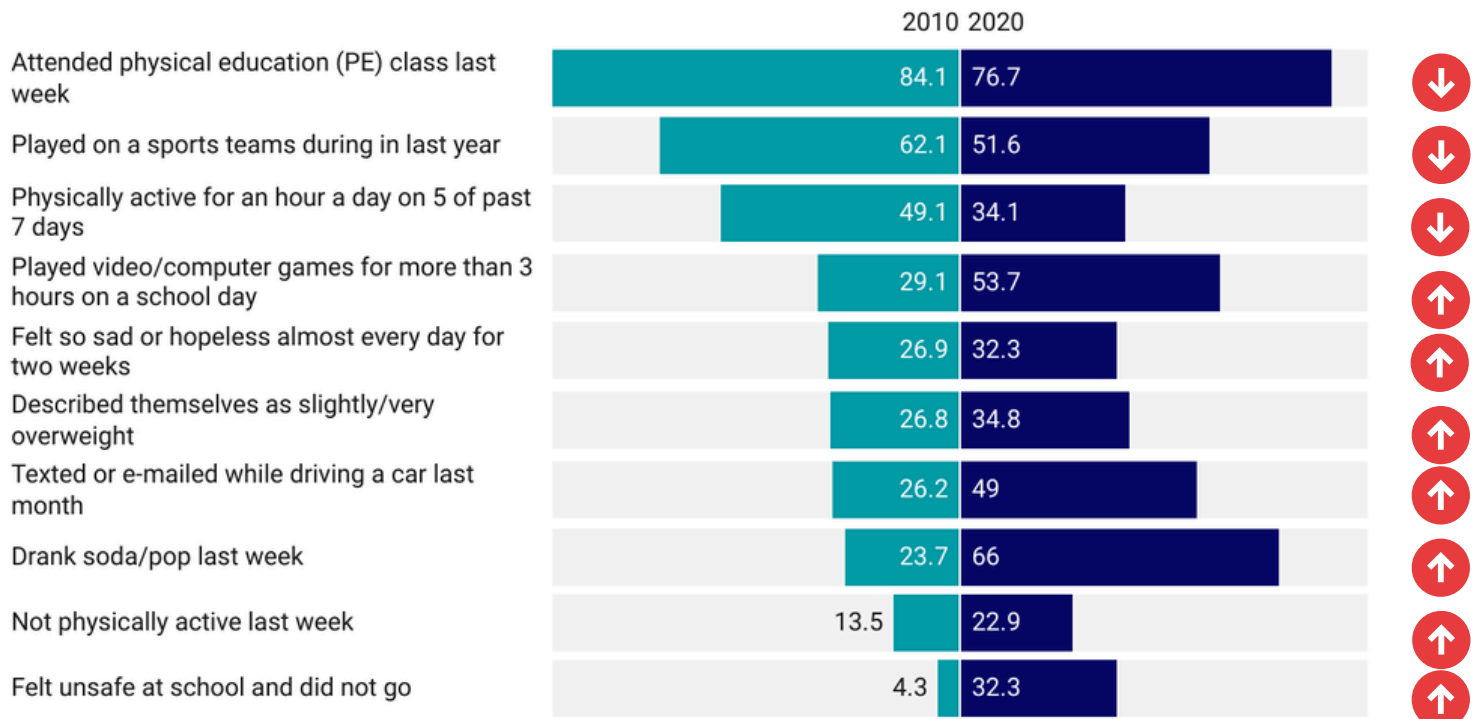
## 2010 & 2020 COMPARISONS

CCDPH had previously completed a version of the YRBS in SCC in 2010. Since then, there were some notable changes to the behaviors of SCC students. When comparing the 2010 survey to the 2020 survey, some differences were notable. This chart displays key risk behaviors that are improving in students from 2010 to 2020. Behaviors reflecting improved health behaviors are indicated in green and red indicates poorer health behaviors, whereas the arrow reflects the direction of change from 2010 to 2020.

## MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:

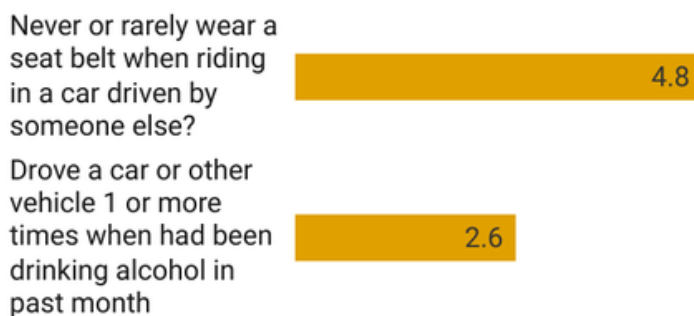
2010 2020



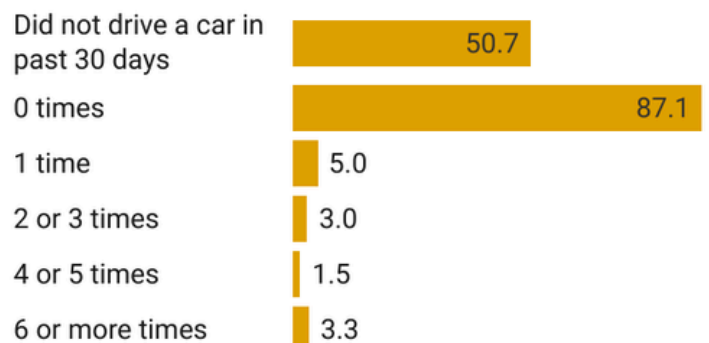
The leading cause of death for adolescents in the U.S. are injuries, which includes motor-vehicle crashes. Youth are at a high risk of nonfatal injuries that does include violence and self-harm. The following data shows the results from the survey as it relates to vehicles, violence, bullying, and self-harm.

## VEHICLE

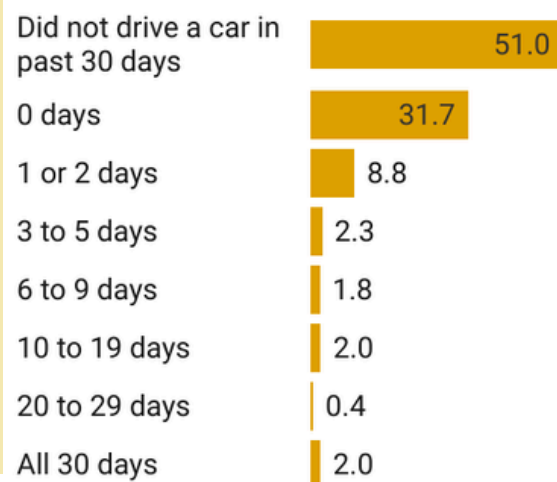
### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



