



2023 - 2024 Youth Survey Fact Sheet

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

1 Insights

Nearly all students reported eating some fruits or vegetables in the previous week, and most did not drink sugary drinks daily in the same period.

71%

of students **did not consume sugary drinks** on a daily basis (and **68%** of 6th grade students)

97%

of students **ate some fruits or vegetables** in the past week (and **98%** of 6th grade students)

59%

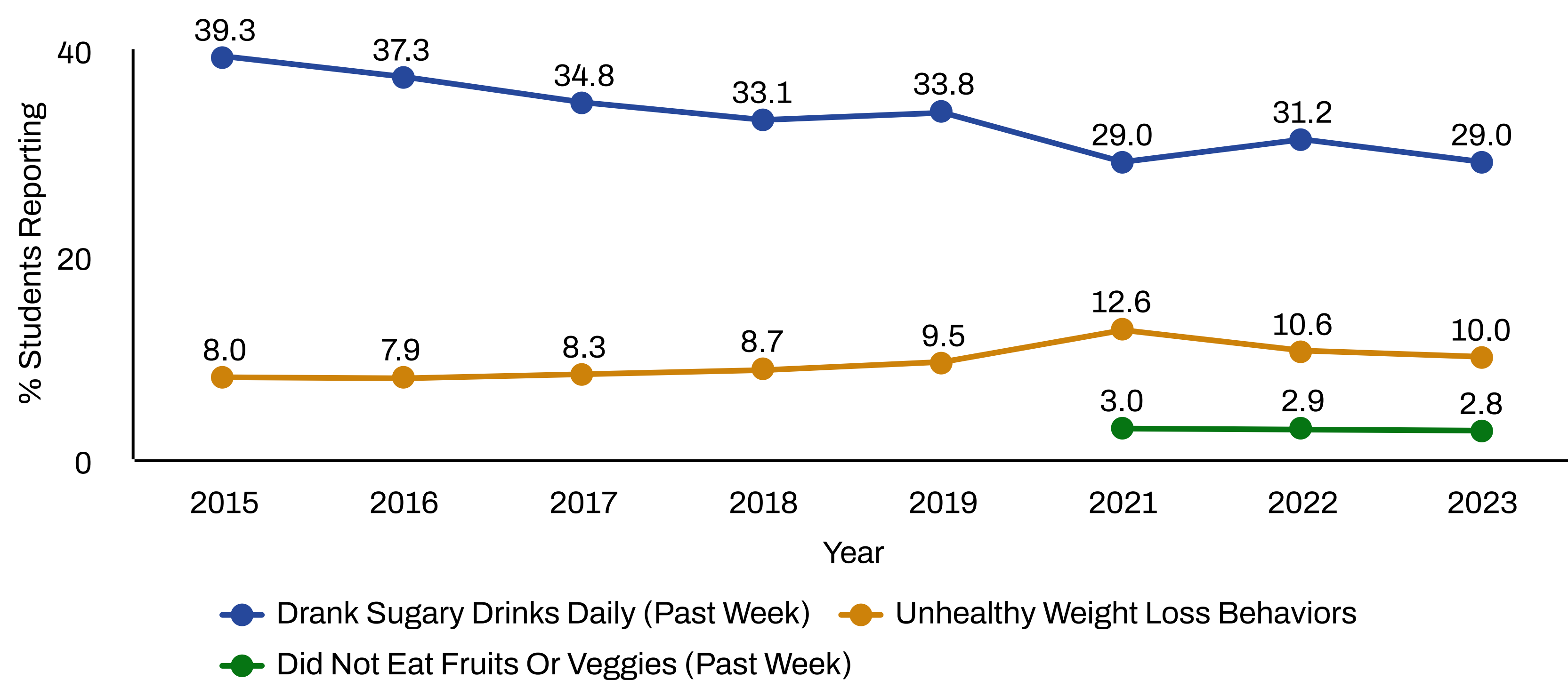
of those **who used unhealthy weight loss methods also felt sad** or hopeless for two or more weeks in a row (vs. **21%** who did not use unhealthy weight loss methods)

23%

of those **who used unhealthy weight loss methods also reported being bullied** in school in the past year (vs. **8%** who did not use unhealthy weight loss methods)

