

The 1997 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Statewide Report

How many Vermont teens drink alcohol or smoke cigarettes? Where do they get alcohol and cigarettes? How many use marijuana or cocaine? How many are sexually active, and of those, how many are using condoms? How many have been threatened at school? How many have contemplated suicide? Finding answers to these questions is vitally important. This information can put to rest unwarranted fears when the answers are positive; it can mobilize prevention and intervention efforts when the answers are negative; and it can influence the behavior of students by setting norms.

Every two years since 1985, the Department of Health's Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs and the Department of Education's Comprehensive School Health Program have sponsored a survey of Vermont students. The Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) measures the prevalence of behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disease, and injury among youth. The YRBS is part of a larger effort to help communities promote the "resiliency" of young people by reducing high risk behaviors and increasing healthy behaviors. The YRBS provides accurate information about Vermont students which enables us to:

- **monitor trends** in their health and risk behaviors
- **compare Vermont** students with a national sample of students
- **plan, evaluate, and improve** community programs which prevent health problems and promote healthy behaviors

In 1997, school staff administered the YRBS to over 23,000 eighth to twelfth grade Vermont students in 83 schools representing 48 supervisory unions and two private schools. **For the purposes of this report, data are based on a representative sample of 8,636 Vermont high school and middle school students.** Participation by both schools and individual students was completely voluntary. To protect student privacy, the questionnaire was anonymous. Therefore, it is impossible to identify an individual student's responses.

How to use the YRBS

The YRBS provides an important piece of the evaluation puzzle. It can help you detect changes in risk behaviors over time. It can help you identify differences among ages, grades, and genders. It can help you focus primary prevention efforts on specific groups of teens, and can suggest whether or not school policies and community programs are having their intended effects on student behaviors.

Think of the YRBS as a tool for starting discussions, for educating the community, for planning and evaluating programs, and for comparing Vermont students with other students nationwide.

- **Starting the Conversation:** Use the YRBS to begin a conversation with teens about the personal choices they make or about the health of their community. Ask them if the results accurately reflect what they see happening around them. How do they explain the results? What ideas do they have about ways to promote healthy behaviors? From their perspective, what seems to be working and what isn't working?
- **Increasing Awareness:** The YRBS provides an opportunity to break through “denial” and to make community members aware of the risks that their young people face. It can also dispel myths and correct misinformation about the “average teenager”. The YRBS can be used to accentuate the positive, and to celebrate the fact that many students are abstaining from behaviors which endanger their health and their ability to succeed.
- **Planning and Evaluating Programs:** The YRBS can serve as the basis of a community needs assessment. It can help identify strengths and weaknesses in your community, and can suggest strategies to address those weaknesses.
- **Vermont Trends and National Comparisons:** We have been able to track some information for over 10 years, because Vermont students have been participating in a student survey since 1985. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducts a biennial YRBS of a national sample of high school students. These results permit us to draw comparisons between Vermont and the nation.

A Word of Caution

The YRBS represents the most complete and most recent information available about risk behaviors among Vermont students. However, the YRBS has some limitations that you should keep in mind when interpreting the results.

- **Data Quality:** Several precautions were taken to ensure the reliability and validity of the results. First, the questionnaire has been carefully designed and thoroughly tested by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Second, the survey was anonymous to encourage students to be honest and forthright. Third, over 100 consistency checks were run on the data to exclude careless, invalid, or logically inconsistent answers. Fourth, the results are statistically adjusted or “weighted” so that the sample accurately represents all Vermont 8th to 12th graders. These precautions can reduce some sources of error, but not all. For example, some high risk students such as those who have dropped out of school are not represented in the results.

- **Comparing Supervisory Unions to Each Other and to the State:** Participating supervisory unions will receive individual reports summarizing their own results. It is natural to want to know how individual supervisory unions compare to the state overall or to other supervisory unions. We urge caution in making such comparisons because the statewide results are “weighted”, whereas the supervisory union results are not. As a result, it is possible that apparent differences, especially small differences, are due to demographics characteristics, rather than to true differences in prevalence.

- **Comparing Vermont to the Nation:** There are two points to keep in mind when comparing the Vermont statewide results to national results. First, the most recent national report was for 1995. The 1997 national report will not be available until mid-1998. Second, eighth graders were included in the Vermont survey, but not the national survey. Therefore, we urge caution when comparing percentages for all students on items where there are clear differences across grades.

A Special Thanks!

We are grateful to the principals and superintendents who chose to participate in the YRBS and to the teachers and school staff who administered the survey or in other ways supported this effort. We also wish to thank the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Adolescent and School Health for sponsoring the statewide survey through a cooperative agreement with the Vermont Department of Education (Program Announcement #309) and Westat Survey Technical Assistance Project for processing and analyzing the data. Finally, we are grateful to the students who took the time and effort to share with us a piece of their lives. This report is our way of thanking all of you. We hope that you find the survey report informative and useful.

The next YRBS is scheduled for 1999. We encourage schools' participation again, because we will be able to continue to monitor trends in students' health and risk behaviors, compare Vermont students with a national sample of students, and plan, evaluate, and improve communities programs which prevent health problems and promote healthy behaviors. If you have any questions or comments about the YRBS, please contact Kelly Hale at the Office of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs, Vermont Department of Health (802-651-1557).

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	i
BASIC INFORMATION	1
Understanding the Report	1
Description of the Sample	2
INJURIES, VIOLENCE, AND SAFETY	3
Physical Fighting	5
Weapons and Fear	9
Vehicle Safety	11
Safety Belts	11
Bicycle Helmets	13
Crashes	14
Driving Under the Influence	16
Suicide	21
ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUGS	23
Alcohol Use	25
Tobacco Use	32
Marijuana Use	39
Inhalant Use	43
Other Drug Use	46
SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	51
BODY WEIGHT AND NUTRITION	61
Body Weight	62
Nutrition	65
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	67
OTHER MEASURES OF RISK AND RESILIENCY	71
REFERENCES	75

Basic Information

Understanding This Report:

- **Format:** The results are presented as data tables, pie charts, bar graphs, and line graphs. In most cases, the data are organized by gender and grade. All results are expressed as percentages of students who endorsed the responses being reported. Some percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.
- **Trends:** This report includes 10 to 12 year trends for several behaviors including drinking and driving, and use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana. The data for years 1985 to 1991 are not based on the YRBS, but on a Vermont student survey that focused on the use of alcohol and other drugs. The questions from the earlier survey were worded slightly different from the questions on the YRBS: e.g., students were asked about their “monthly use”, instead of their use during “the past 30 days”. In order to adjust for the difference, the trend data for years 1985 to 1991 were estimated. Since the questions were asked both ways on the 1993 and 1995 surveys, we used a simple ratio of the percentages from comparable “monthly” and “30-day” questions to adjust the 1985 to 1991 data.
- **Healthy Vermonters 2000:** Vermont has established goals for promoting health and reducing risk behaviors in *Healthy Vermonters 2000*. Goals relevant to the behaviors surveyed by the YRBS are included in the report for your reference. For more information, see *The Health Status of Vermonters* and *Healthy Vermonters 2000 Progress Report*, available from the Vermont Department of Health.

Remember to look at the flip side!! In most cases the majority of adolescents are NOT engaging in risky behaviors. Although most of the charts are oriented to examining the prevalence of risk behaviors, please do not forget about the percent of adolescents who are NOT engaging in the behaviors!

Basic Information

Description of the Sample

- **Sampling:** Nineteen Vermont high schools of varying sizes, along with their 13 associated middle schools, were randomly selected for the state sample (1:3 systematic sample after sorting by enrollments). A survey of this size was required in order to have an error rate of +/- 5% at each of the five grade levels.
 - **Response Rates:** The school response rate was 87 percent, and the student response rate was 82 percent. Therefore, the overall response rate was 71 percent ($.87 * .82 = .71$).
 - **Weighting:** The results were “weighted” in order to compensate for differences between the sample and the population of all 8th to 12th grade students in Vermont. The weighting procedure ensures that the sample is representative of the population. This permits us to draw inferences about the entire student population based on the results of the sample.
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Vermont Students Who Participated in the YRBS

	GRADE					GENDER		
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	ALL*
Number of students	1672	2077	1857	1623	1331	4381	4224	8636

*NOTE: Some students did not indicate their grade or gender. Therefore, totals by grade and by gender do not equal the overall total, 8636.

✓ Injuries, Violence, and Safety

This section deals with personal safety and violence, and includes questions about physical fights, weapons, vehicle safety, and suicide.

- **Physical Fighting:** Violence and abuse comprise a significant public health problem in Vermont. In FY'96, the Vermont Network Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault served close to 16,000 victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.¹ In 1991, 44 percent of the homicides in Vermont were a result of family violence.² Nationwide, homicide is the second leading cause of death among all youth aged 15 to 24.³ Physical fighting often precedes fatal violence among young persons.⁴ More and more Vermont schools are teaching students to resolve conflicts through mediation.
- **Weapons and Fear:** Homicide rates increase dramatically in the United States during adolescence from less than one per 100,000 at age 10, to 13.9 per 100,000 by age 20.⁵ Approximately nine out of 10 homicide victims in the United States are killed with a weapon.² The immediate accessibility of a firearm or other lethal weapon is often a factor.^{6,7} In Vermont, homicides involving firearms are most common among teenagers.⁸
- **Vehicle Safety - Safety Belts and Bicycle Helmets:** Safety belt use is estimated to reduce motor vehicle fatalities by 40 to 50 percent and serious injury by 45 to 55 percent.⁹ Increasing the use of automobile safety restraint systems to 85 percent could save an estimated 10,000 American lives per year.¹⁰ In 1995, 71 percent of Vermonters reported using their safety belt, up from 55 percent in 1993.¹¹ Head injury is the leading cause of death in motorcycle and bicycle crashes.¹² The risk of head injury for unhelmeted bicyclists is more than six and one-half times greater than for riders who wear helmets.¹³
- **Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence:** Motor vehicle crash injuries, more than half of which involve alcohol,¹⁴ are the leading cause of death among youth aged 15 to 24 in the US.³ For instance, 31 out of 68 deaths (46 percent) among 15 to 24 year olds in Vermont in 1995 were due to motor vehicle crashes.¹⁵ Alcohol-related crashes also cause serious injury and permanent disability and rank as the leading cause of spinal cord injury among adolescents and young adults.¹⁶

Motor vehicle fatalities account for half of all fatal injuries in the US.³ The two most important factors contributing to such fatalities are non-use of safety belts and driving under the influence of alcohol. In 1994, 42 percent of Vermonters fatally injured in crashes were unrestrained.¹⁷

✓ Injuries, Violence, and Safety (cont'd)

- **Suicide:** Suicide is the third leading cause of death among US youth aged 15 to 24.³ The suicide rate for people aged 15 to 24 has tripled since 1950.¹⁸ Vermont's teen suicide rate is higher than the national average with a rate of 4.2 deaths per 100,000 adolescents, compared to 3.1 deaths per 100,000 adolescents nationwide.⁸
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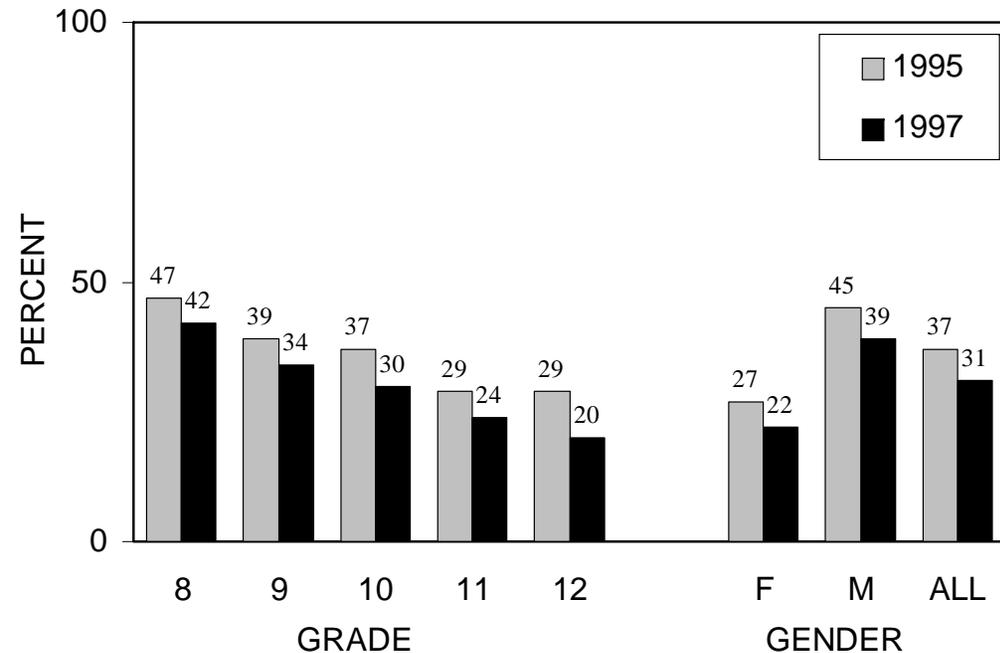
Related *Healthy Vermonters 2000* Goals:

- Increase the percent of people using motor vehicle safety restraints to at least 85 percent.
- Increase the number of schools that teach non-violent conflict resolution to at least 50 percent.
- Reduce suicides rate to less than 10.5 per 100,000 population.

■ Physical Fighting

- Less fighting.** Overall, Vermont students reported less physical fighting this year compared to 1995 (31% vs 37%). Nationally, 39% of students (grades 9 to 12) reported fighting in 1995.
- Females fight less than males.** Male students were almost twice as likely as female students to have been in a physical fight (39% vs 22%). The male vs female difference was similar in 1995 in Vermont (45% vs 27%) and nationally among 9th to 12th graders (46% vs 31%).
- Fighting is more common among young students.** Eighth graders were twice as likely as 12th graders to have been in a fight (42% vs 20%). The 8th vs 12th grade difference was similar in 1995 (47% vs 29%).

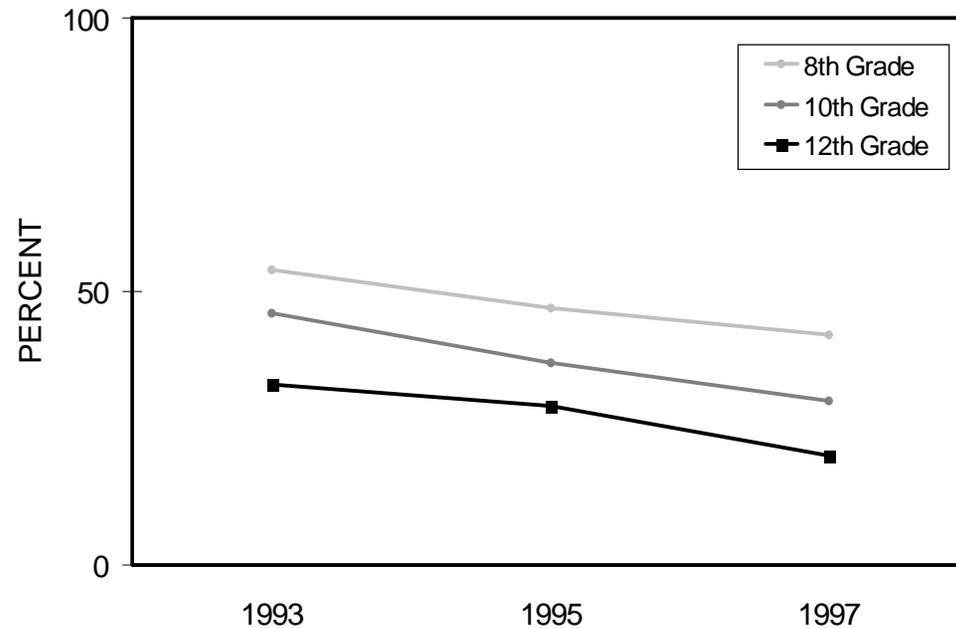
Percent of students who were in a physical fight during the past 12 months



■ Physical Fighting

- **Less fighting.** Physical fighting has decreased across all grades in Vermont since 1993. For example, fighting among 8th graders dropped from 54% to 42%, among 10th graders 46% to 30%, and among 12th graders 33% to 20%.

