

about

HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

what you need to know...

High school girls in Fairfax County report a high level of involvement and support in their families, schools, community and with their peers. While this is good news, high school girls also face challenges.

Depression (feeling so sad or hopeless almost every day for weeks or more that the student stopped doing some usual activities) affects 36% of girls and 18% have considered suicide.

Alcohol is the most commonly used drug by teens in Fairfax County. Two-thirds of the girls surveyed in grades 10 and 12 report having ever used alcohol and 34% have used it in the past 30 days.

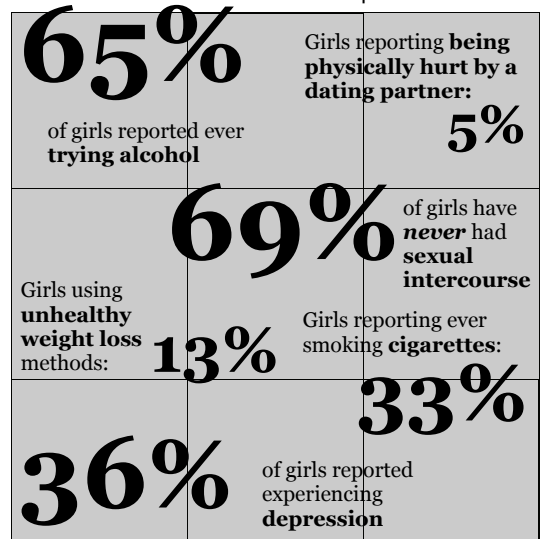
Cigarette and marijuana use, taking painkillers without a doctor's prescription and using inhalants to get high are the next most prevalent drug use behaviors for girls.

Sixty-nine percent of girls report never having had sex. However, of those who have had sex, 33% reported no condom use and 10% did not use any method of contraception the last time they had sex. Seven percent report that they have ever been physically forced to have sex when they did not want to.

Fifty-three percent of girls report that they have bullied others and 52% that they have been bullied.

Thirteen percent of girls surveyed have used at least one unhealthy

Fairfax County 10th and 12th Grade Girls self-reported behavior



2008 Fairfax County Youth Survey Report

weight loss method in the past year (fasting for 24 hours or more; vomiting or taking laxatives; using diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor's order).

what can you do?

promote healthy behaviors

- An adolescent girl has an intense need for connection. A strong connection with family, community, and peers can help her build healthy relationship skills and reduce risk-taking sexual behaviors.
- Spend time with her. Build a relationship that includes trust, honesty, open lines of communication, and setting limits.
- Be a good role model. Eat right, exercise, deal with stress in healthy ways, and don't use drugs, alcohol, or cigarettes.
- Teach her good values and a sense of responsibility. Then trust her to make good choices.
- Set rules and stick with them. Setting and enforcing fair rules can help girls avoid social settings where they may run into peer pressure they can't handle.



understand, encourage, learn, and act

- Understand that it's normal for a teen to want to try new things.
- Understand that when she is angry with you, she may rebel by making poor choices. Turn her mistakes into lessons, show her you still love her, and point out the good things she does.
- Encourage and support her involvement in positive, pro-social activities such as sports, school clubs, the arts, community service, and any activity that provides a sense of belonging.
- Encourage her not to be ashamed of having a problem with stress, relationships, grades, weight, drugs, or alcohol, but to learn how to handle problems in healthy ways.
- Learn about teen depression and suicide; alcohol and drug abuse; bullying and dating abuse; and eating disorders that contribute to weight loss or weight gain.
- Consult with your doctor, school staff, local hospitals, or county alcohol and drug services. Read books and get information from Web sites on preventing and handling risk-taking behaviors. Join and support school and community coalitions.

Source: adapted from girlshealth.gov/parents

who can help?