### Times rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol in past month.



### Number of days of texting or e-mail while driving a car or other vehicle in past month.



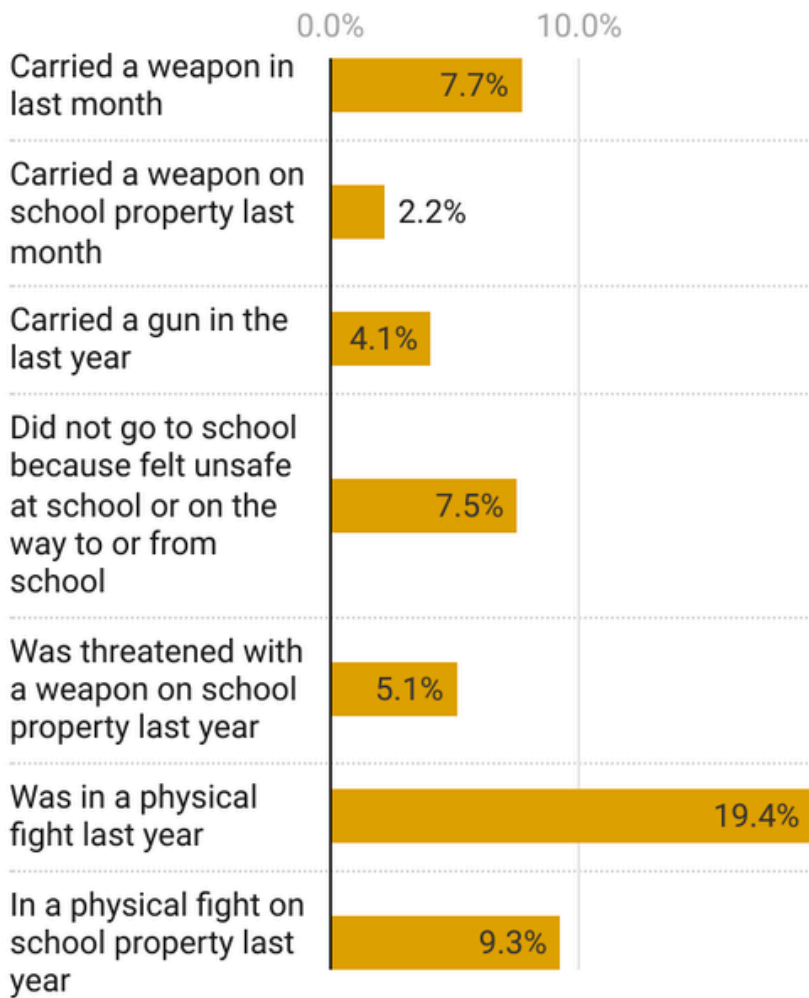
In 2010, 6% of students never or rarely wore a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else compared to 4.8% in 2020. 23.6% of students in 2010 who rode one or more times during the past 30 days in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol, compared to 12.9%.



The leading cause of death for adolescents in the U.S. are injuries, which includes motor-vehicle crashes. Youth are at a high risk of nonfatal injuries that does include violence and self-harm. The following data shows the results from the survey as it relates to vehicles, violence, bullying, and self-harm.

## VIOLENCE

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:

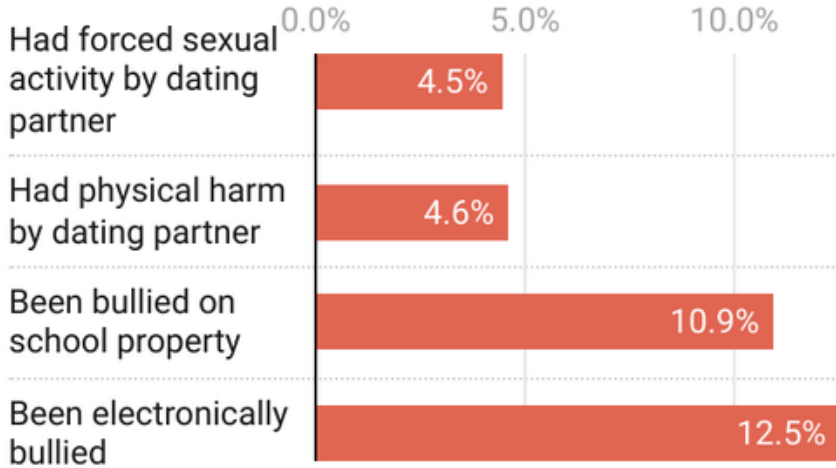


2010 percentage of students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property on one or more of the past 30 days was 2.5, compared to 2.2 in 2020.



## BULLYING

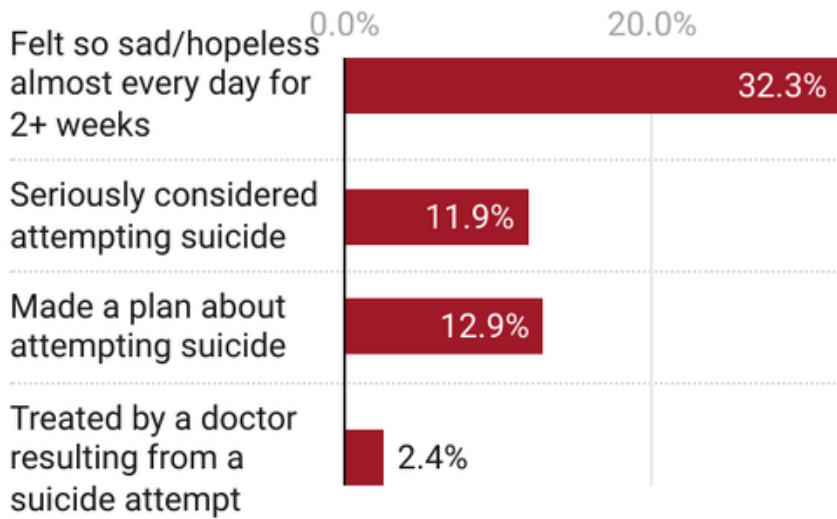
### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



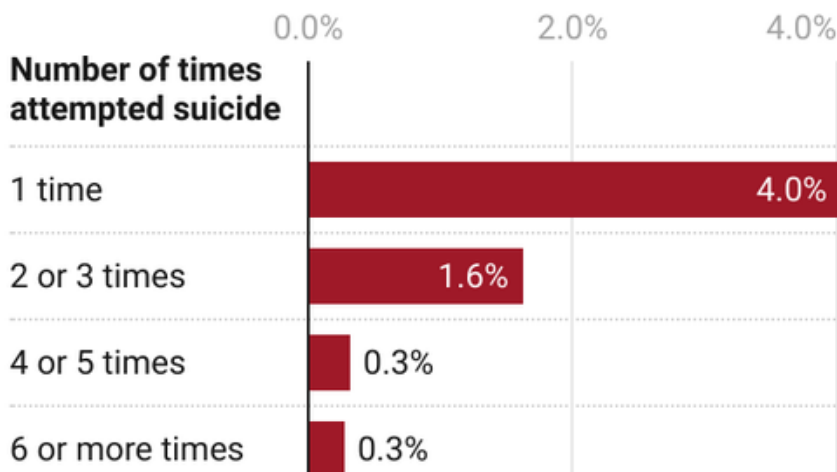
SCC students have been bullied electronically (12.5%) more than on school property (10.9%) in 2020.

## SUICIDE-RELATED

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



Nationally, 36.7% students almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row so that they stopped doing some usual activities compared to 32.3% of students residing in SCC.