Physical Fighting in Vermont 1993 to 1997
Percent of students who were in a physical fight during the past 12 months



■ Physical Fighting

- Females are in serious fights less than males.** Female students were less likely than male students to be in a fight that resulted in an injury (2% vs 5%). and in a fight on school property (8% vs 22%). These figures are similar to the 1995 national results (grades 9 to 12).
- Fighting on school property is more common among young students.** Eighth graders were three times more likely than 12th graders to fight on school property (24% vs 8%). Overall, 15% of Vermont students fought on school property. This compares to 16% from the national 1995 survey (grades 9 to 12).

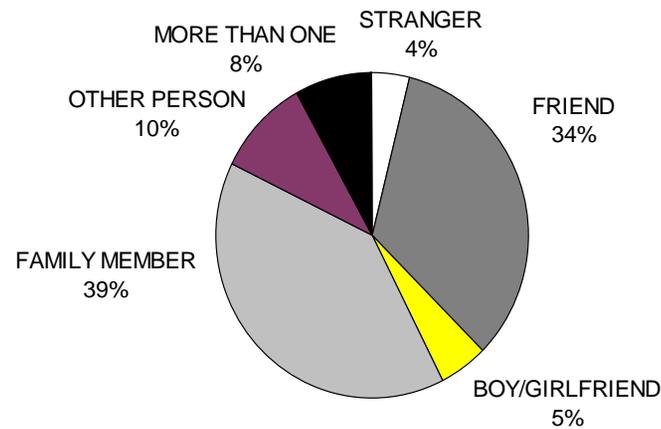
PHYSICAL FIGHTING	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who were in a physical fight and had to be treated by a doctor or nurse during the past 12 months	4	4	4	3	3	2	5	4	5
Percent of students who were in a physical fight <u>on school property</u> during the past 12 months	24	18	14	10	8	8	22	15	17

Physical Fighting

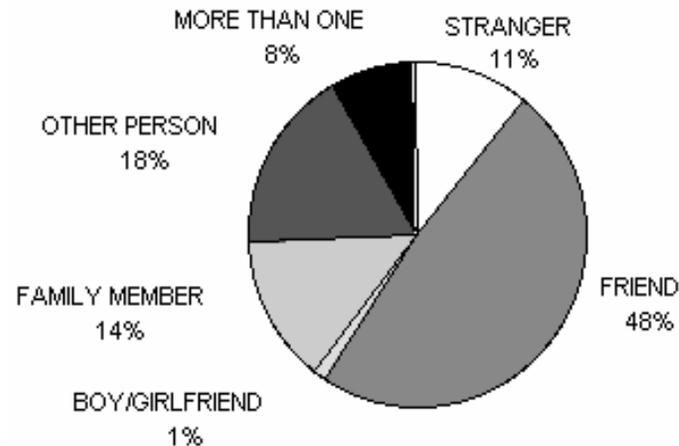
- Students fight more with people they know than with strangers.** Strangers made up only 4% of the people female students fought with and 11% of the people male students fought with during the past 12 months.
- Females fight less with friends and more with family members and dates than male students.** Of the students who fought, 39% of female students fought with family members, compared to only 14% of male students. Female students were five times more likely to fight with a boy/girlfriend or date than male students (5% vs 1%). These differences are consistent with results from the 1995 Vermont YRBS.

The last time you were in a physical fight with whom did you fight?

FEMALES



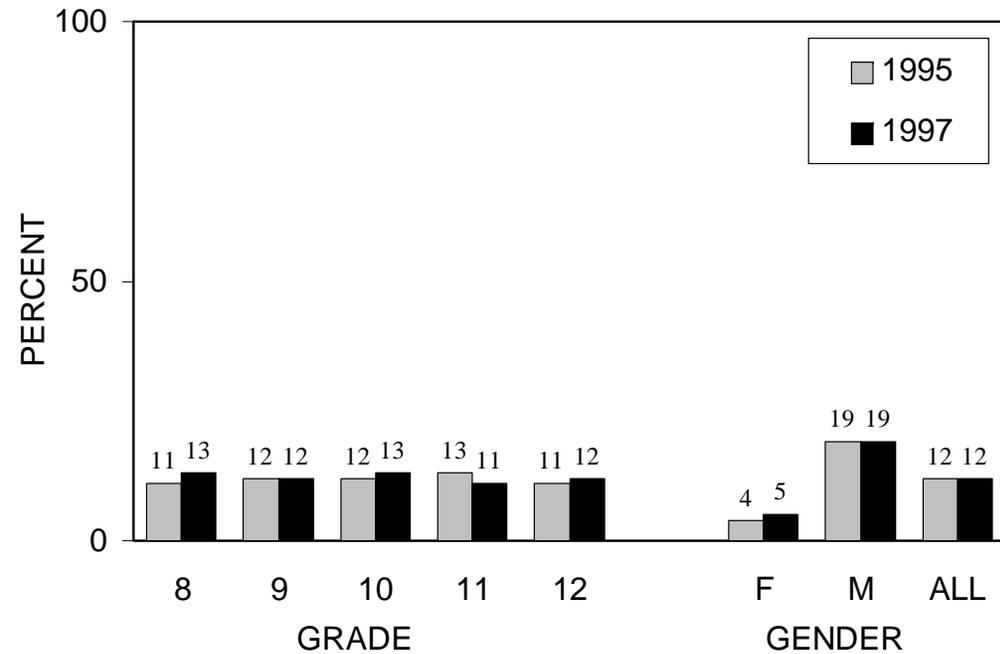
MALES



■ Weapons and Fear

- **Males carry weapons to school more than females.** Male students were almost four times more likely to carry a weapon on school property than female students (19% vs 5%). This pattern is similar to the 1995 national (14% vs 5%) and Vermont results (19% vs 4%)

Percent of students who carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club on school property during the past 30 days



■ Weapons and Fear

- **Younger students feel less safe than older students.** Eighth graders were twice as likely as 12th students to not go to school because they felt unsafe (6% vs 3%). This difference is similar to the 1995 Vermont results (7% vs 3%).
- **Females are threatened with weapons at school less than males.** Female students were half as likely as male students to have been threatened with a weapon at school (5% vs 11%). The female vs male difference is similar to the 1995 US results (6% vs 11%).
- **More males than females have their property stolen at school.** Overall, 36% of male students compared to 27% of female students reported that someone stole or deliberately damaged their property at school.

SAFETY, WEAPONS, AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY									
	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who:									
Did not go to school because they felt unsafe during the past 30 days	6	5	5	3	3	4	5	4	4
Were threatened or injured with a weapon <u>on school property</u> during the past 12 months	10	8	8	6	6	5	11	8	7
Said that someone had stolen or deliberately damaged their property <u>on school property</u> during the past 12 months	34	35	30	30	27	27	36	32	36

Vehicle Safety - Safety Belts

- Safety belt use is up.** Overall, 75% of Vermont students reported always or almost always wearing their safety belt when riding in a car, compared to 72% of students in 1995 and 63% of students in 1993.
- Females wear safety belts more often than males.** Four out of five (80%) female students wore their safety belt when riding in a car, compared to 70% of male students. The female vs male difference was similar in 1995 (79% vs 65%).

SAFETY BELT USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who wear a safety belt when riding in a car driven by someone else									
Always or almost always	72	72	76	81	77	80	70	75	72
Sometimes	14	14	12	10	10	12	13	12	15
Never or rarely	15	14	12	9	13	8	17	13	14

■ Vehicle Safety - Safety Belts

- **Over three-fourths of students buckle up when driving.** Overall, 82% of Vermont students reported always or almost always wearing their safety belt when driving a car.
- **Females buckle up more often than males.** Nine out of 10 (89%) female students always or almost always wore their safety belt when driving a car, compared to 77% of male students.

SAFETY BELT USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who wear a safety belt when driving a car									
Always or almost always	52	80	87	87	81	89	77	82	NA
Sometimes	10	6	4	5	6	5	6	6	NA
Never or rarely	37	14	8	8	13	6	17	12	NA

■ Vehicle Safety - Bicycle Helmets

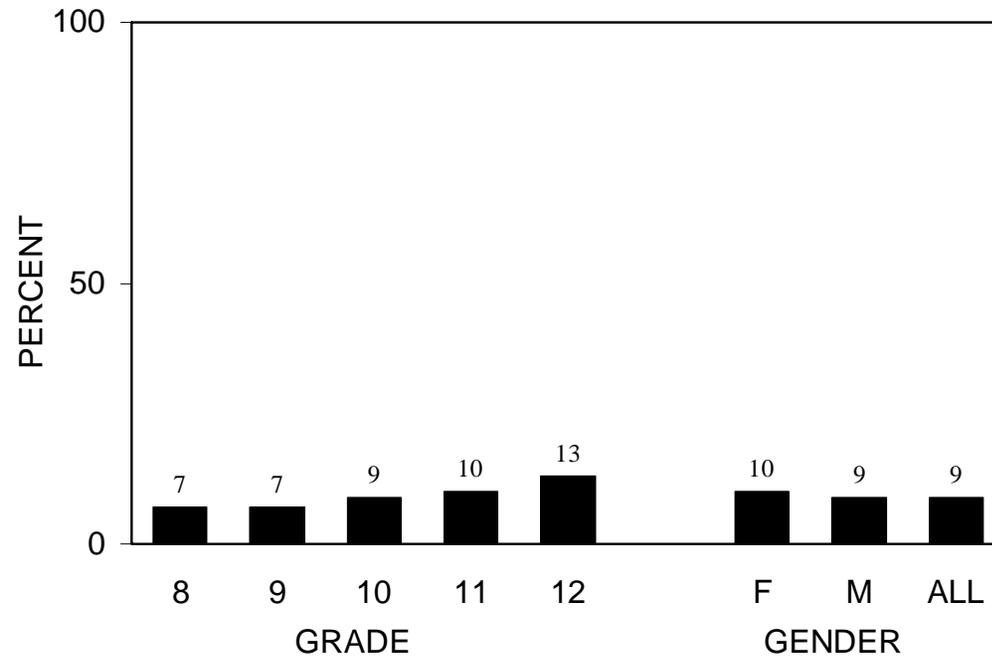
- Younger students ride bicycles more than older students.** More 8th graders than 12th graders rode bicycles during the year preceding the survey (92% vs 66%). This difference is similar to 1995 Vermont results (91% vs 71%)
- Bicycle helmet use is up.** Overall, 26% of students always or almost always wore helmets when riding bicycles, compared to 16% of students in 1995 and 11% of students in 1993.
- Younger students wear bicycle helmets more than older students.** More 8th graders than 12th graders always or almost always wore helmets when riding bicycles (32% vs 23%).

BICYCLE HELMET USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who rode a bicycle one or more times during the past 12 months	92	88	82	73	66	77	85	81	82
Frequency of helmet use (in percents) among students who rode a bicycle in the past 12 months									
Always or almost always	32	29	24	21	23	27	26	26	16
Sometimes	13	12	12	11	10	13	11	12	9
Never or rarely	55	59	65	68	67	60	63	62	75

■ Vehicle Safety - Crashes

- Overall, 9% of students were injured in a car crash during the past 12 months.
- Older students are more likely than younger students to have been injured in a car crash. Twelfth graders were almost twice as likely as 8th graders to be injured in a car crash during the past 12 months. (13% vs 7%).

Percent of students who were injured in a car or other vehicle crash during the past 12 months



■ Vehicle Safety - Crashes

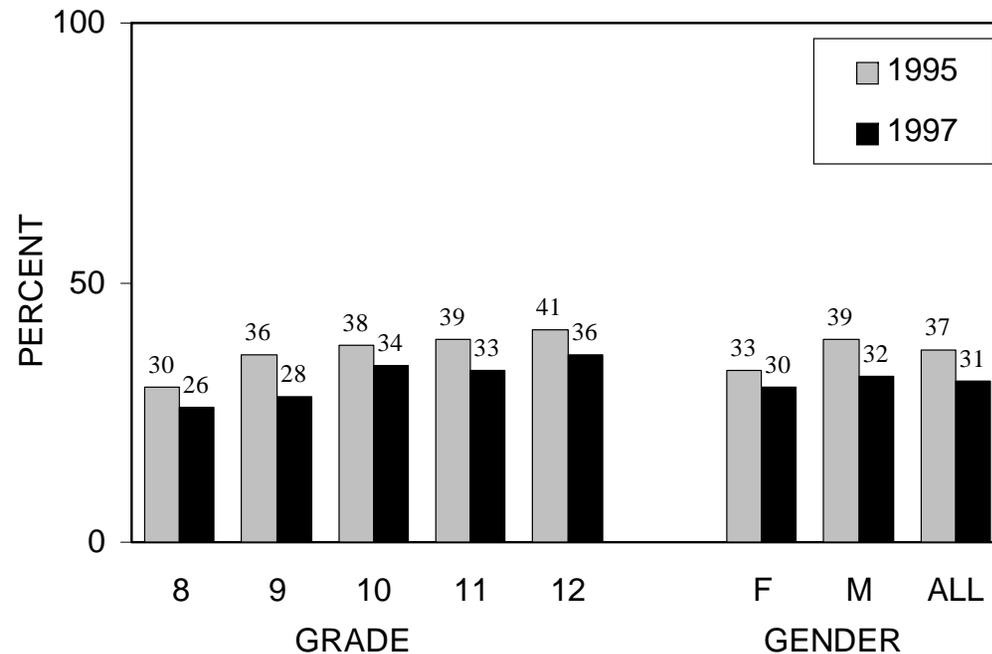
- **The majority of drivers involved in car crashes are young.** In almost half (46%) of those crashes where students were injured, the driver was 15 to 17 years old.
- **More males than females who are injured in a car crash are not wearing their safety belt at the time of the crash.** Half of male students (51%), compared to 32% of female students were not wearing their safety belt when injured in a car crash.

MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES	GRADE					GENDER		ALL
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	
Percent of students who injured in a crash during the past 12 months, and:								
The driver was 15 to 17 years old	31	36	45	59	52	49	43	46
They were driving	22	14	16	37	46	25	32	28
They were not wearing their safety belt	57	44	40	40	32	32	51	42

■ Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence

- Riding with drinking drivers has declined slightly.** Almost one-third (31%) of Vermont students reported riding with a drinking driver during the past 30 days, compared to 37% of students in 1995.
- Older students ride with drinking drivers more than younger students.** Twelfth graders were more likely than 8th graders to have ridden in a car driven by someone drinking alcohol (36% vs 26%). This 12th vs 8th grade difference was similar in 1995 (41% vs 30%).

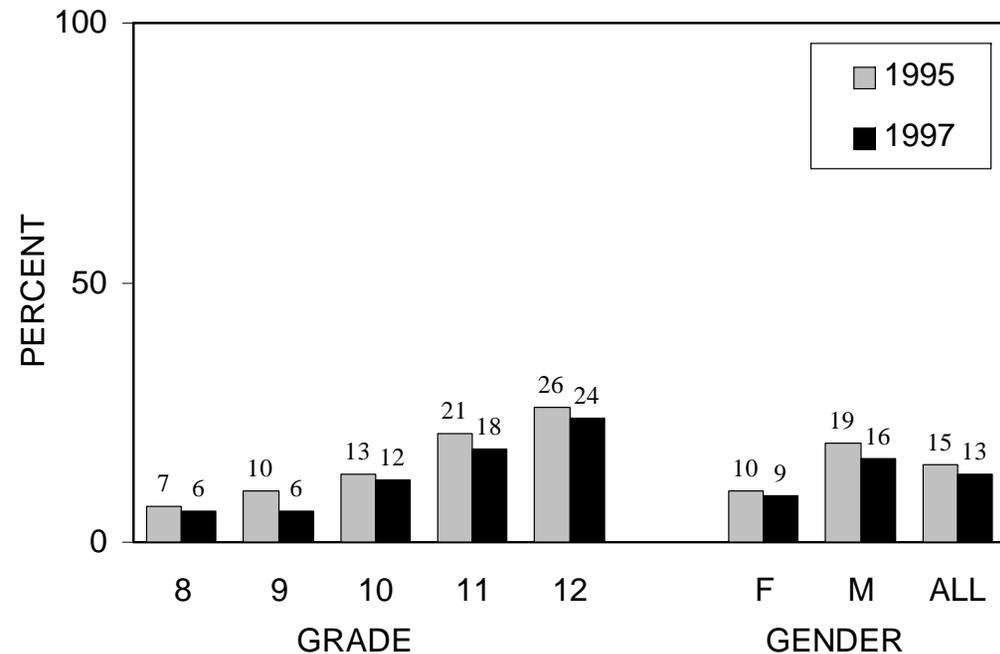
Percent of students who during the past 30 days rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol



Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence

- Females drink and drive less than males.** Female students were almost half as likely as male students to drive a car after drinking alcohol (9% vs 16%). This difference is similar to results in 1995 (10% vs 19%).
- Older students drink and drive more than younger students.** Twelfth graders were four times more likely than 8th graders to drive when they had been drinking alcohol (24% vs 6%). This difference is similar to results in 1995 (26% vs 7%).

