



Arizona YRBS 2023 Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to important questions asked most often about the YRBS.

Q. What is the focus of the YRBS?

- A. The YRBS focuses on priority health risk behaviors established during youth that result in the most significant mortality and morbidity during both youth and adulthood. These include behaviors that result in unintentional injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; sexual behaviors that could result in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancies; dietary behaviors; physical inactivity and other priority health issues.

Q. Why is the YRBS conducted?

- A. Arizona is responsible for identifying and monitoring factors that may affect the health of our youth. Arizona will use the results from the YRBS to (1) monitor whether priority health risk behaviors among high school students increase, decrease, or remain the same over time; (2) evaluate the impact of broad national, state, and local efforts to prevent risk behaviors; and (3) improve school health policies and programs.

Q. Does the survey have broad support?

- A. **Yes!** The survey is supported by many major national organizations interested in the health of youth. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Advocates for Youth, the American School Counselor Association, Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the National Association of County and City Health Officials, the National Association of School Nurses, the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the National Catholic Educational Association, the National Education Association, the National PTA, the School Superintendents Association, and other organizations have provided letters of support.

At the state level, the Arizona National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and the Arizona PTA support our Arizona 2023 YRBS.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

- A. Questions regarding sexual intercourse and injection drug use may be considered sensitive by some schools or school districts. However, HIV infection, and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are major health problems, and sexual intercourse and injection drug use are among the behaviors known to increase the risk of HIV or other STIs. The only way to determine if adolescents are at risk of becoming infected is to ask questions about these behaviors. Other topic areas that may be considered sensitive are attempted suicide, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, and weapon-carrying. The questions are asked in a straightforward manner and the YRBS is administered under conditions that are designed to protect student anonymity, thus reducing any uneasiness about answering questions considered sensitive. If students are not comfortable answering a question, they may leave it blank. In addition, resources such as websites and emergency hotlines will be made available to students at the time of the survey.

Q. Are students tracked over time to see how their behavior changes?

- A. No. Students who participate cannot be tracked because no identifying information is collected. Each year a new sample of schools and students is drawn.

Q. Is student participation anonymous? How is student privacy protected?

- A. Survey administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy by allowing for anonymous and voluntary participation. Students complete the self-administered questionnaire by recording their responses directly on an answer sheet containing no personal identifiers or on an electronic device such as a computer that cannot be traced to an individual student. To the extent possible, students' desks are spread throughout the classroom to minimize the chance that students will see each other's responses. Students also are encouraged to use an extra sheet of paper provided by the data collector to cover their responses as they complete the questionnaire. For electronic administration, only one question appears at a time to prevent responses from being seen by others. Students not participating in the survey are provided with an alternative activity by their teacher. Published reports do not include names of schools or students.

Q. What if school districts, schools, or students do not choose to participate?

- A. Participation in the YRBS is voluntary. However, to develop accurate estimates of priority health risk behaviors among adolescents in Arizona, participation rates must be high. Selected schools and students cannot be replaced. The goal is to achieve 90 to 95 percent participation by selected schools and students.

Q. What grades are included?

- A. The YRBS is administered to students in grades 9 through 12.

Q. What is the sample size?

- A. Approximately 2,000 students from about 40 schools are scientifically selected to participate in the Arizona YRBS every other year.

Q. How is the YRBS coordinated at each school?

- A. It is preferable to have a single coordinator in each school. This can be the principal, another school administrator, a teacher, or someone else designated by the principal. The school coordinator provides a list of classes to the Arizona YRBS coordinator, distributes parental permission forms to teachers of the sampled classes, and helps to promote the survey in the school.

Q. How long does it take to fill out the questionnaire? Is there some sort of physical test?

- A. One class period is needed for administration of the self-administered questionnaire. It takes approximately 10 minutes for the survey administrator to distribute survey materials and read directions to the students. It then takes approximately 35 minutes for students to record their responses. The questionnaire contains 99 multiple choice questions. No physical test or exam is involved.

Q. Do students answer questions truthfully?

- A. Research indicates data of this nature may be gathered as reliably from adolescents as from adults. Internal reliability checks help to identify the small percentage of students who falsify their answers. To obtain truthful answers, students must perceive the survey as important and know procedures have been developed to protect their privacy and allow for anonymous participation.

Q. When is the survey conducted? When are results available?

- A. Data collection is scheduled to start in January 2023 and continue through May 2023. A report summarizing the results will be published the following year.