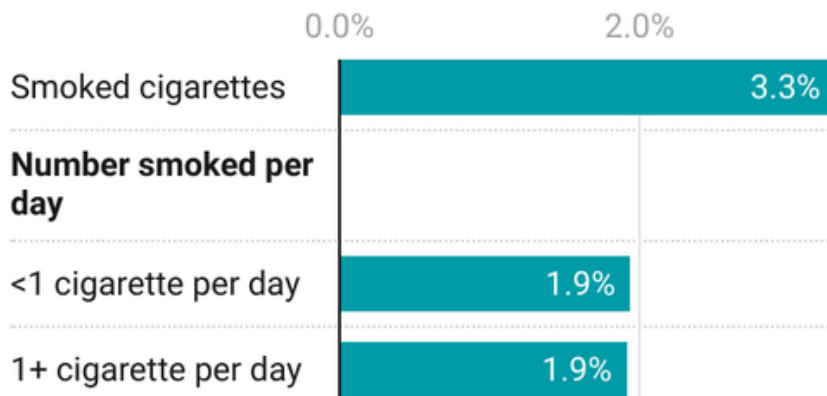


6.2% of Suburban Cook County students have attempted to end their life at least once in their lifetimes.

Substance use in adolescence is considered a high-risk behavior. The following data shows the results from the survey as it relates to tobacco, vaping, marijuana, and other substance use.

## CIGARETTES

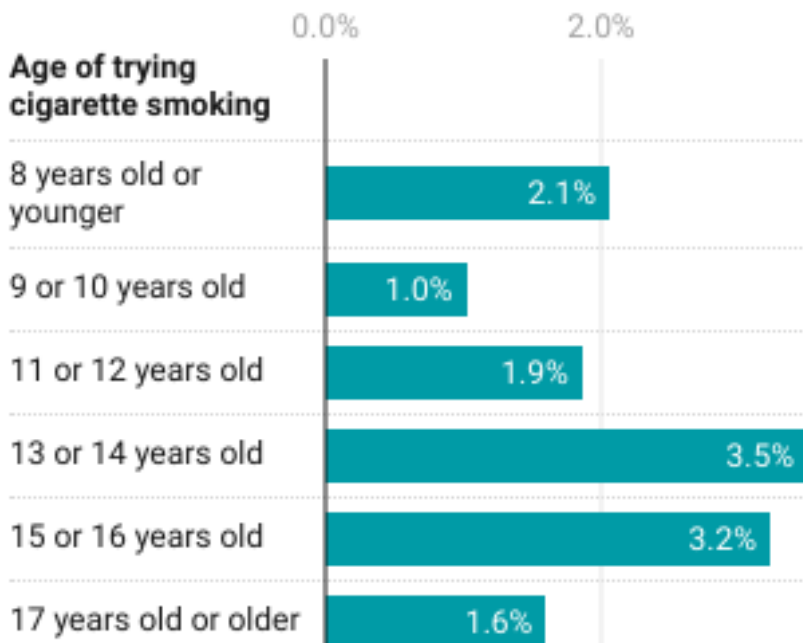
### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



There are about half less SCC students that are currently smoking (3.3%) compared to students who smoke nationally (6.0%).

## CIGARETTES

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



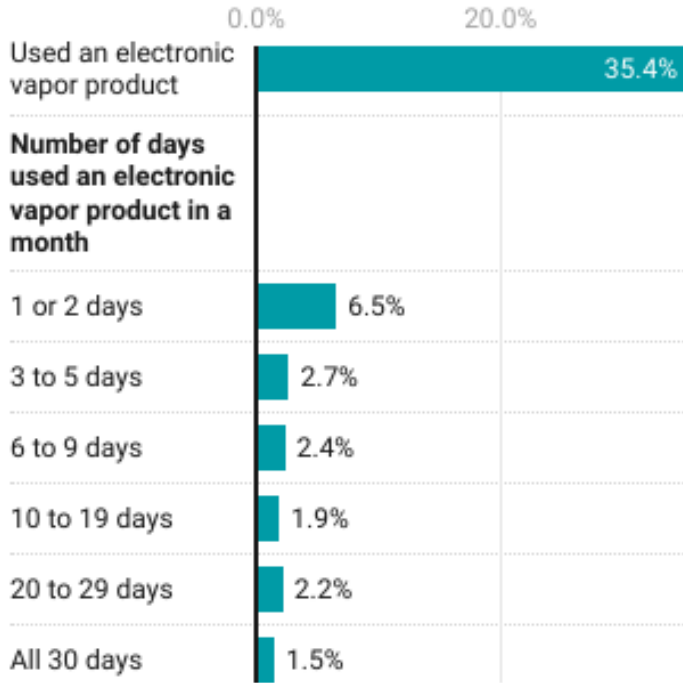
The age of initiation into cigarette smoking for SCC students is mainly between 13 and 16 years old.



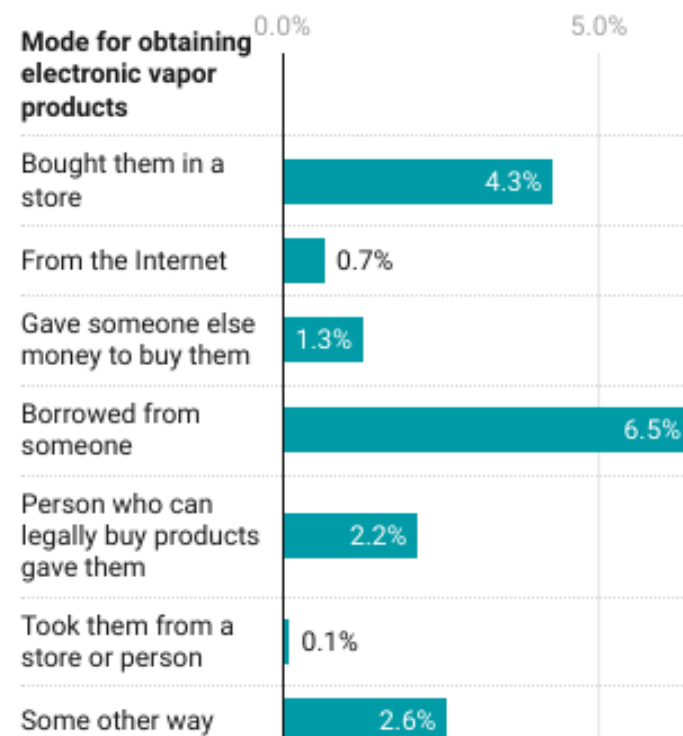
Substance use in adolescence is considered a high-risk behavior. The following data shows the results from the survey as it relates to tobacco, vaping, marijuana, and other substance use.