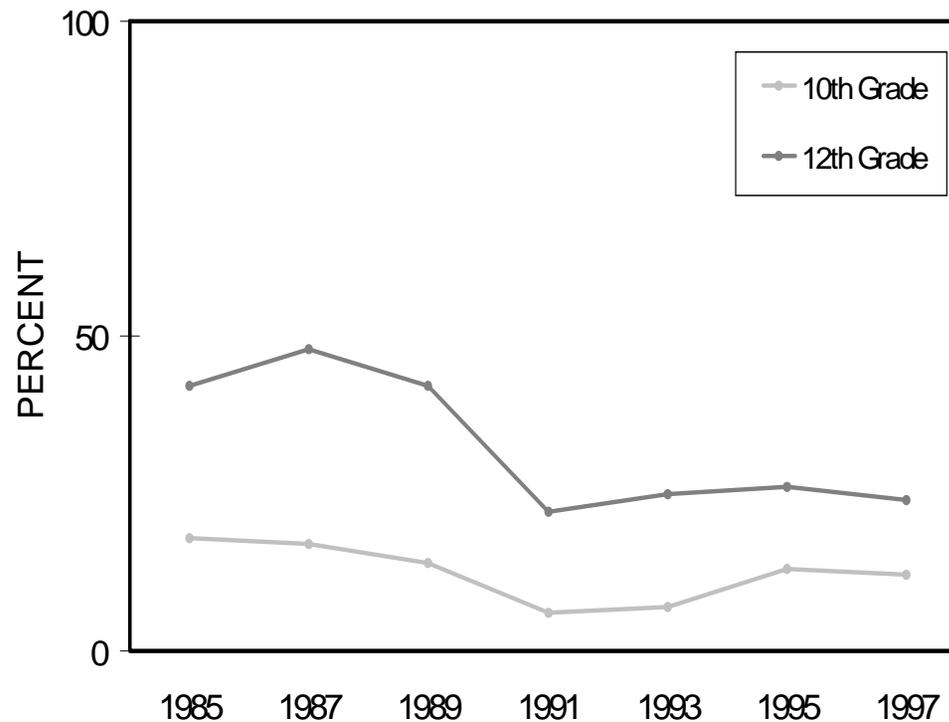
Percent of students who during the past 30 days drove a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol



■ Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence

- **Drinking and driving has decreased since 1985.** Among 12th graders, drinking and driving decreased from 42% in 1985 to 24% in 1997. This pattern was similar to, but less dramatic among 10th graders.

Drinking and Driving 1985 to 1997
Percent of students who during the past 30 days drove a car or other vehicle when they had been drinking alcohol *

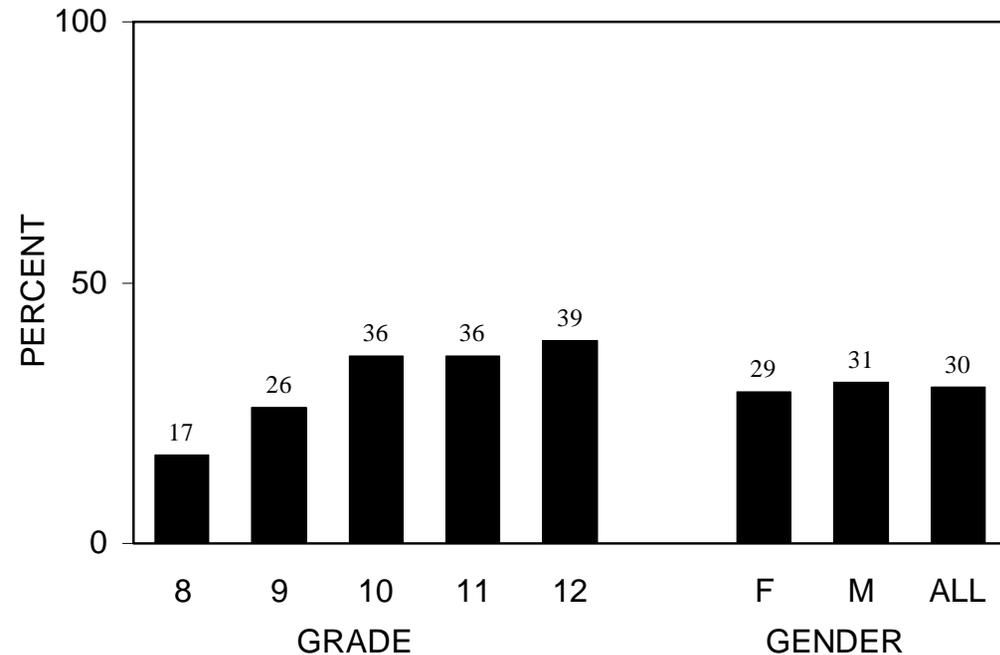


*The data provided for 1985 to 1993 are estimates based on earlier versions of the Vermont student survey (see page 1).

■ Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence

- **Almost one-third (30%) of students have ridden with someone who was smoking marijuana during the past 30 days.**
- **Older students ride with someone who has been smoking marijuana more than younger students.** Twelfth grader were more likely than 8th graders to have ridden in a car driven by someone smoking marijuana (39% vs 17%).

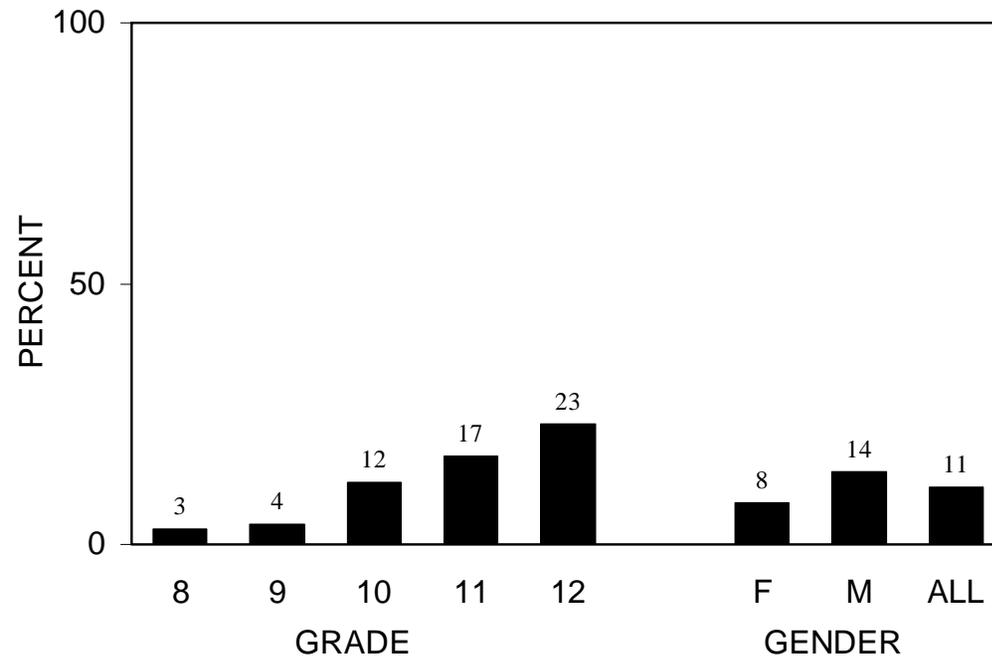
Percent of students who during the past 30 days rode in a car or other vehicle driven by someone who had been smoking marijuana



■ Vehicle Safety - Driving Under the Influence

- Female students drive when they have been smoking marijuana less than male students.**
 Females were almost half as likely as males to report driving when they had been smoking marijuana (14% vs 8%).
- Older students drive when they have been smoking marijuana more than younger students.** Twelfth graders were over seven times more likely than 8th graders to drive when they had been smoking marijuana (23% vs 3%).

Percent of students who during the past 30 days drove a car or other vehicle when they had been smoking marijuana



■ Suicide

- One-fourth of students seriously consider suicide.** Overall, 24% of students seriously considered suicide in 1997. Among students (grades 9 to 12) nationwide in 1995, 24% considered suicide, 18% made a plan, 9% attempted suicide, and 3% required medical treatment.
- More females than males consider suicide.** Female students were more likely than male students to seriously consider suicide (30% vs 18%), make a suicide plan (22% vs 14%), and actually attempt suicide (11% vs 7%). These female vs male differences are similar to results from the 1995 Vermont and national surveys.

SUICIDE CONCERNS	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who during the past 12 months:									
Seriously considered attempting suicide	25	26	24	22	21	30	18	24	28
Made a plan about how to attempt suicide	20	20	18	17	16	22	14	18	22
Actually attempted suicide	11	10	10	6	7	11	7	9	10
Attempted suicide and required medical treatment	4	4	4	2	3	3	3	3	4

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs

The questions in this section ask students about their use of alcohol, tobacco products, marijuana, inhalants, cocaine, steroids, and other illegal drugs. The questions ask the age at which students first used these substances and how often they use them now.

- **Alcohol Use** is a major contributing factor in approximately one half of all homicides, suicides, and motor vehicle crashes, which are the leading causes of death and disability among young people in the United States.¹⁴ Approximately 100,000 American deaths per year are attributable to misuse of alcohol.¹⁹ Heavy drinking among youth has been linked to physical fights, property destruction, academic and job problems, and trouble with law enforcement authorities.¹⁰
- **Tobacco Use** is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States,^{20,21} accounting for more than one of every five deaths.²² Smoking causes heart disease; cancers of the lung, larynx, mouth, esophagus, and bladder; stroke; and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In addition, smoking is related to poor academic performance and the use of alcohol and other drugs.²³ Over one million teenagers begin smoking each year.¹⁸ Between 1970 and 1986, the prevalence of snuff use in the US increased fifteenfold among men 17 to 19, and the prevalence of chewing tobacco use increased fourfold.²¹
- **Marijuana Use** has begun to rebound during the past few years following a decade of decline. Increased use has occurred across all ages but is especially true among 8th graders. Chronic, long-term use is associated with smoking-related respiratory damage, short-term memory loss, decreased motivation, and psychological dependence.²⁴
- **Inhalant Use** is the deliberate inhalation or sniffing of common products found in homes and schools, like glue and cleaners, and some gases intended for medical or dental purposes to obtain a “high”. Inhalant use can cause short-term memory loss, brain, lung, liver, and kidney damage, or even sudden death. Inhalants are legal, easy to get, inexpensive and difficult to detect, and experimentation typically begins in the preteen years.²⁵
- **Other Drug Use** is related to early unwanted pregnancy, school failure, delinquency, and transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), including HIV infection.²⁶ One in four American adolescents is estimated to be at very high risk for the consequences of alcohol and other drug problems.¹⁹ In spite of improvements in recent years, illicit drug use is greater among high school students and other young adults in the United States than in any other industrialized nation in the world.²⁷

Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs (cont'd)

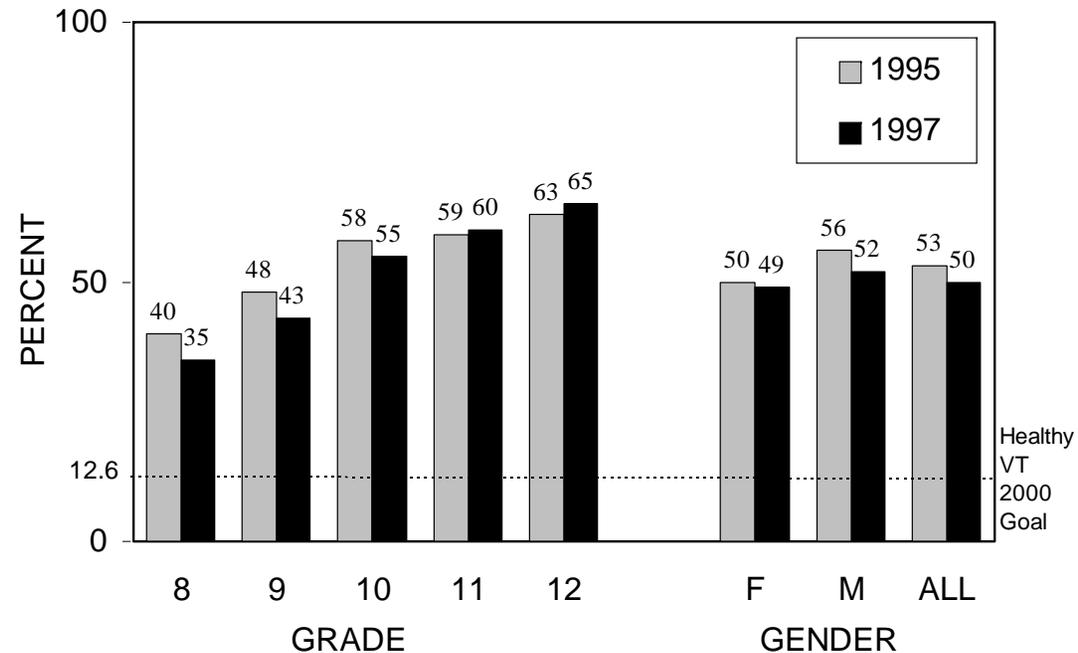
Related *Healthy Vermonters 2000* Goals:

- Reduce percent of youth aged 12 to 17 who used alcohol in the past month to 12.6 percent or less.
- Reduce percent of high school seniors who engage in heavy drinking to 28 percent or less.
- Reduce percent of youth who begin smoking by age 20 to 15 percent or less.
- Reduce percent of youth aged 12 to 17 who used marijuana in the past month to 3.2 percent or less.
- Reduce percent of youth aged 12 to 17 who used cocaine in the past month to 0.6 percent or less.

Alcohol Use

- Half of all students have consumed alcohol during the past 30 days.** Overall, 50% of Vermont students drank alcohol, compared to 53% of Vermont and 52% of national students (grades 9 to 12) in 1995.
- Alcohol use increases across grades.** More 12th graders than 8th graders drank alcohol (65% vs 35%). In 1995, 63% of Vermont 12th graders drank alcohol, compared to 40% of 8th graders.

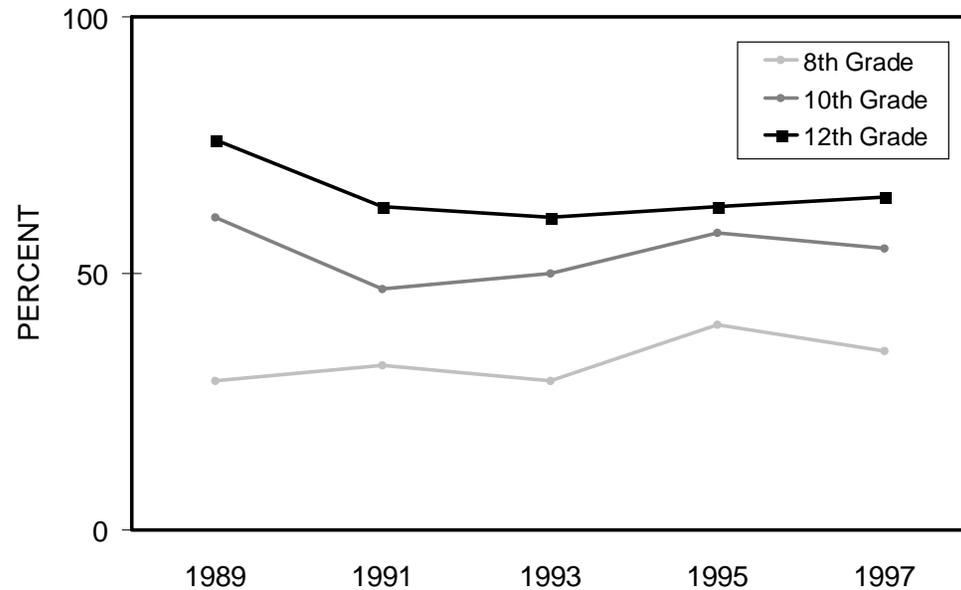
Percent of students who consumed at least one drink of alcohol during the past 30 days



■ Alcohol Use

- Alcohol use among 10th and 12th graders has decreased since 1989.** Alcohol use among 12th graders in Vermont dropped from 76% in 1989 to 63% in 1991 and has been level since then. Alcohol use among 10th graders dropped from 61% in 1989 to 47% in 1991, but it has increased slightly since then.
- Alcohol use among 8th graders has increased since 1989.** Alcohol use among 8th graders in Vermont remained stable from 1989 (29%) to 1993 (29%), but it dramatically increased in 1995 (40%) and remains higher than the 1989 level.

