



Youth Smoking Survey 2008-2009

Riverview Middle School Feedback Report Summary

THE ISSUE

- 17% of all deaths (approx. 37 200) in Canada are attributable to smoking, resulting in 3 times as many deaths as car accidents, suicide, homicide, alcohol, illegal drugs and AIDS combined.
- 85% of current smokers¹ start smoking by the age of 19.
- The average age at which students in grade 12 smoked their first whole cigarette is 14 years.
- Students who take up smoking show a decrease in academic achievement, and are more likely to drop out of high school than those who use marijuana or alcohol.

SMOKING AT YOUR SCHOOL

- 1% of students at your school reported being a current smoker. Overall, 13% reported having ever tried a cigarette.²
- 29% of students who have never smoked a cigarette have low confidence in their ability to remain smoke-free in the future.³
- **Peer and family influences:**
 - 82% of current smokers/tryers⁴ reported having at least one friend who smokes compared to 13% of non-smokers⁵.
 - 42% of current smokers/tryers said they are usually given cigarettes by friends, parents, siblings or someone else, while others (26%) usually buy them from retailers or from someone else.

- 90% of students thought that smoking should not be allowed around kids in cars; however, 22% of students rode in the car with someone smoking during the week preceding the survey.
- 24% reported that there were no restrictions or only some restrictions regarding smoking in the home.

EMERGING TOBACCO ISSUES

- Students use other tobacco products. For example, 5% of students indicated that they have ever tried or used flavoured tobacco products and 5% have ever tried or used cigars, cigarillos or little cigars.

PERCEPTIONS VS. REALITY

- 33% of students believe the myth that smoking helps people relax.
- 22% of students believe that smokers can quit anytime; however *% of current smokers have tried to quit *at least once*, and failed.

TOBACCO EDUCATION

- 64% of students reported having one or more classes in the last 12 months that talked about the effects of smoking.
- Students reported on their knowledge about the health implications of tobacco use. 74% believe that there is danger to your health from an occasional cigarette.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY SETTING

- A sense of connection to the school and school rules can support students to make healthy choices. 85% of students at your school either agreed or strongly agreed that *"I feel I am part of my school."*
- 53% of current smokers/tryers responded "true" or "mostly true" to the statement *"In general, I like the way I am"* compared to 80% of non-smokers.
- 18% of students reported that "a lot" or "some" students at this school smoke on school property, 6% responded "false" or "usually false" to the statement *"This school has a clear set of rules about smoking for students to follow"*.
- 39% of current smokers/tryers reported skipping one or more classes in the last 4 weeks compared to 6% of non-smokers.

OTHER FINDINGS FROM YOUR SCHOOL

- 28% reported that they watch more than 2 hours of television per day.
- 68% of students spend less than one hour per day reading for fun.
- 13% reported that they spend more than 2 hours per day playing video games and 26% surf or play on the computer for more than 2 hours per day.
- 20% of students reported having had a drink of alcohol that was more than just a sip. Of those who had more than just a sip, 52% reported having 5 drinks or more of alcohol on one occasion.
- 10% reported having ever tried or used marijuana.
- *, *% and 86% of current smokers reported these behaviours respectively.

Schools Can Make a Difference...

Things to Consider...

- What do you think is the connection between smoking and a decrease in academic achievement and motivation?
- What is it about our social and physical environment that tempts students to start smoking?
- Your school's results show that 22% of students believe that smokers can quit anytime. How does this fit with the fact that half of all students who smoke have tried to quit but failed?

What can we do?

- What can be done to minimize influences that encourage students at your school to start smoking?
- What support systems are available to help students at your school who smoke to quit smoking? What other supports can you recommend that would help students at your school to quit smoking?

Please refer to the full version of your school's Feedback Report to see more detailed results. For more information, visit www.yss.uwaterloo.ca.

This project is a collaboration of:



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¹ A current smoker refers to "someone who has smoked at least 100 cigarettes in his/her lifetime, and who has smoked at least one whole cigarette during the past 30 days".

² Ever tried a cigarette refers to "someone who has ever tried a cigarette, even a few puffs".

³ Refers to a susceptible smoker, which is "someone at high risk to begin smoking".

⁴ A trier refers to "someone who has smoked less than 100 cigarettes in his/her lifetime and has smoked or puffed cigarettes in the last 30 days".

⁵ A non-smoker refers to "someone who has not smoked or puffed cigarettes in the last 30 days or has never smoked a cigarette, even a puff".