## VAPING

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



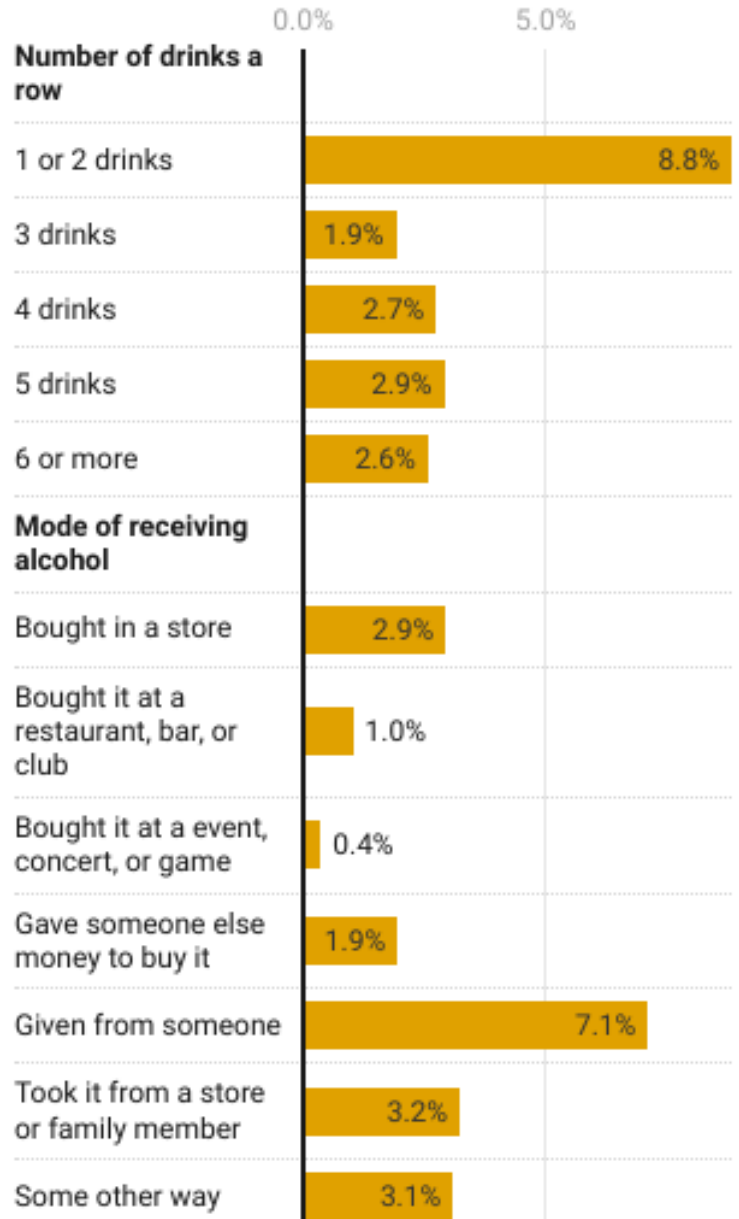
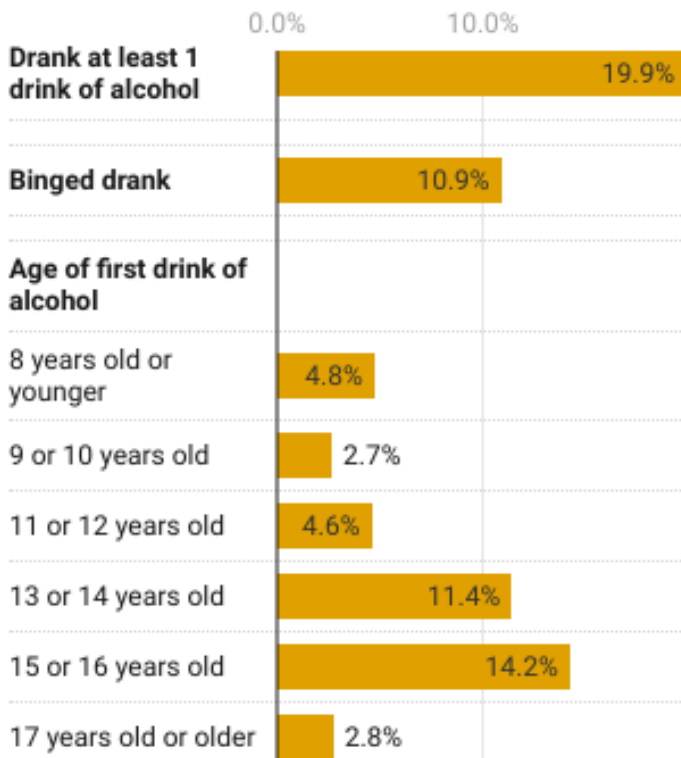
SCC students have used vapor products at a higher percentage than nationally, 35.4% compared to 32.7%.



Students in SCC are mainly getting their vape products from someone else, or buying it themselves from a store (such as a convenience store, supermarket, discount store, gas station, or vapor shop).

## ALCOHOL

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



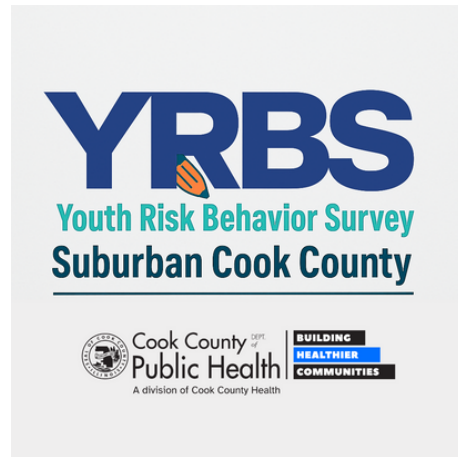
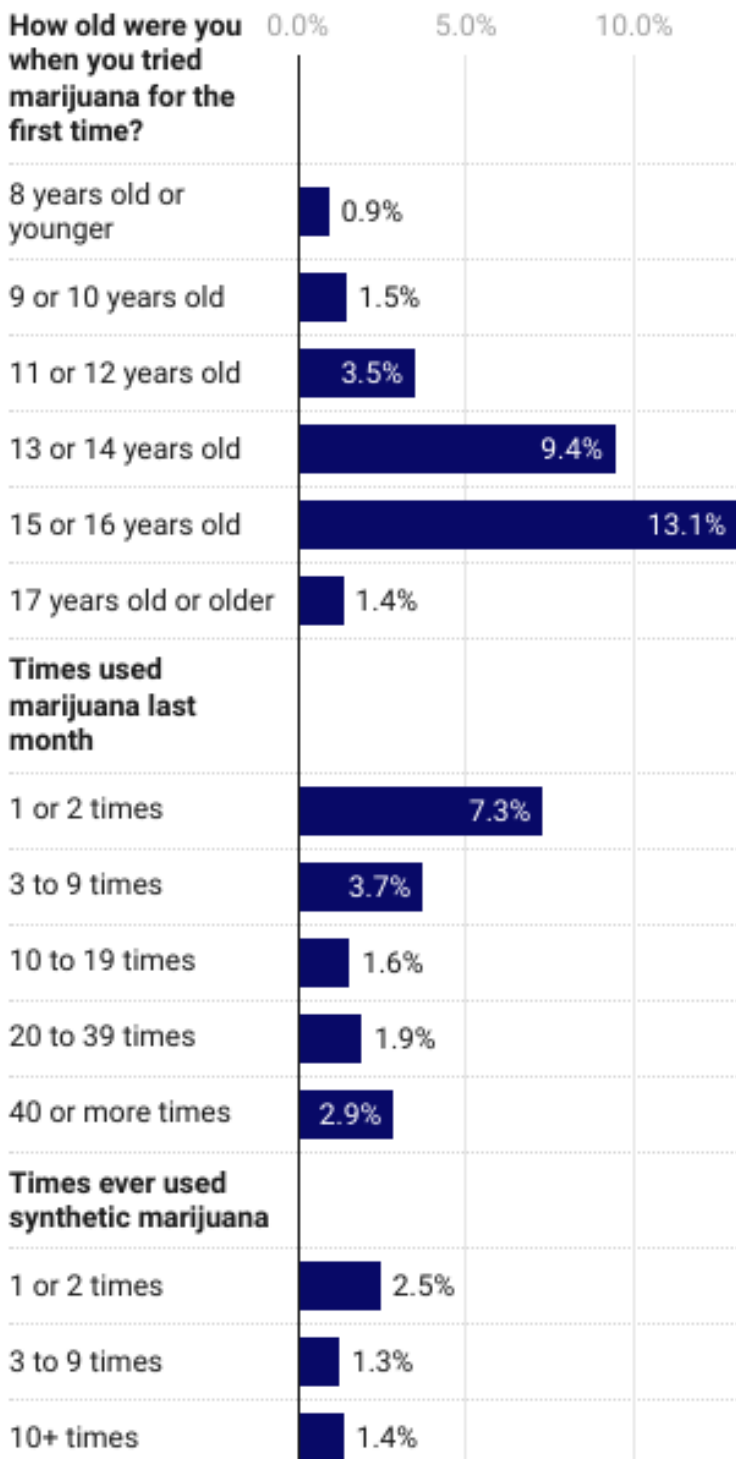
Alcohol use in students is at 19.9%, with binge drinking (4 or more drinks of alcohol in a row for females or 5 or more drinks of alcohol in a row for males, within a couple of hours) currently at 10.9% of students.