Alcohol Use in Vermont 1989 to 1997
Percent of students who drank during the past 30 days*

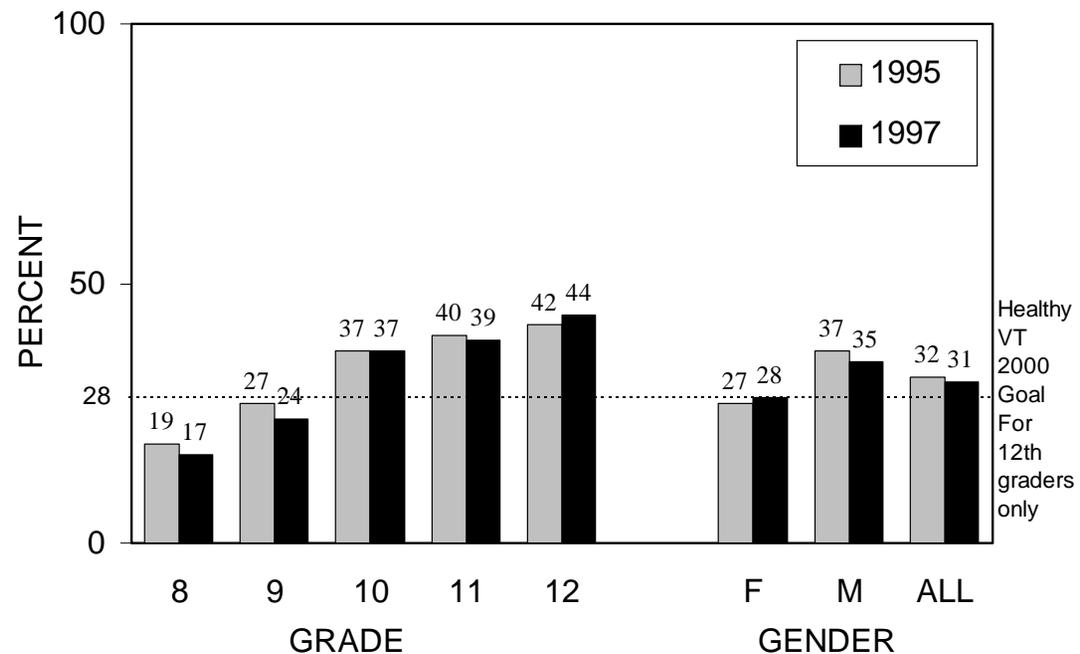


*The data provided for 1989 to 1991 are estimates based on earlier versions of the Vermont student survey (see page 1).

Alcohol Use

- Almost one-third of Vermont students binge drink.** Binge drinking is defined as having five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours. Overall, 31% of Vermont students reported binge drinking during the past 30 days.
- Female students binge drink less than male students.** Over one-fourth (28%) of female students reported binge drinking compared to 35% of male students. This female vs male difference was similar in 1995 in Vermont and the nation (grades 9 to 12)
- Older students binge drink more than younger students.** Twelfth graders were over twice as likely as 8th graders to binge drink (44% vs 17%). The 12th vs 8th grade difference was similar in 1995 (42% vs 19%).

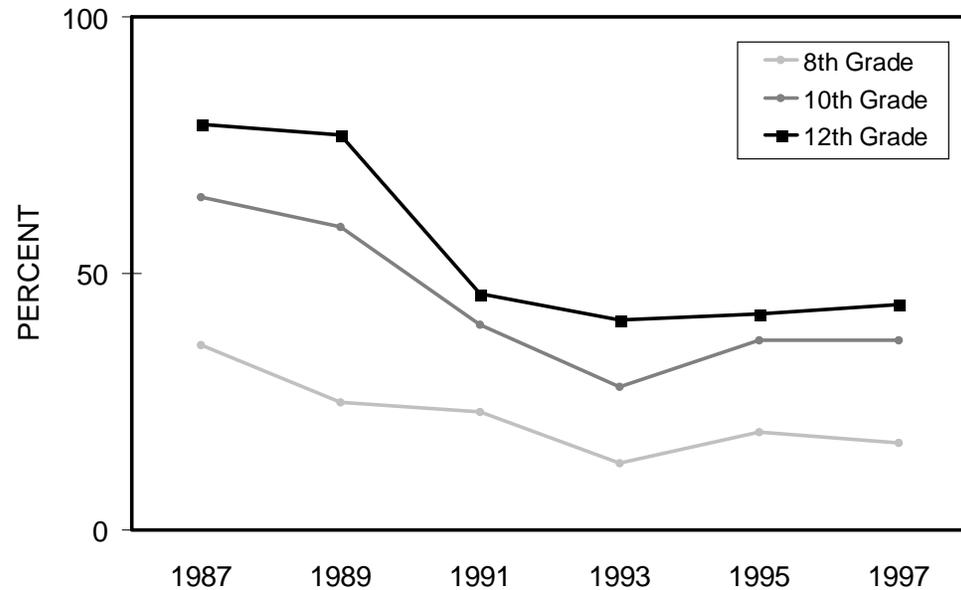
Percent of students who binged on alcohol (had five or more drinks of alcohol within a couple of hours) during the past 30 days



Alcohol Use

- Binge drinking is decreasing.** Among 8th graders binge drinking decreased from 36% in 1987 to 17% in 1997. Among 10th graders, binge drinking decreased from 65% in 1987 to 37% in 1997. Among 12th graders, binge drinking decreased from 79% in 1987 to 44% in 1997.
- Among lower grades, binge drinking is up compared to 1993.** Binge drinking among 8th graders increased from 13% in 1993 to 17% in 1997. Binge drinking among 10th graders increased from 28% in 1993 to 37% in 1997.

Alcohol Use in Vermont 1987 to 1997
Percent of students who “binged” during the past 30 days*



*The data provided for 1987 to 1991 are estimates based on earlier versions of the Vermont student survey (see page 1).

■ Alcohol Use

- **Three-fourths of Vermont students have had a drink of alcohol.** In 1995, 77% of Vermont students and 80% of US students (grades 9 to 12) had consumed alcohol, other than a few sips.
- **Females start drinking alcohol later than males.** Female students were less likely than male students to report consuming alcohol before age 13 (30% vs 40%). Similarly, the female vs male difference in 1995 was 31% vs 43%.
- **Females drink less frequently than males.** Female students were almost half as likely as male students to have consumed alcohol on 10 or more days during the past month (6% vs 11%). The female vs male difference was similar in 1995 (12% vs 6%).

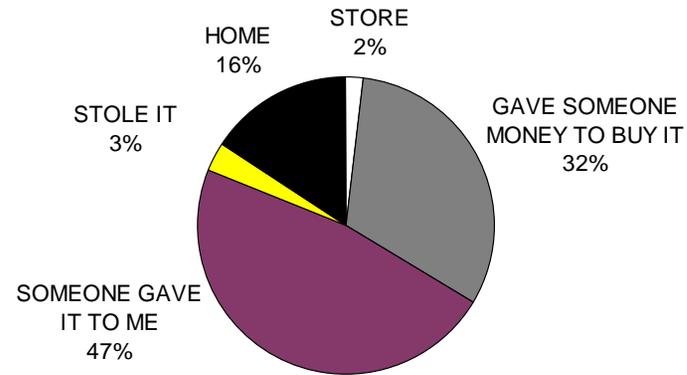
ALCOHOL USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who:									
Have ever had a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips	58	68	82	83	86	74	75	74	77
First consumed alcohol, other than a few sips, before 13 years of age	44	38	36	29	27	30	40	35	37
Drank alcohol on 3 to 9 days during the past 30 days	12	18	24	28	26	20	21	21	21
Drank alcohol on 10 or more days during the past 30 days	6	7	10	9	15	6	11	9	9
“Binged” on alcohol 10 or more days during the past 30 days	2	2	3	3	6	2	4	3	3
Drank alcohol <u>on school property</u> during the past 30 days	6	5	8	5	6	4	8	6	7

Alcohol Use

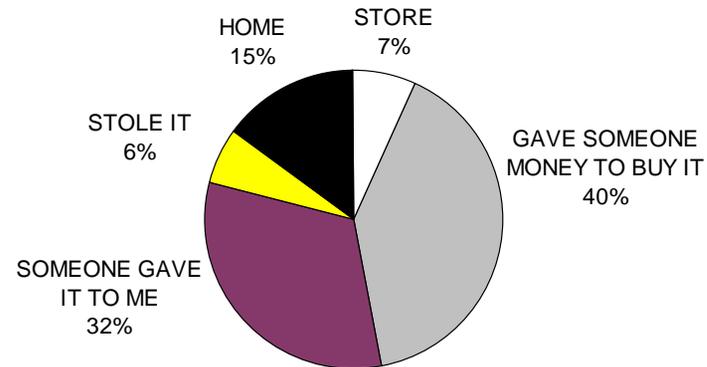
- Most students obtain alcohol by someone giving it to them or by giving someone money to buy it for them.** Overall, 40% of the students who drank during the past 30 days reported someone gave them alcohol and 36% reported giving someone else money to buy alcohol for them.
- Some students obtain alcohol from home.** Among students who drank alcohol during the past 30 days, 16% of females and 15% of males usually got their alcohol from home.

Where students get their own alcohol (only among students who drank during the past 30 days)

FEMALES



MALES



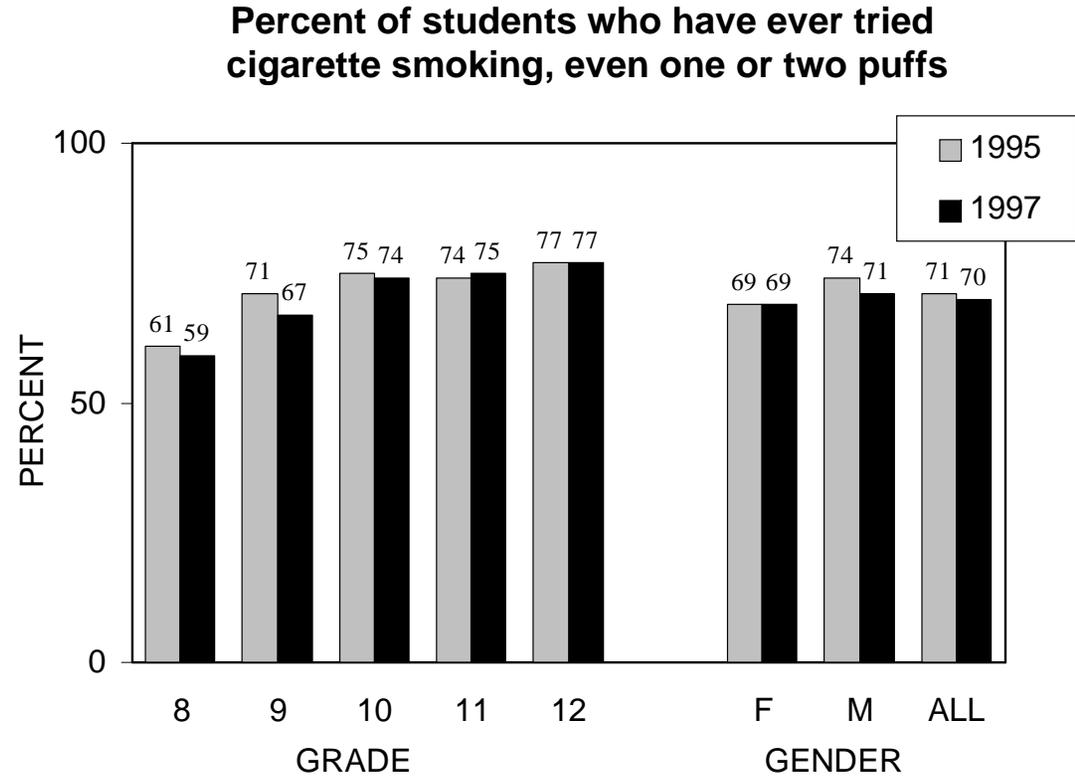
■ Alcohol Use

- **Almost one-fourth of Vermont students drank alone.** Overall, 23% of students reported drinking alone during the past 12 months.
- **Almost one-third of students drank more than they thought they would.** Overall, 32% of students reported drinking more than they thought they would during the past 12 months.
- **More older students than younger students could drink more without getting drunk.** Over one-third (36%) of 11th and 12th grade students reported that during the past 12 months they could drink more alcohol without getting drunk, compared to 22% of 8th grade students.
- **Over one-fourth of students could not remember what they said or did while drinking.** Overall, 27% of students could not remember what they said or did while drinking alcohol.

ALCOHOL USE AND ABUSE	GRADE					GENDER		
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	ALL
Percent of students who during the past 12 months:								
Drank alone	19	22	26	24	23	21	25	23
Drank more than they thought they would	19	27	37	38	42	33	31	32
Could drink more without getting drunk	22	26	35	36	36	28	33	31
Could not remember what they said or did while drinking	16	23	34	30	34	28	26	27

■ Tobacco Use

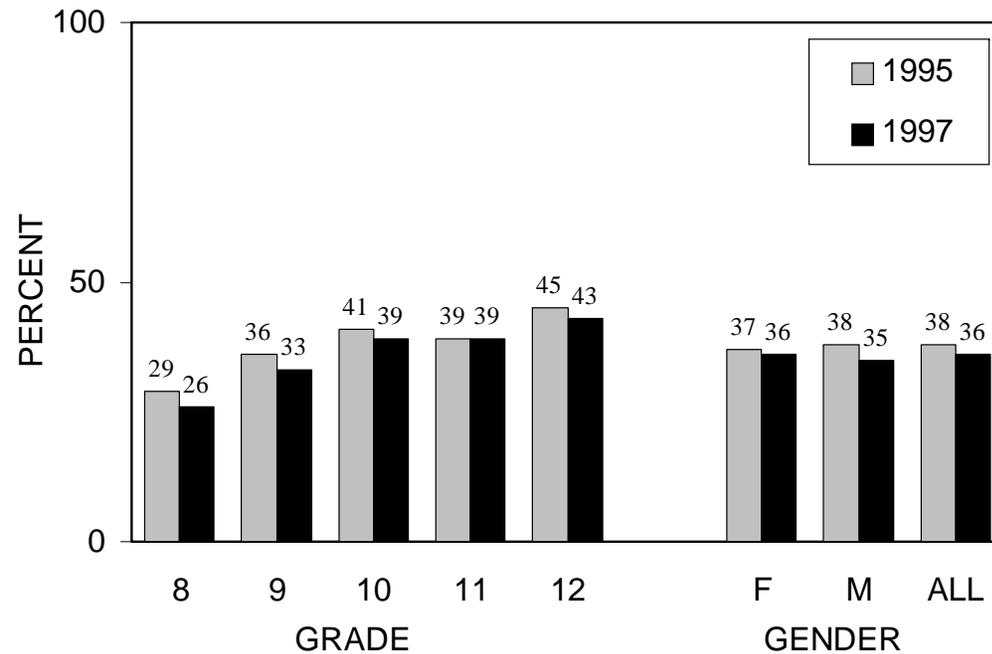
- **Seven out of 10 Vermont students have tried smoking cigarettes.** In 1995, 71% of Vermont and US (grades 9 to 12) students had tried smoking.
- **More older students than younger students have tried smoking.** Over three-fourths (77%) of Vermont 12th graders had tried smoking, compared to 59% of 8th graders.



■ Tobacco Use

- Over one-third of Vermont students smoke.** Overall, 36% of students reported smoking during the past 30 days. Nationally, 35% of students (grades 9 to 12) smoked cigarettes in 1995.
- Cigarette smoking remains stable.** Since 1995, the percent of students reporting smoking during the past 30 days has not significantly changed.