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB) Alcohol and Drug Services
24-Hour CSB Emergency Services Phone: 703-573-5679 | TTY: 703-207-7737
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/ads

Fairfax County Public Schools Department of Intervention and Prevention
703-423-4020 | TTY: 711

Your School Public Health Nurse or Fairfax County Health Department
703-246-2433 | TTY: 711

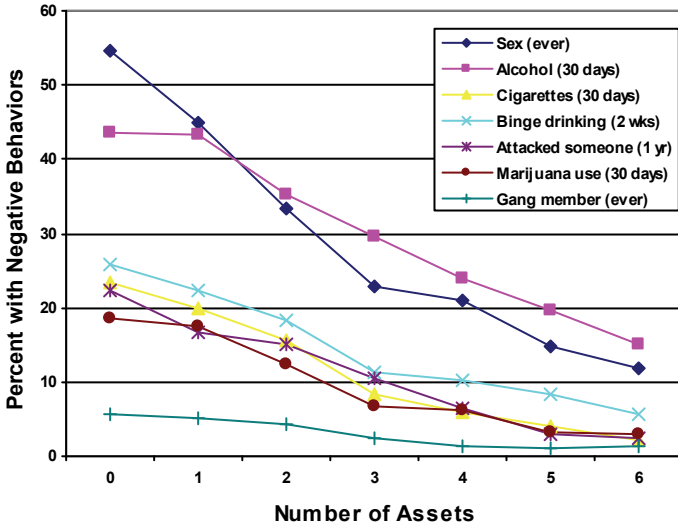
Fairfax County Public Schools Student Safety and Wellness Section
www.fcps.edu/dss/ips/ssaw



THREE TO SUCCEED

Thriving in Fairfax

Fairfax County 2008 Youth Survey
10th and 12th Grade Girls



The Three to Succeed concept is based on the youth survey analysis that shows how just having three assets (or strengths) dramatically reduces risk behaviors and promotes thriving youth.

Assets are strengths in young people, their families, schools and communities that help them thrive in health, in school

Assets

- Good grades
- Involved in decision-making
- Adults in my neighborhood to talk to
- Parents notice when doing a good job
- Involved in extracurricular activities
- Involved in community service

and daily life, and in a safe environment. The more assets an individual has in their lives, the fewer risk behaviors are reported.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from their communities, families, schools, and friends demonstrating the benefits of everyone taking a role in ensuring that EVERYONE'S CHILDREN are thriving in Fairfax.

Physical Health

Use Unhealthy Weight Loss Methods	13%
Active 5 or More Days per Week	31%
Participate on Sports Teams	57%
Eat 5 Fruits or Vegetables Every Day	17%
Ever Drink Milk	83%

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the spring semester of 2008 to a randomly drawn, statistically valid sample of students. The data presented represents the responses of **girls in the 10th and 12th grades.**

30-Day Drug Use

Alcohol	34%
Cigarettes	12%
Marijuana	11%
Painkillers	4%
Inhalants	2%

Sexual Health

Ever Had Sex	31%
Did Not Use Condom During Last Sex	33%*
Did Not Use Contraception During Last Sex	10%*
Ever Physically Forced to Have Sex	7%

*Percentage of girls who have ever had sex.

web sites for more information

Fairfax County Prevention System (*links to Youth Survey*)
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dsm/prevention

Unified Prevention Coalition of Fairfax County Public Schools
www.unifiedpreventioncoalition.org

Fairfax-Falls Church Network of Care for Behavioral Health
www.fairfax-fallschurch.va.networkofcare.org/mh/resource/find.cfm

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Sexual Health
<http://www.cdc.gov/sexualhealth/>

National Eating Disorders Association
<http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org>

Parents, the Anti-Drug
www.theantidrug.com



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protective factors

Girls in Fairfax County report they ...

- Have opportunities to be involved in school activities (97%), and that teachers notice their good work (71%).
- Volunteer for community service (91%).
- Have parents who notice when they do a good job (63%) and they are involved in family decisions that affect them (64%).
- Are honest with their parents (79%), believe it is wrong to cheat at school (61%), and wrong to steal (88%).