The most frequent mode that SCC are obtaining alcohol is by another person providing it to them.



## MARIJUANA

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:

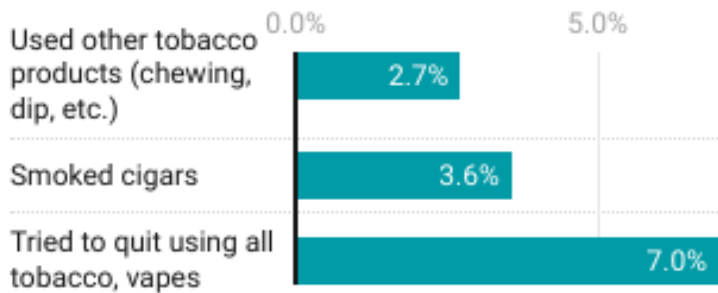


29.8% of SCC students have ever used marijuana in their life. The majority of students start when they are 15-16 years old.



**OTHER TOBACCO**

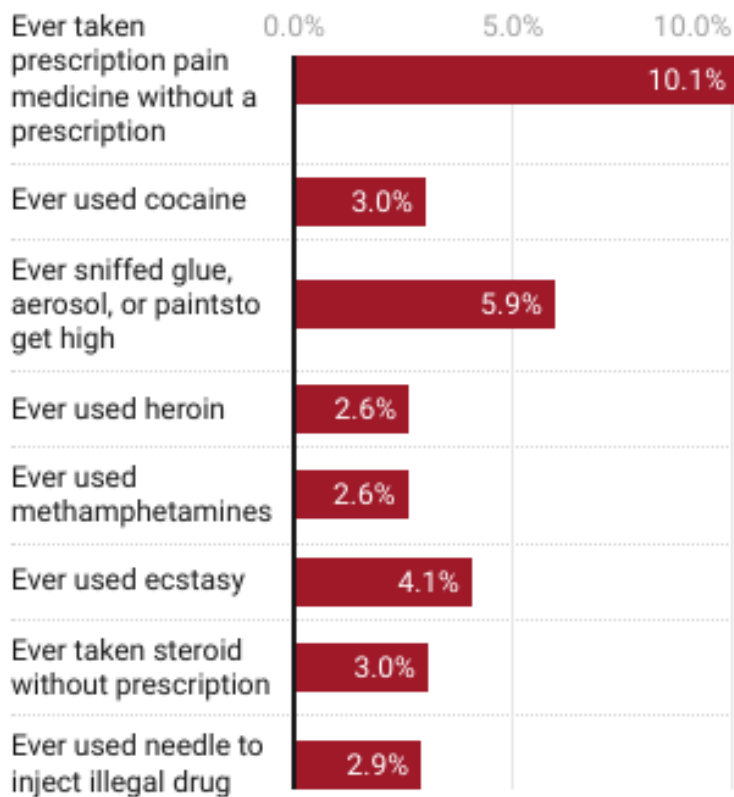
**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:**



Students in SCC are using other forms of tobacco and cigars less compared to cigarette use. There are 7% of students trying to quit their use of all tobacco products.

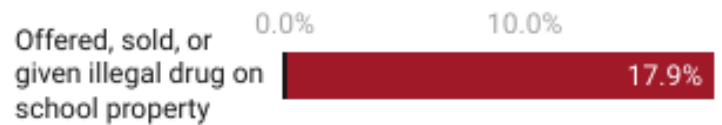
**OTHER SUBSTANCES**

**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:**



Students in SCC are using other forms of tobacco and cigars less compared to cigarette use. There are 7% of students trying to quit their use of all tobacco products.

**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO LAST YEAR:**

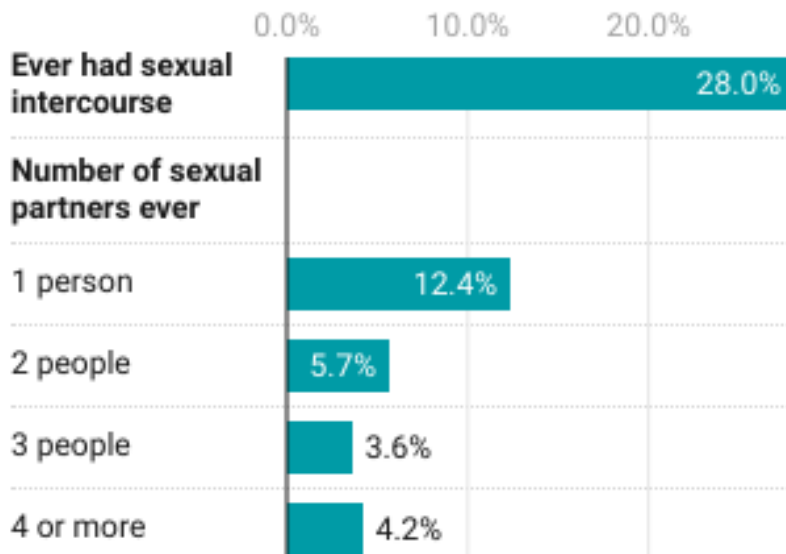


There were 17.9% of students in SCC who were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in 2020.

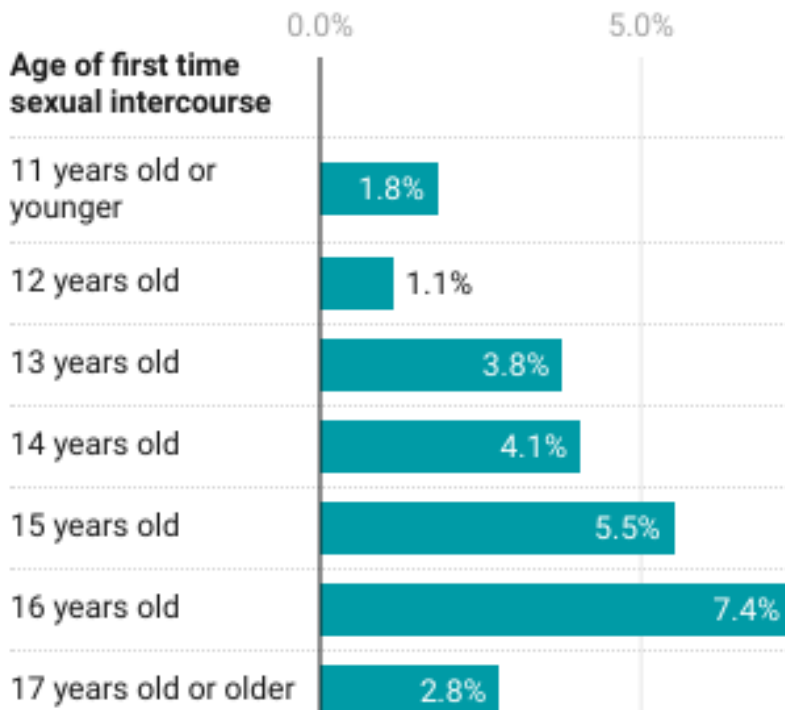
It is known that adolescents who engage in sexual risk behaviors have a greater likelihood of contracting HIV or STDs and of becoming pregnant. This section describes the current characteristics in SCC students.