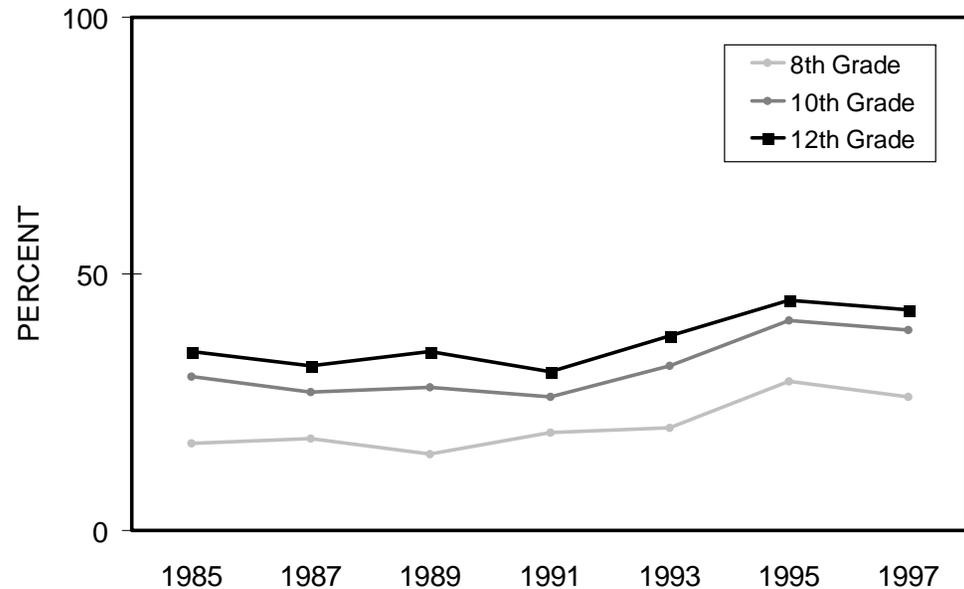
Percent of students who smoked cigarettes on one or more days during the past 30 days



■ Tobacco Use

- **Cigarette smoking has increased since 1985.** Smoking during the past 30 days is up since 1991. This is true among all grades, and it signals a clear shift in the fairly level trend since 1985.

Cigarette Smoking in Vermont 1985 to 1995
Percent of students who smoked cigarettes during the last 30 days*

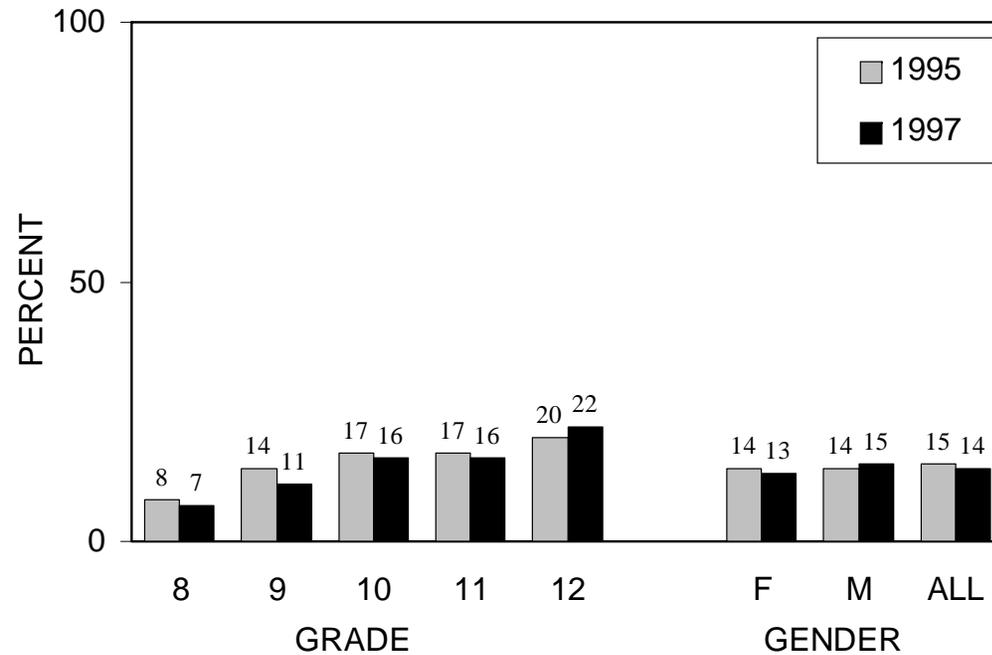


*The data provided for 1985 to 1991 are estimates based on earlier versions of the Vermont student survey (see page 1).

■ Tobacco Use

- Overall, 14% of Vermont students smoke regularly. Regular smoking among students has not significantly changed since 1995.

Percent of students who smoked every day during the past 30 days



■ Tobacco Use

- **Over one-fourth of Vermont students start smoking prior to age 13.** Overall, 28% of students reported smoking a whole cigarette prior to age 13.
- **Overall, 16% of students smoke cigarettes on school property.**
- **One-third of students have tried to quit smoking.** Overall, 33% of students reported trying to quit smoking at some point during the past.
- **More males than females chew tobacco.** Male students were four times more likely than female students to chew tobacco (12% vs 3%). Nationally, 20% of male students and only 2% of female students chewed tobacco.

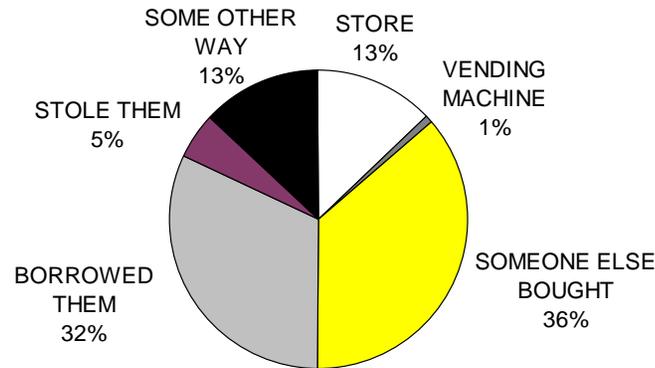
TOBACCO USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who:									
Smoked a whole cigarette prior to age 13	33	30	30	25	22	26	30	28	28
Smoked more than a pack on days smoked during the past 30 days	1	1	2	2	4	1	3	2	2
Smoked cigarettes <u>on school property</u> during the past 30 days	9	16	20	17	18	15	17	16	19
Ever tried to quit smoking cigarettes	31	32	34	34	34	34	32	33	36
Used chewing tobacco or snuff during the past 30 days	6	7	8	7	9	3	12	7	12
Used chewing tobacco or snuff <u>on school property</u> during the past 30 days	3	4	5	4	6	1	7	4	6

■ Tobacco Use

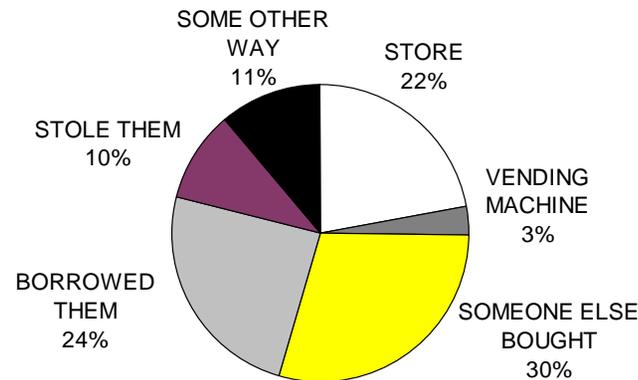
- Females buy cigarettes in stores less often than males.**
 Among students who smoked during the past 30 days, 13% of females bought cigarettes in stores, compared to 22% of male.
- Most students obtain cigarettes from other people.**
 Overall, most students who smoked had someone else buy cigarettes for them (32%) or borrowed (28%) the cigarettes.

Where students get cigarettes
 (only among students who smoked during the past 30 days)

FEMALES



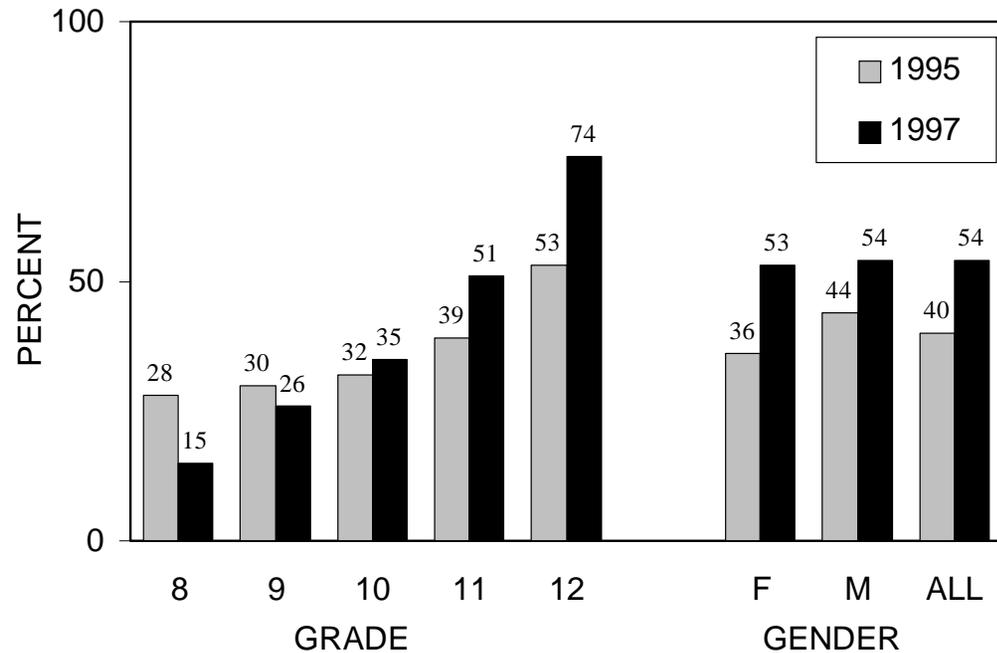
MALES



■ Tobacco Use

- **More students were asked to show ID.** Overall, 54% of Vermont students who bought cigarettes in a store were asked to show identification, compared to 40% in 1995.
- **Eighth graders were asked to show ID less in 1997.** Only 15% of 8th graders who bought cigarettes in a store were asked to show identification, compared to 28% in 1995.

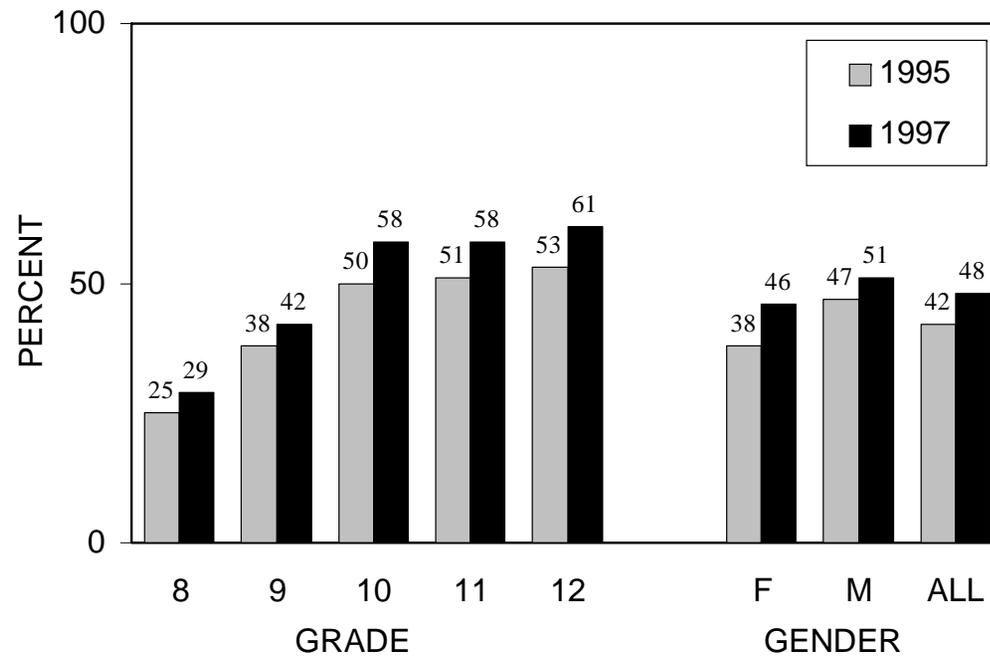
The percent of students who were asked to show proof of age when buying cigarettes in a store (only among those students who bought cigarettes)



■ Marijuana Use

- More Vermont students have tried marijuana.**
 Almost half (48%) of all students had tried marijuana in 1997, compared to 42% of Vermont and US (grades 9 to 12) students in 1995.

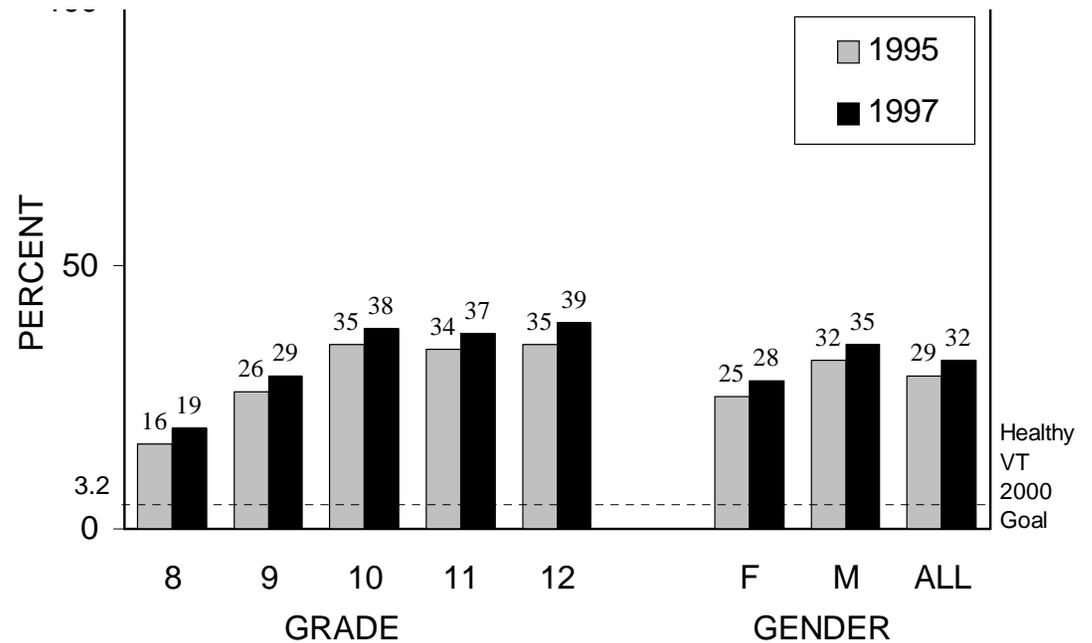
Percent of students who have ever tried marijuana



■ Marijuana Use

- **Almost one-third of Vermont students use marijuana.** Overall, 32% of students used marijuana during the past 30 days. Nationally, 25% of students (grades 9 to 12) used marijuana in 1995.
- **Females use marijuana less than males.** Over one-fourth (28%) of female students used marijuana, compared to 35% of male students. The female vs male difference is similar to US and Vermont results in 1995.

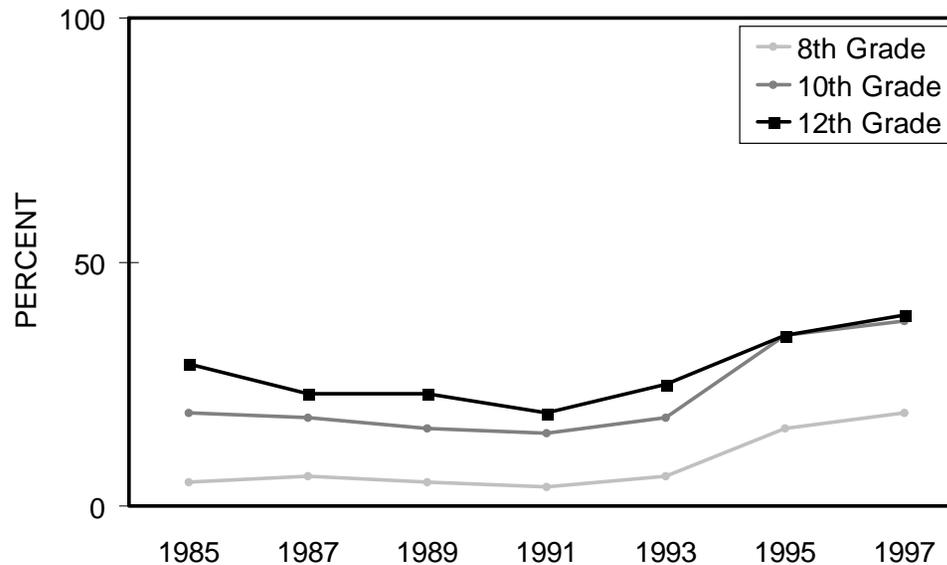
Percent of students who used marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days



Other Drug Use

- Marijuana use has increased since 1985.** The percentage of students who used marijuana during the past 30 days was level or even slightly declining from 1985 to 1991. Since 1991, marijuana use has increased dramatically among 12th graders (19% to 39%), 10th graders (15% to 38%), and 8th graders (4% to 19%).