## SEXUAL ACTIVITY

### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



There are 28% of SCC students whom are sexually active, compared to 27% nationally.

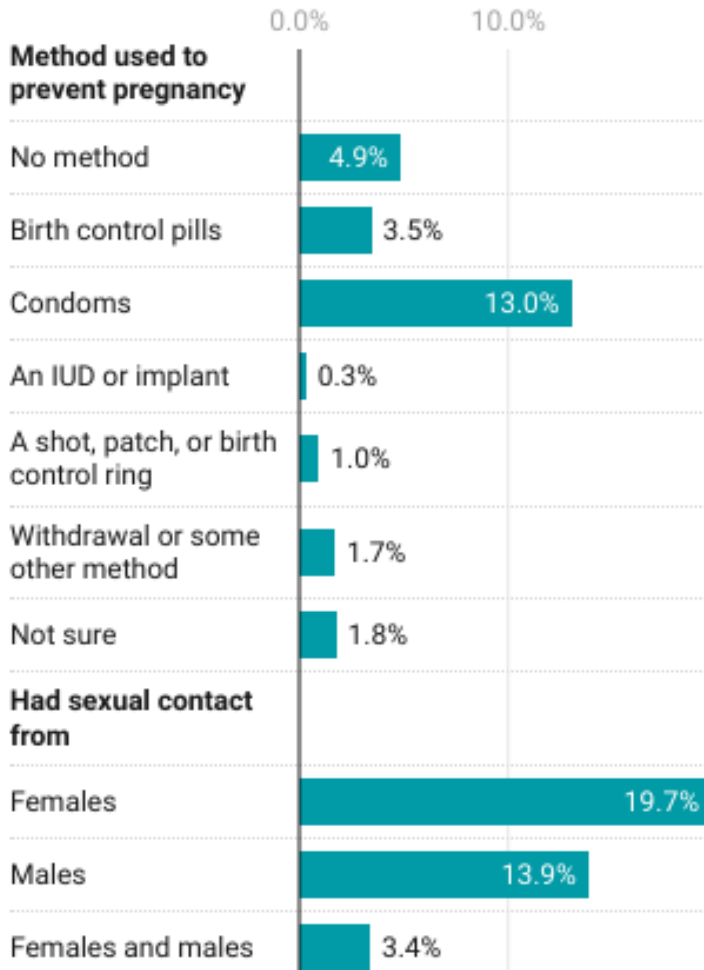


2.9% of high schoolers have had sex when they were younger than 13 years old.

**YRBS**  
 Youth Risk Behavior Survey  
 Suburban Cook County

## SEXUAL ACTIVITY

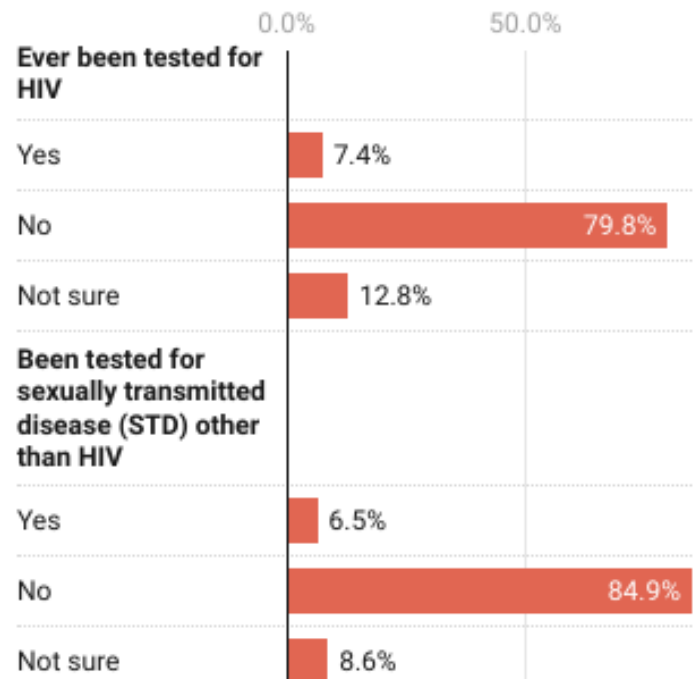
### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



There were nearly 5% of sexually active high schoolers in SCC who had no method to avoid pregnancy.

## SEXUAL TRANSMITTED DISEASE

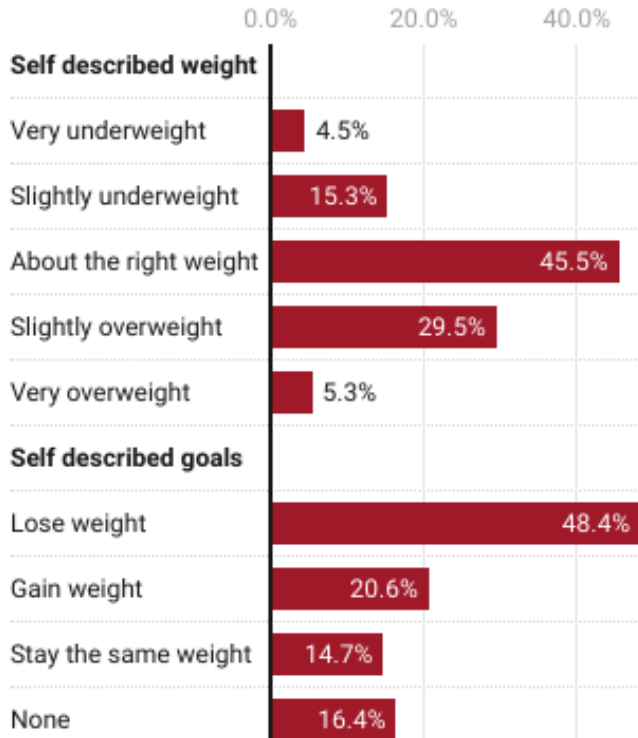
### PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:



93.5% of SCC high school students have not or unsure if they have ever been tested for a sexually transmitted disease other than HIV (such as chlamydia or gonorrhea) in the last year. Nationally, the percentage was 91.4%.

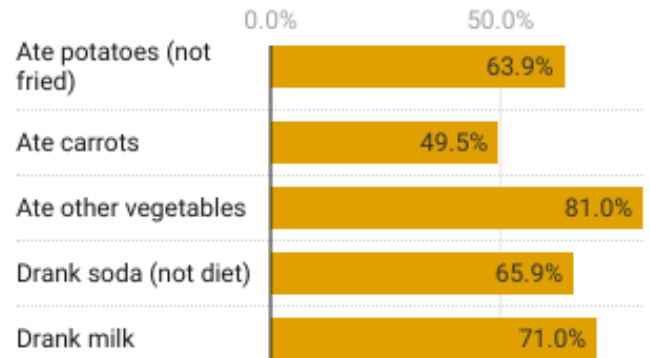
Understanding the dietary and physical activity patterns among adolescence is important to public health to preventing chronic diseases. The following sections analysis the characteristics of SCC bodyweight, healthy food intake, physical and leisure activity.

## BODYWEIGHT PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:

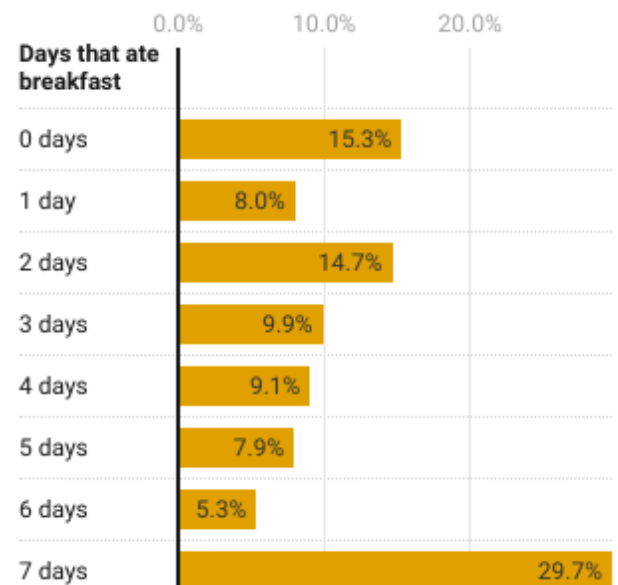


Over 45% of all SCC high schoolers considers themselves to be about the right weight, yet nearly half of all students wanted to lose weight.

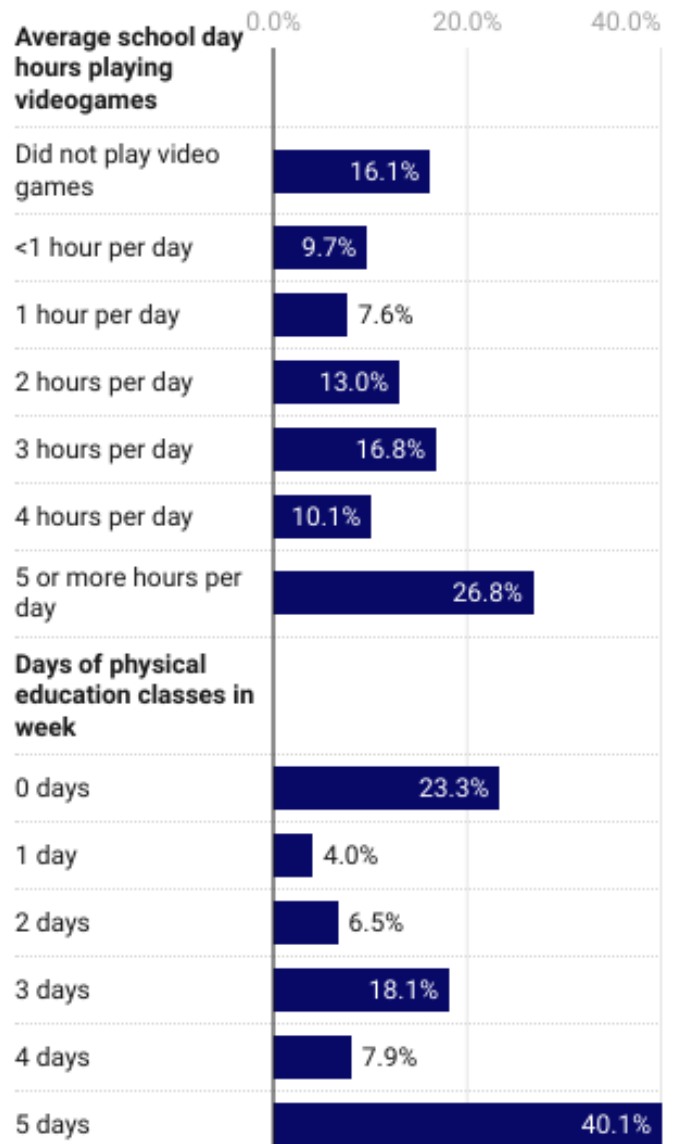
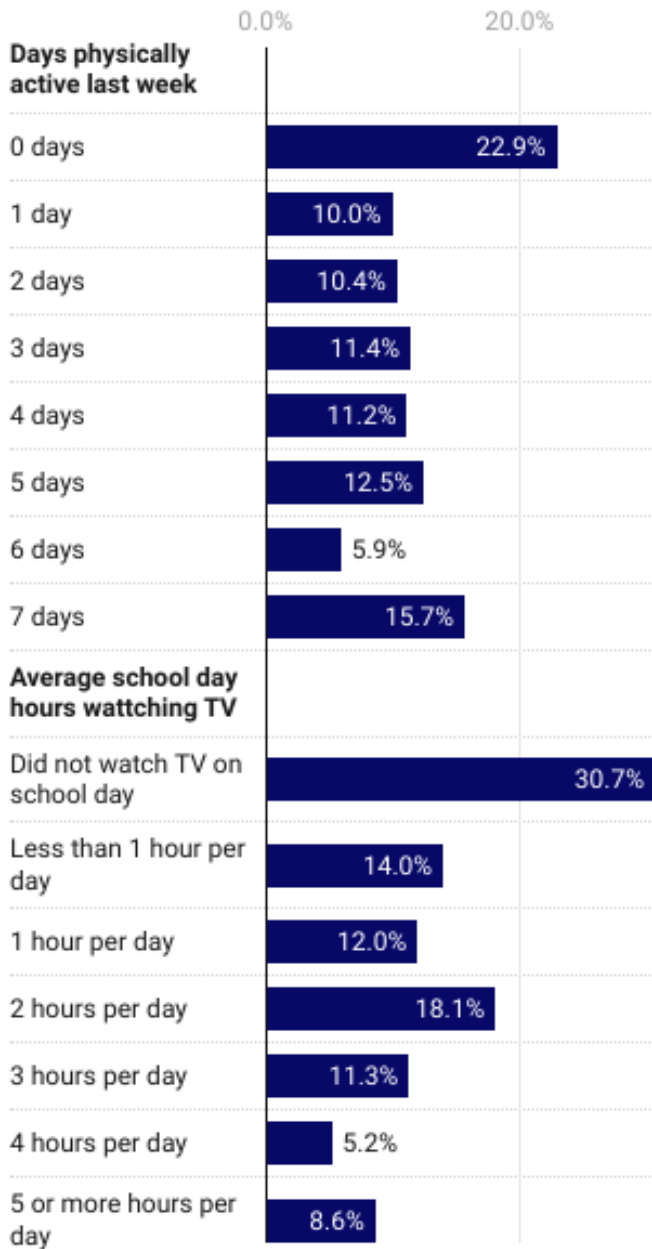
## HEALTHY FOOD INTAKE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN THE LAST WEEK WHO:



- Over 65% of SCC students drank soda at least once in the last week.
- Less than 30% of students at breakfast every day of the week. There were over 15% of students who said they did not eat breakfast at all in a typical week.