Marijuana Use 1985 to 1995
Percent of students who smoked marijuana one or more times during the past 30 days*



*The data provided for 1985 to 1991 are estimates based on earlier versions of the Vermont student survey (see page 1).

■ Marijuana Use

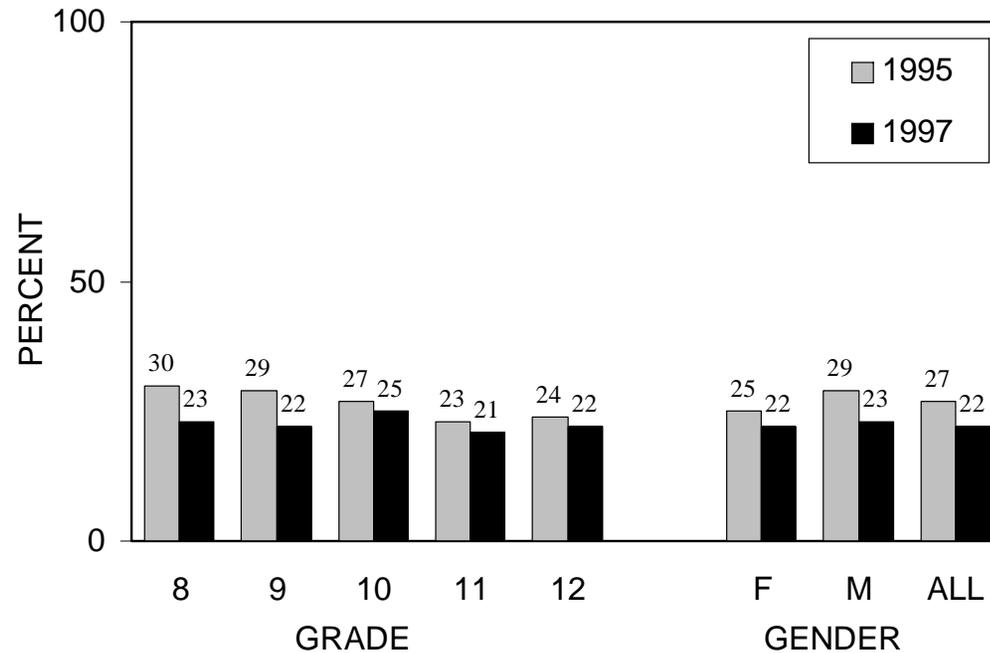
- Students start using marijuana earlier compared to 1993.** Overall, 13% of Vermont students have smoked marijuana by age 13, compared to 10% of Vermont students in 1995 and 6% in 1993.
- Males start using marijuana earlier and use marijuana more often than females.** In 1997, 16% of male students used marijuana by age 13, compared to 10% of females. Similarly, 17% of male students, compared to 11% of female students, used marijuana 10 or more times during the past 30 days
- Females use marijuana on school property less than males.** Female students were half as likely as male students to have used marijuana on school property (6% vs 12%). The male vs female difference was similar in 1995 among Vermont students (7% vs 13%) and US students (grades 9 to 12) (8% vs 3%).

MARIJUANA USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who:									
Tried marijuana before age 13	16	15	15	10	8	10	16	13	10
Used marijuana 10 or more times during the past 30 days	8	12	16	15	20	11	17	14	12
Used marijuana one or more times <u>on school property</u>	5	10	13	10	11	6	12	9	10

■ Inhalant Use

- Inhalant use is down.**
 Overall, 22% of Vermont students tried inhalants, compared to 27% in 1995. A decline in inhalant use was also seen across grades and gender.

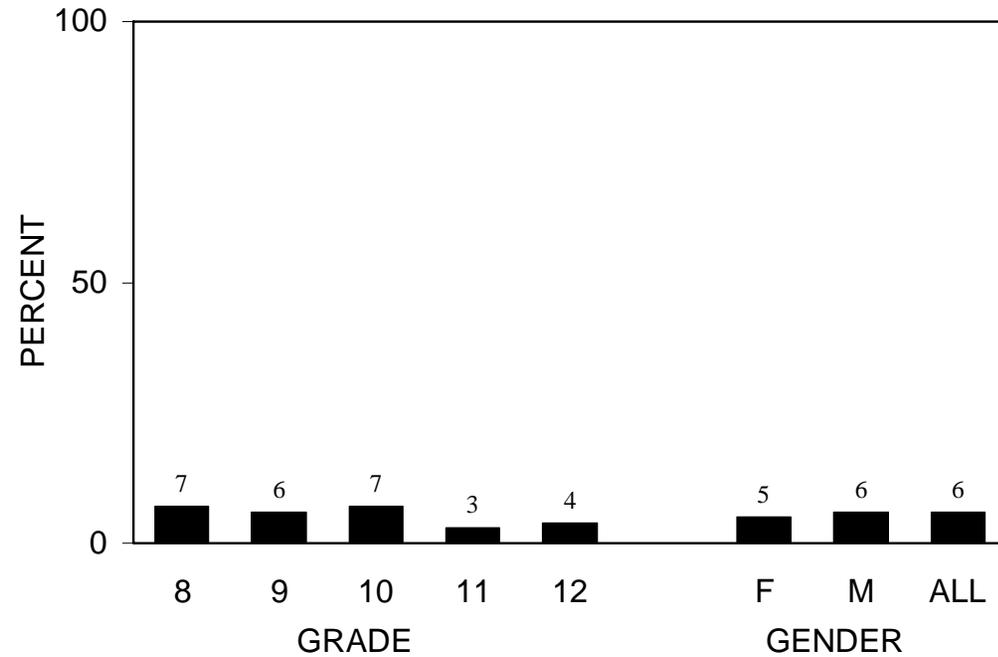
Percent of students who have ever used inhalants (e.g., sniffed glue, breathed the contents of aerosol spray cans, inhaled any paints or sprays to get high)



■ Inhalant Use

- **Younger students use inhalants more than older students.**
Approximately twice as many 8th through 10th grade students as 11th through 12th grade students used inhalants during the past 30 days (6 to 7% vs 3 to 4%).

Percent of students who used inhalants during the past 30 days

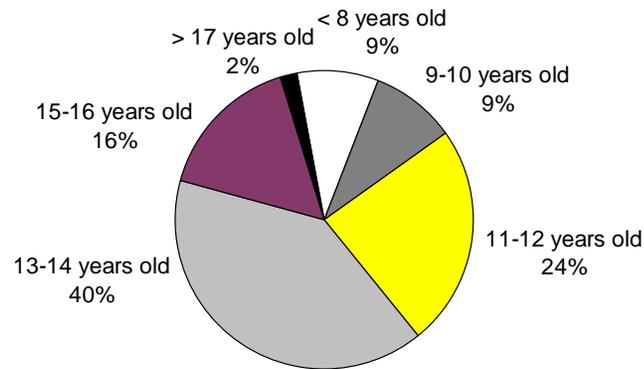


■ Inhalant Use

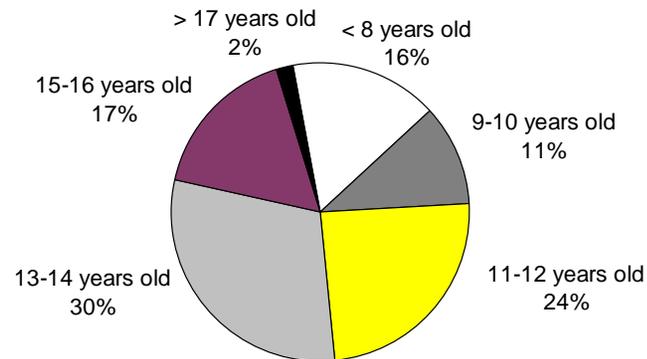
- **Almost half of students who have used inhalants tried them prior to age 13.** Overall, 47% of Vermont students who used inhalants first tried them when they were 12 years old or younger.
- **Males try inhalants earlier than females.** Over one-fourth (27%) of male students who have used inhalants tried them prior to age 11, compared to 18% of female students.

**Age at which students first tried inhalants
(only among students who have ever used inhalants)**

FEMALES



MALES



■ Other Drug Use

- **Overall, 10% of Vermont students have used cocaine.** In 1995, 7% of Vermont students and US students (grades 9 to 12) had used cocaine during their lifetime.
- **Females use illegal drugs less than males.** Female students were less likely than male students to have taken steroids (4% vs 8%); to have used other illegal drugs (20% vs 24%); to have injected illegal drugs (3% vs 6%); and to have been offered or sold drugs on school property (32% vs 42%).

OTHER DRUG USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who have used cocaine:									
During their lifetime	8	9	11	11	12	8	12	10	7
During the past 30 days	4	4	6	4	5	3	6	5	4
Percent of students who during their lifetime have:									
Taken steroids without a prescription	6	6	7	5	5	4	8	6	6
Used other illegal drugs (e.g., LSD, PCP, ecstasy, mushrooms, speed, heroin, ice)	14	20	24	24	29	20	24	22	19
Used a needle to inject any illegal drug into their body	5	4	5	4	3	3	6	4	4
Percent of students who were offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property during the past 12 months	29	39	44	39	38	32	42	38	35

■ Other Drug Use

- Overall, 17% of Vermont students took more drugs than they thought they would and could not remember what they said or did while taking drugs during the past 12 months.

OTHER DRUG USE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997
Percent of students who during the past 12 months have:								
Taken more drugs than they thought they would	11	16	21	19	18	17	17	17
Could not remember what they said or did while taking drugs	12	17	20	17	16	16	17	17

■ Other Drug Use

- **More males than females get in to physical fights while using alcohol or other drugs.** Male students were two times more likely than female students to have gotten into a physical fight while using alcohol or other drugs (17% vs 8%).
- **Some Vermont students have problems at school and at home because of using alcohol or other drugs.** Overall, 10% of students reported having problems at school and 17% reported problems at home because of their use of alcohol or other drugs.
- **Overall, 6% of students reported needing help or getting help for a problem with their use of alcohol or other drugs.**

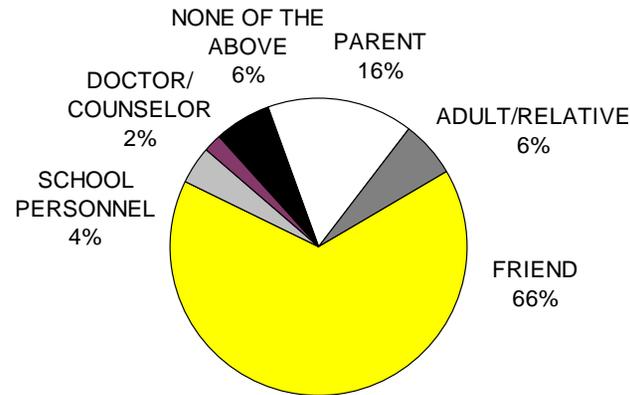
ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS	GRADE					GENDER		ALL
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997
Percent of students who during their lifetime have:								
Gotten into a physical fight while using alcohol or other drugs	11	11	14	14	16	8	17	13
Had problems at school because of using alcohol or other drugs	7	9	12	9	12	9	11	10
Had problems with their family because of using alcohol or other drugs	11	17	20	18	18	17	17	17
Ever thought they needed help for problems with their use of alcohol or other drugs	4	5	6	7	7	5	6	6
Ever gotten help that was primarily for problems because of their use of alcohol or other drugs	4	5	6	6	7	5	6	6

Other Drug Use

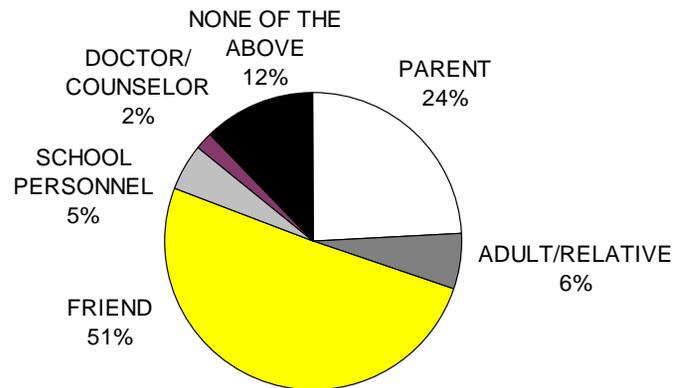
- Students are more likely to talk with friends than adults about a drug problem. Two-thirds (66%) of female students and 51% of male students would most likely talk to a friend about a drug problem. Students would more likely talk to a parent than another adult about a drug problem.

If you had a problem with tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs, who would you be most likely to talk to about it?

FEMALES



MALES



✓ Sexual Behavior

The questions in this section ask students whether they have received information about AIDS or HIV infection, whether they have had sexual intercourse, the age at which they first had sex, the frequency with which they have sex, whether they have ever been forced to have sex, and whether they use contraception.

-
- **Early sexual activity** is associated with unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STD), including HIV infection, and negative effects on social and psychological development.²⁸ Number of sexual partners and age at first intercourse are associated with STD. Alcohol and drug use may serve as predisposing factors for initiation of sexual activity and unprotected sexual intercourse. Of the 12 million new cases of STD per year in the United States, 86 percent are among people aged 15 to 29.²⁹ STD may result in infertility and facilitation of HIV transmission and may have an adverse effect on pregnancy outcome and maternal and child health.³⁰
 - **AIDS** is the sixth leading cause of death for youth aged 15 to 24 in the United States.³ Nationwide, 53 percent of students in grades 9 to 12 have already had sexual intercourse.³¹ While heterosexual transmission was once uncommon, recent trends indicate that growing numbers of individuals are at risk of contracting HIV in this way. Many people, especially adolescents, do not have the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to prevent their becoming infected. Besides abstinence, condom use is currently the most effective means of preventing sexual transmission of HIV.

In Vermont, 312 residents were diagnosed as having AIDS as of June 30, 1997.³² Up to eight times this number may be infected with HIV, and many of these people may not be aware of their infection. Many more Vermonters are at risk of acquiring HIV infection through unprotected sex with multiple partners or intravenous drug use. No area of the state remains unaffected.

- **Teen Pregnancy:** More than one million teenage girls in the United States become pregnant each year and about half of them give birth.³³ One-third of all unintended pregnancies occur among teenagers, and 75 percent of teenage pregnancies occur among adolescents who are not using contraception.³⁴ In 1994, the teen pregnancy rate in Vermont was 30.1 pregnancies per 1,000 girls age 15 to 17, which has dropped since 1991 (37.8 pregnancies per 1,000).³⁵

✓ Sexual Behavior (cont'd)

- **Gay and Lesbian Youth:** Although many lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents lead happy and healthy lives, others face tremendous challenges to growing up physically and mentally healthy. Compared to heterosexual youth, lesbian, gay, and bisexual young people are at higher risk for depression, alcohol and other drug use, suicide, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted diseases. Suicide is the leading cause of death among this group. They are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers and may account for 30 percent of suicides among youth annually.³⁶
-

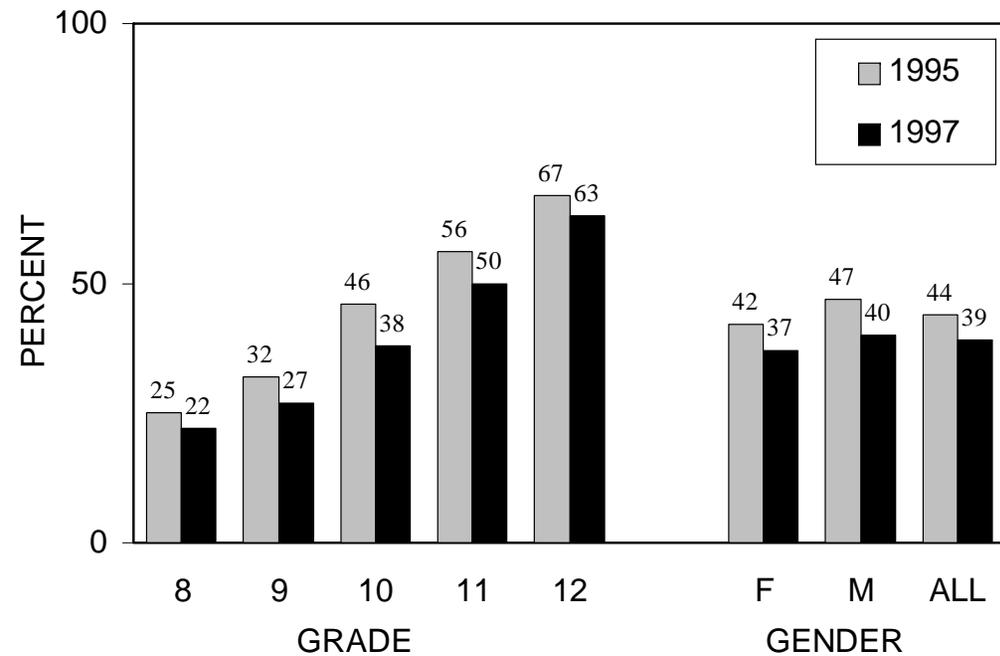
Related *Healthy Vermonters 2000* Goals:

- Increase percent of schools that offer education programs on sexually transmitted diseases to 100 percent.
- Increase percent of schools with HIV education to at least 95 percent.
- Increase percent of sexually active adolescents who use condoms to at least 75 percent.

■ Sexual Behavior

- **Over one-third of students have had sexual intercourse.** In 1997, 39% of students reported having had sex, down from 1995 (44%). Nationally, 53% of 9th to 12th graders reported having had sex in 1995.

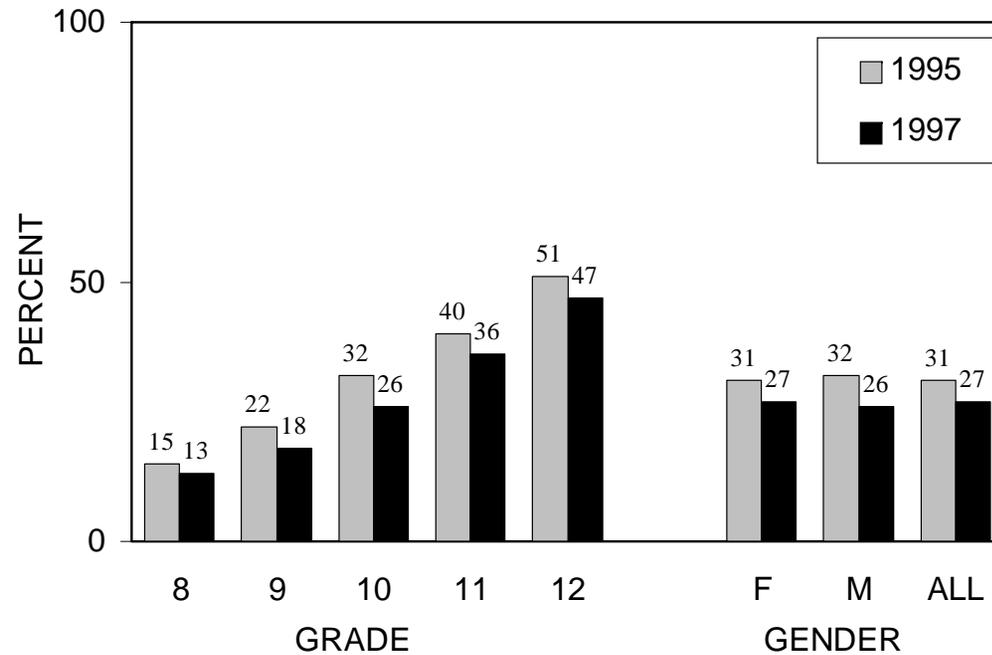
Percent of students who have ever had sexual intercourse



■ Sexual Behavior

- Over one-fourth of Vermont students are sexually active.**
 Overall, 27% of students reported having had sex during the past 3 months, down compared to 1995 (31%). Nationally, 38% of 9th to 12th graders were sexually active in 1995.

Percent of students who have had sexual intercourse during the past 3 months



■ Sexual Behavior

- **Males have sex earlier than females.** Males were twice as likely as females to have had sex prior to age 13 (10% vs 5%).
- **More females than males are forced to have sex.** Twice as many female students as male students had physical force used against them when they had sex for the first time (4% vs 2%) and were ever forced or pressured to have sex (11% vs 5%).
- **Over one-fourth of sexually active students use drugs before sex.** Overall, 28% of students used alcohol or drugs prior to sex.
- **Over half of sexually active students use condoms.** Overall, 60% of sexually active students used a condom during their most recent sexual experience. Nationally, 54% of students (grades 9 to 12) used a condom in 1995.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who:									
First had sexual intercourse before age 13	11	8	9	5	6	5	10	8	9
First sexual partner was older than 21 years old*	10	6	6	5	6	7	6	6	NA
Had physical force threatened or used against them when they had sexual intercourse for the first time	2	3	3	3	3	4	2	3	NA
Have ever been forced or pressured to have sex	4	6	8	9	13	11	5	8	12
Used drugs or alcohol before their most recent sexual experience*	28	31	31	24	28	25	31	28	31
Used a condom during their most recent sexual experience*	58	68	61	62	54	58	63	60	55
Have been pregnant or have impregnated someone	3	2	5	4	5	4	4	4	5

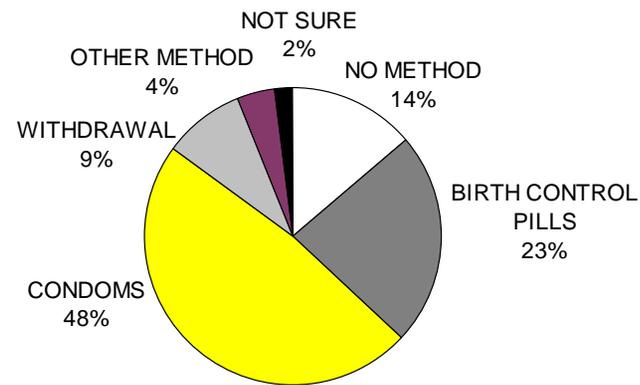
*Includes only students who said that they have sexual intercourse

■ Sexual Behavior

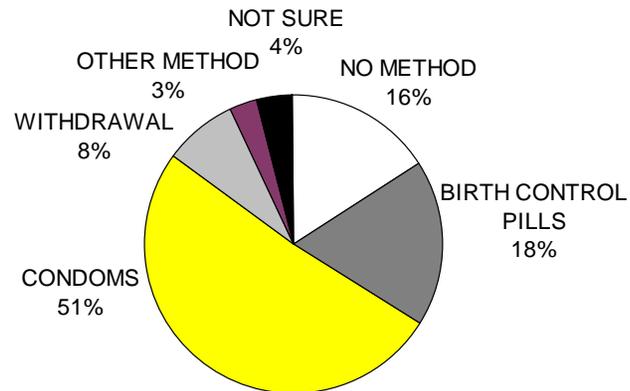
- **Condoms are most common contraceptives.** Overall, 49% of students used condoms to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex.
- **Many students do not use any method to prevent pregnancy.** Overall, 15% of students did not use any method to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex, and 3% were not sure what method was used.

**What method did you or your partner use to prevent pregnancy the last time you had sexual intercourse?
(only among those students who have ever had sex)**

FEMALES



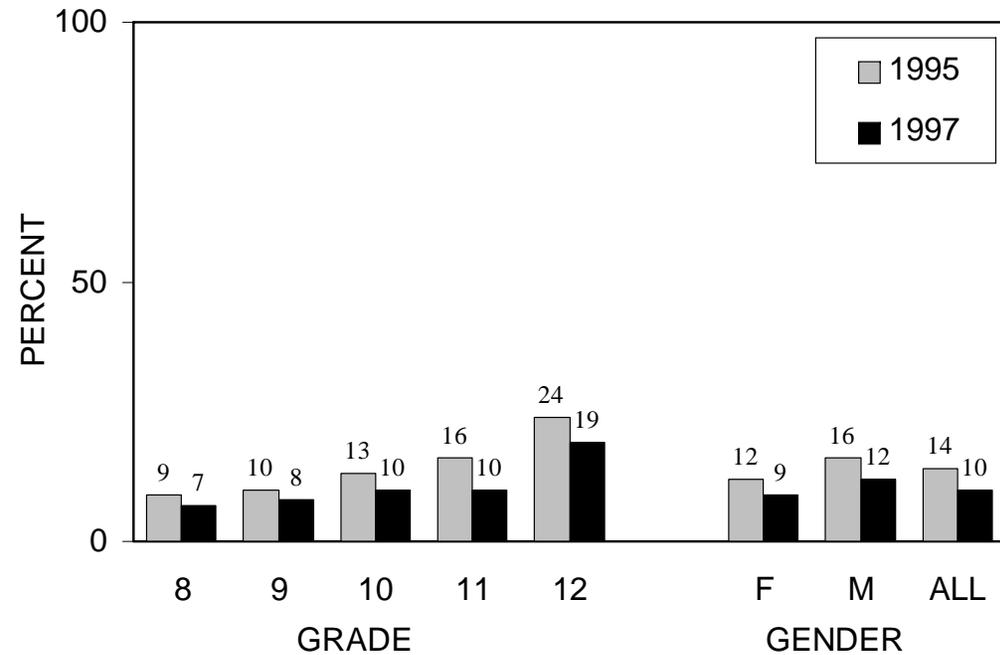
MALES



■ Sexual Behavior

- Overall, 10% of Vermont students have had sexual intercourse with four or more people. In 1995, 14% of Vermont students and 18% of US students (grades 9 to 12) have had four or more sexual partners.

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

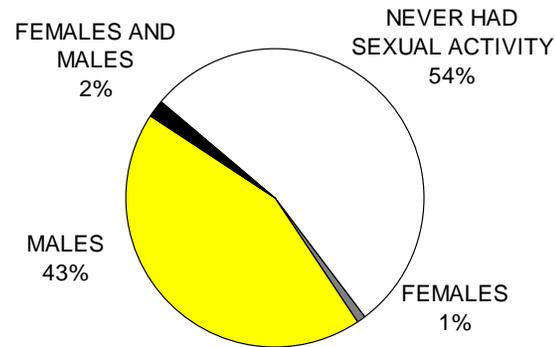


■ Sexual Behavior

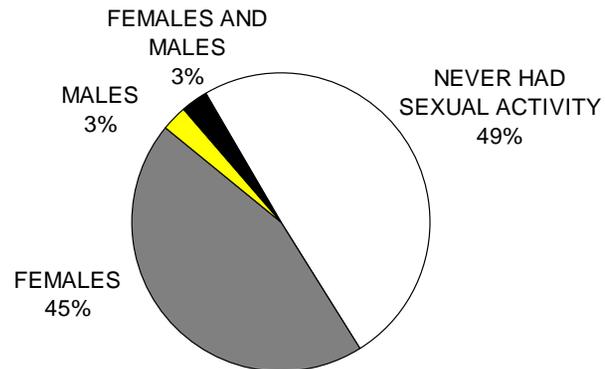
- **Same gender sexual activity.**
Males were twice as likely as females to report engaging in same gender sexual activity (6% vs 3%).

The persons with whom you have had sexual activity are:

FEMALES



MALES

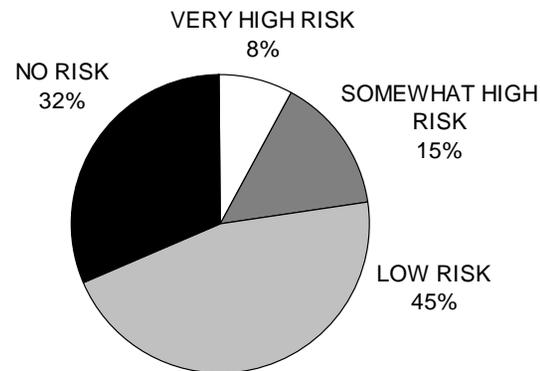


■ Sexual Behavior

- **More females than males talk with their parents about HIV infection.** Almost two-thirds (63%) of female students, compared to 54% of male students have talked with their parents about HIV or AIDS.
- **Overall, 68% of students perceive that they have at least some risk for getting HIV infection.**

HIV EDUCATION	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who:									
Have received education about HIV or AIDS at school	88	89	90	94	93	92	90	91	90
Have talked with parents or other adults in their family about HIV/AIDS	54	58	58	62	63	63	54	59	61
Perceive that they have at least some risk for getting HIV infection or AIDS	65	67	70	69	71	66	71	68	70

Students' perceived risk for getting AIDS or HIV infection



✓ Body Weight and Nutrition

This section asks students how they feel about their weight and what, if anything, they are doing to control their weight. The questions also inquire about how often students eat healthful foods and “junk” foods.

- **Obesity** and extreme obesity appear to be increasing by as much as 39 percent and 64 percent, respectively, among adolescents aged 12 to 17 in the United States.³⁷ Obesity acquired during childhood or adolescence may persist into adulthood, increasing later risk for chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, some types of cancer, and gall bladder disease.³⁸ Children and adolescents often experience social and psychological stress related to obesity.³⁹

Obesity in adolescence has been related to depression, problems in family relations, and poor school performance.⁴⁰ Overemphasis on thinness during adolescence may contribute to eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia.^{41,42} Adolescent females represent a high-risk population for the development of these two health problems and comprise 90 to 95 percent of all patients with eating disorders.⁴³

- **Nutrition:** Poor nutrition is associated with five of the leading causes of death: heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and atherosclerosis, and it contributes to other causes of death and disability as well. Dietary habits that negatively affect health include: excessive consumption of foods high in fat, saturated fat and cholesterol; low dietary intake of complex carbohydrates and fiber; and excessive calorie intake in relation to calorie expenditure.²

Americans currently consume more than 36 percent of their total calories from fat.³⁸ High fat diets are associated with increased risk of obesity, heart disease, some types of cancer, and other chronic conditions. They are often consumed at the expense of foods high in complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber, foods which are considered to be more conducive to good health. Because lifetime dietary patterns are established during youth, adolescents should be encouraged to choose nutritious foods and to develop healthy eating habits.⁴⁴

Related *Healthy Vermonters 2000* Goals:

- Increase average intake of fruits, vegetables, and legumes to five or more servings a day.
- Increase average intake of grains to six or more servings per day.

■ Body Weight

- More females than males think they are overweight and are trying to lose weight.** Female students were almost two-thirds more likely than male students to describe themselves as overweight (38% vs 23%). The female vs male difference was similar in 1995 in Vermont (39% vs 24%) and in the US (34% vs 22%). In addition, 60% of female students are trying to lose weight, compared to only 24% of male students. This difference was similar in 1995 in Vermont (61% vs 25%) and in the US for grades 9 to 12 (60% vs 24%).

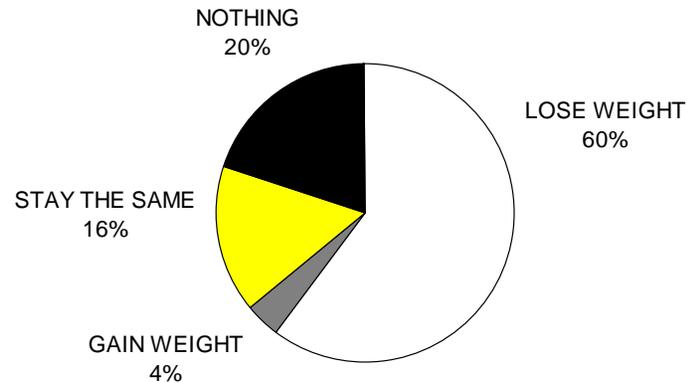
BODY WEIGHT DESCRIPTION	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who describe themselves as:									
Underweight	19	18	17	17	16	15	20	18	19
Overweight	31	29	31	30	32	38	23	30	31
Percent of students who are:									
Trying to lose weight	45	42	41	41	40	60	24	42	42
Trying to gain weight	17	16	16	13	9	4	24	14	16

■ Body Weight

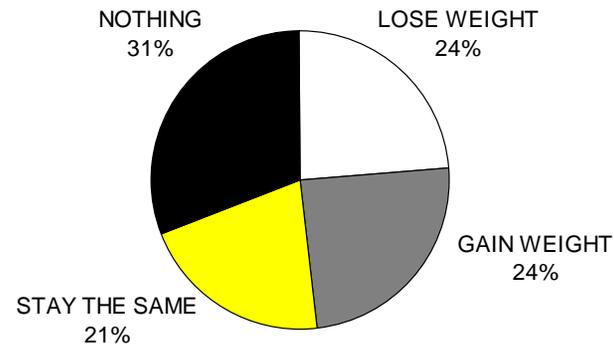
- **More males than females are trying to gain weight.** Male students were six times more likely than female students to be trying to gain weight (24% vs 4%). Similarly, 26% of male students in 1995 were trying to gain weight, compared to 5% of female students. In addition, female students were almost two and a half times more likely than male students to be trying to lose weight (60% vs 24%).