**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & LEISURE  
PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:**

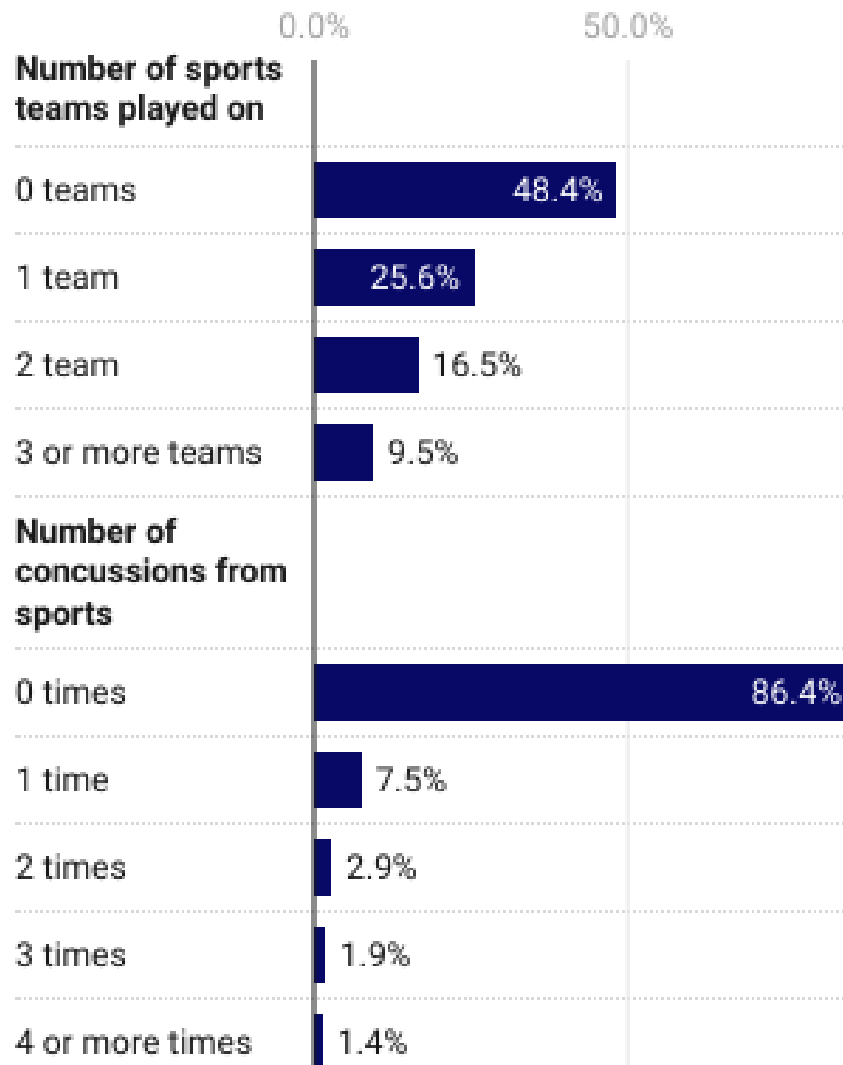


Nearly a quarter of SCC high schoolers were not physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day in a typical week.

Even though students are not watching much TV, they are playing video and computer games. Over 25% of high schoolers are playing 5 or more hours of games on an average school day.

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY &amp; LEISURE

## PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS IN THE LAST YEAR:

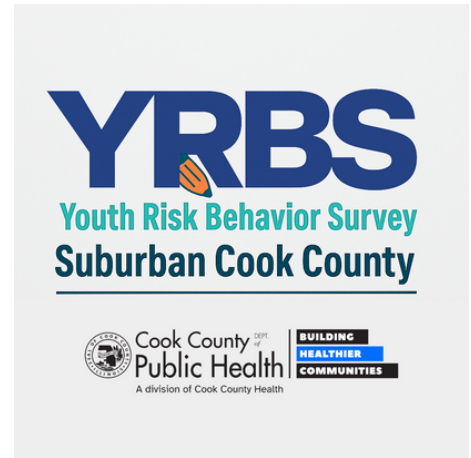
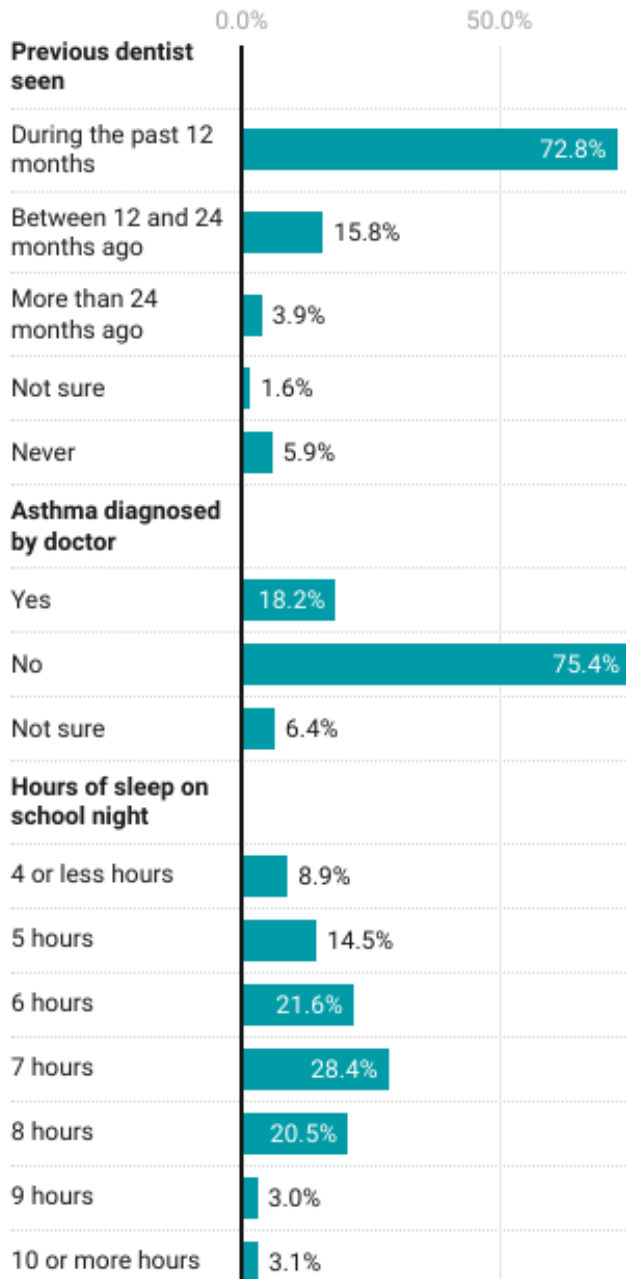


Even though students are not watching much TV, they are playing video and computer games. Over 25% of high schoolers are playing 5 or more hours of games on an average school day.

The following survey health questions aims to understand the risks and experiences of youth so that they can become healthy, successful adults.

**ORAL HEALTH**

**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO:**



Suburban Cook County students mostly getting between 6-8 hours a sleep a night on an average school night, although there are 23.4% of students getting 5 hours or less per night.

# GETTING THE SURVEY DONE

To ensure that we are getting the survey done, we need **to strengthen** district and school participation in future SCC YRBS cycles:

## Advance Communication

Early outreach to districts via summer memos to superintendents and infographics showing prior results proved effective and should continue. Additional engagement could occur at Cook County ROE meetings to secure early buy-in.