What are students trying to do about their weight?

FEMALES



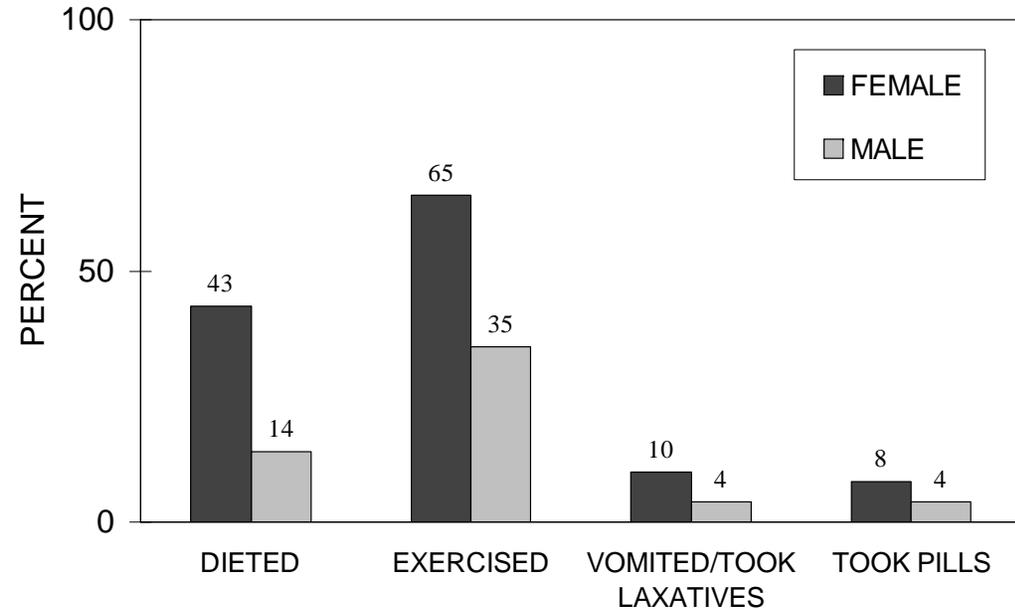
MALES



■ Body Weight

- **More females than males are trying to control their weight.** Female students were more likely than male students to have dieted (43% vs 14%), exercised (65% vs 35%), vomited or taken laxatives (10% vs 4%), and taken diet pills (8% vs 4%) to try and control their weight.

What females and males did during the past 30 days to control their weight



■ Nutrition

- **Three-fourths of students eat fruit or drink fruit juice daily.**
- **Approximately half of students eat vegetables daily.** Overall, 41% of students eat green salad and 58% of students eat cooked vegetables daily.
- **Overall, 40% of students eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.** In 1995, 36% of Vermont students and 28% of US students (grades 9 to 12) ate five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- **Some students go to bed hungry.** Overall, 8% of students reported going to bed hungry because there was not enough food to eat.

YESTERDAY'S FOOD CONSUMPTION	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who had at least one serving of:									
Fruit	78	74	74	73	73	74	75	74	71
Fruit juice	75	77	74	75	74	74	77	75	71
Green salad	42	42	39	40	41	40	42	41	37
Cooked vegetables	56	58	60	58	57	57	58	58	55
Percent of students who had 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables yesterday	41	41	41	38	38	37	42	40	36

Physical Activity

This section asks students how often they engage in physical activities that maintain aerobic capacity. Students were also asked about school-based physical activities including physical education classes and sports teams.

- **Regular physical activity** increases life expectancy⁴⁵ and is associated with good mental health and self-esteem.⁴⁶ Additionally, regular physical activity can assist in the prevention and management of coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, obesity, and mental health problems.⁴⁷ School physical education programs can have a significant positive effect on the health-related fitness of children.^{48,49}
 - **Benefits:** Evidence of the benefits of regular physical activity is mounting. Engaging in light to moderate exercise for 30 minutes each day reduces the risk of heart disease, hypertension, noninsulin-dependent diabetes, osteoporosis, overweight and mental health problems.² Physically active people tend to outlive those who are inactive. Regular activity can also help older adults maintain functional independence and can enhance the quality of life for people of all ages.
-

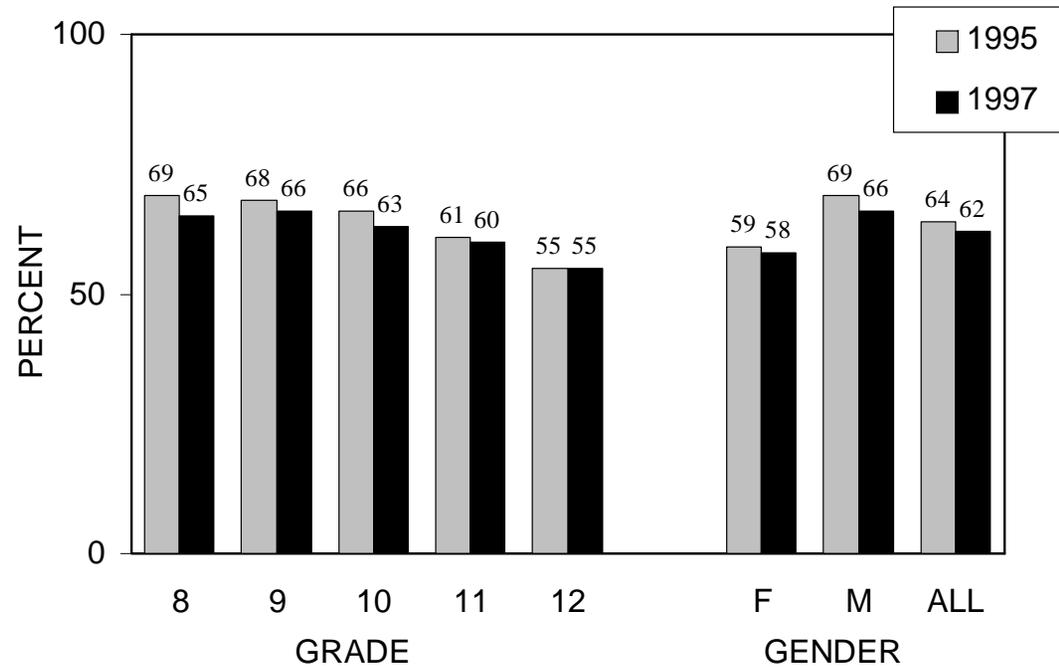
Related *Healthy Vermonters 2000* Goals:

- Increase the proportion of people who exercise regularly (at least 30 minutes, five or more times per week) to 30 percent.

■ Physical Activity

- **Almost two-thirds of students participated in aerobic exercise.** Overall, 62% of Vermont students participated in three or more days/week of aerobic exercise, compared to 64% of students in 1995. Nationally, 64% of students (grades 9 to 12) participated in aerobic exercise in 1995.
- **Females participate in aerobic exercise less often than males.** Over half (58%) of female students exercised aerobically three or more days per week, compared to two-thirds (66%) of male students.

Percent of students who participated in aerobic exercise* three or more days during the past 7 days



*Activities that caused sweating and hard breathing for at least 20 minutes.

■ Physical Activity

- **One-third of students walk or bike three or more days per week.** Overall, 34% of students walked or biked for at least 30 minutes on three or more days during the past week.
- **More PE in lower grades.** Nine out of 10 (91%) 8th graders, compared to only 29% of 12th graders, participated in at least one physical education class per week. The 8th vs 12th grade difference was similar in 1995 (90% vs 20%)
- **Males participate in non-school sports teams more than females.** One-third (34%) of female students participate in sports teams run by a non-school organization, compared to 47% of male students. This female vs male difference was similar in 1995 in Vermont (32% vs 45%) and in the US among grades 9 to 12 (27% vs 46%).

EXERCISE	GRADE					GENDER		ALL	
	8	9	10	11	12	F	M	1997	1995
Percent of students who participated in:									
Walking or biking 3 or more days during the past 7 days	38	37	33	30	27	32	35	34	38
Physical education classes at least once during the past 7 days	91	71	54	36	29	57	59	58	55
Physical education classes five days during the past 7 days	12	32	21	17	14	19	20	19	25
More than 20 minutes of exercise or sports during physical education class	73	57	44	32	25	46	49	48	45
School sports team	57	59	54	56	51	53	59	56	57
Sports team run by a non-school organization	45	44	38	37	35	34	47	40	39

Other Risk and Resiliency Measures

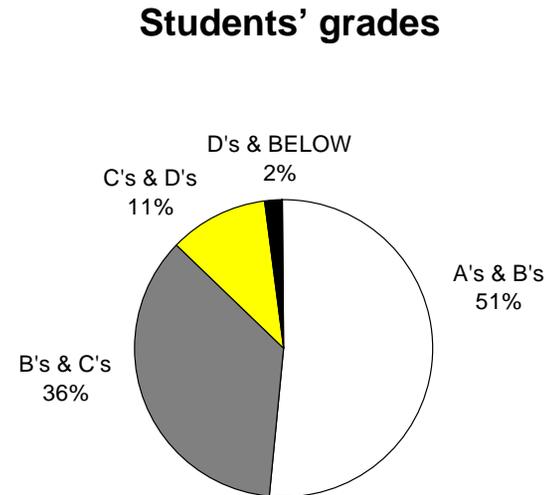
This section asks students about the grades they receive in school, how often their parents talk to them about school, and whether they skip school.

- **Grades in School:** Above average school performance is viewed as one of many developmental assets (i.e., factors promoting positive teenage development) for youth.⁵⁰ Conversely, poor academic performance is associated with alcohol,¹⁰ tobacco,²³ and other drug use,²⁶ as well as obesity.⁴⁰ Based on a survey of more than 250,000 youth across the United States, 47 percent of 6th to 12th grade students report that their school performance is above average.⁵⁰
- **Parents Involvement in School:** A national study of adolescent health found that adolescents who reported a “connectedness” to their parents/family and school were the least likely to engage in risky behaviors.⁵¹ Parental expectations regarding school achievement were also associated with lower levels of risk behaviors. Similarly, parental involvement in helping adolescents succeed in school is viewed as one of many developmental assets for youth.⁵⁰ Only 27 percent of 6th to 12th grade students surveyed across the United States reported that their parents are involved in helping them succeed in school.⁵⁰
- **Truancy:** School truancy is associated with other risk behaviors, such as alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, depression, suicide, drinking and driving, vandalism, fighting, and weapon use.⁵² Approximately 10 percent of 6th to 12th grade students surveyed across the United States skipped school two or more days during the past month.⁵²

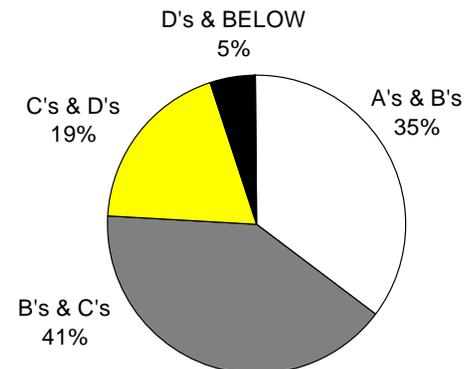
■ Other Measures of Risk and Resiliency

- **The majority of students receive above average grades.** Overall, 81% of students reported receiving above C's.
- **Females receive better grades than males.** Half (51%) of female students reported receiving mostly A's and B's, compared to 35% of male students

FEMALES



MALES

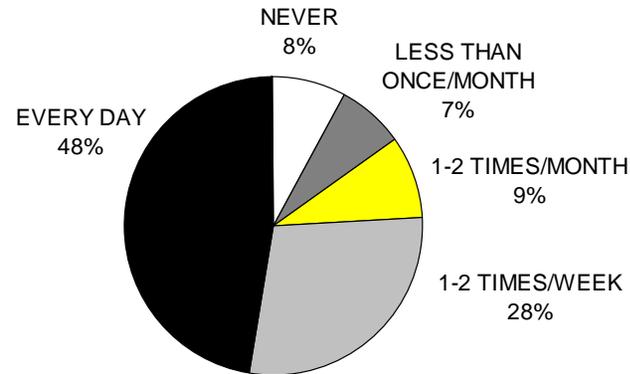


■ Other Measures of Risk and Resiliency

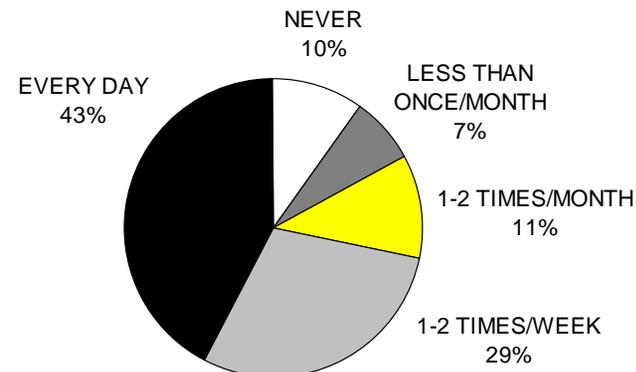
- **Almost three-fourths of students's parents talk with them about school weekly or more often.** Overall, 45% of students reported that their parents talked with them daily about school and 28% talked with them once or twice a week.
- **Some parents rarely or never talk with their children about school.** Overall, 10% of students reported that their parents never talk with them about school and 7% reported that their parents talk with them less than once a month.

How often does one of your parents talk with you about what you are doing in school?

FEMALES



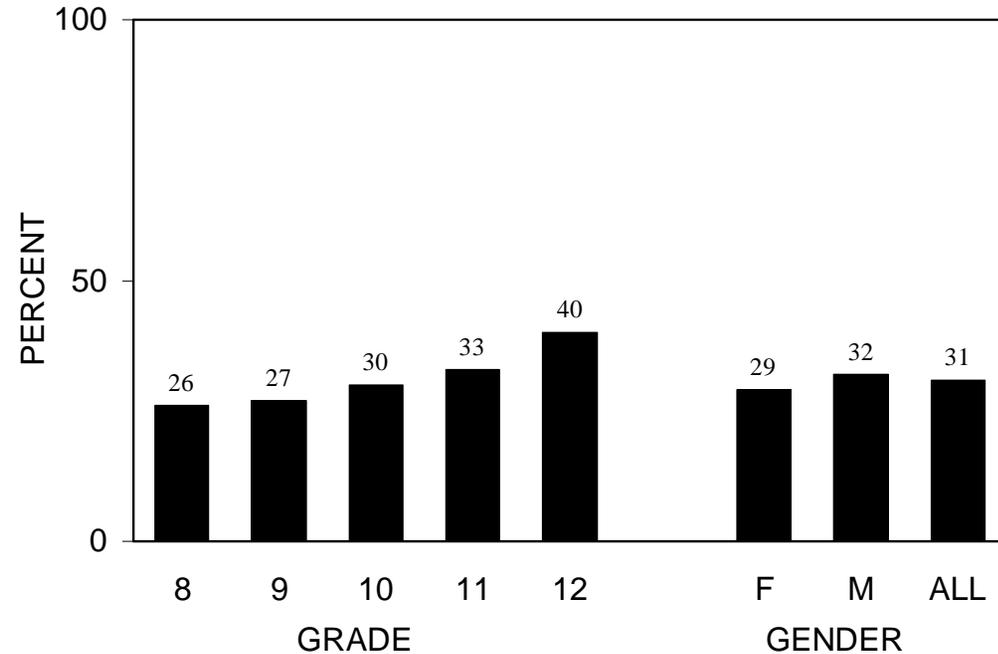
MALES



■ Other Measures of Risk and Resiliency

- **Almost one-third of Vermont students skip school.** Almost one-third (29%) of female and (32%) male students reported skipping school during the past 30 days.

Percent of students who skipped or “cut” school during the past 30 days



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