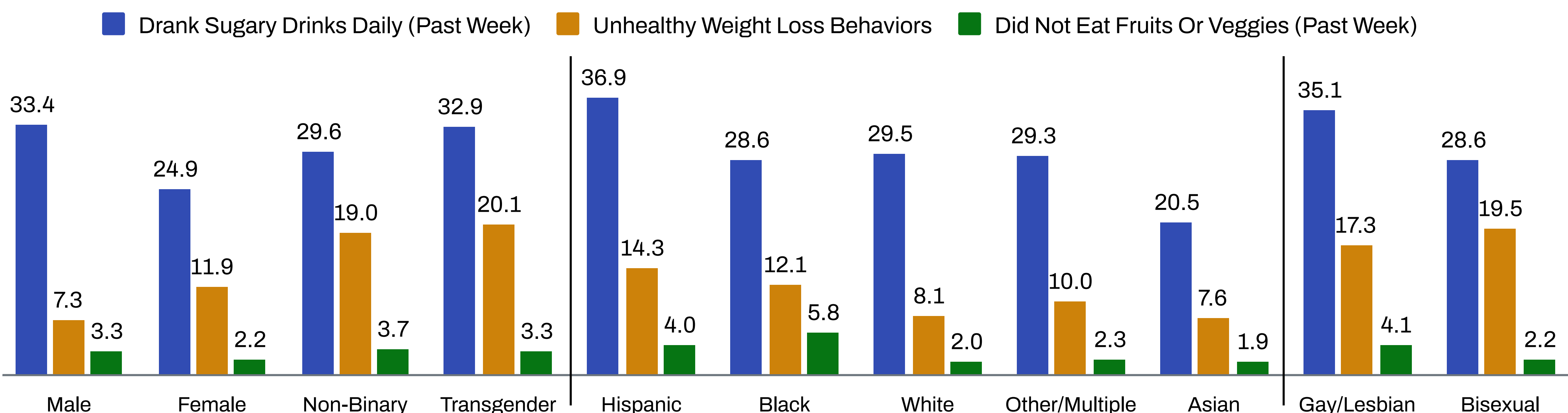
2 Trends

Since 2015, the share of those who consumed sugary drinks daily has decreased. However, the rate of unhealthy weight loss behaviors rose from 2015 to 2021, but has declined since. Fruit and vegetable intake was fairly steady in the past three years.



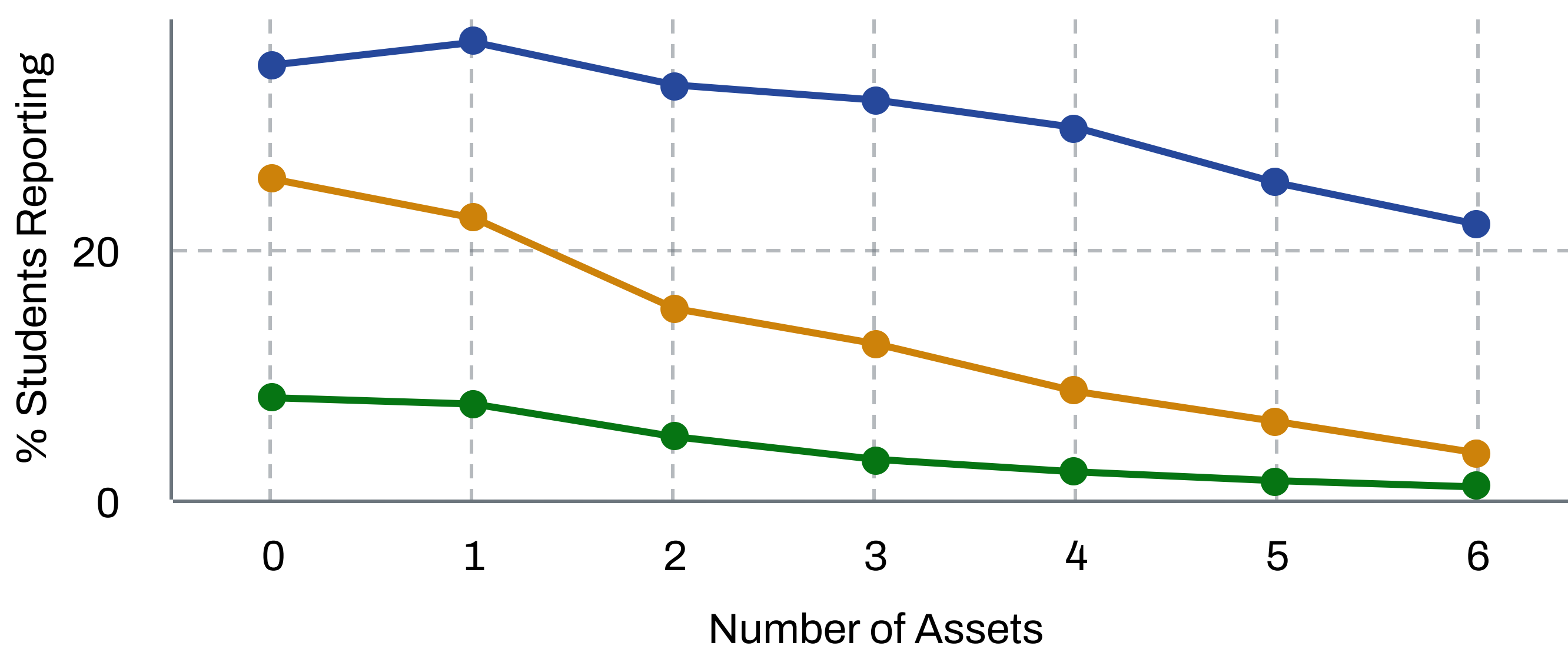
3 Differences by Demographic Factors

Sugary drink consumption was higher among male, Hispanic and LGBTQ students. Unhealthy weight loss behaviors were more common among Hispanic, Black/African American, female, and LGBTQ students. (For comparison within the chart below: Heterosexual: Drank sugary drinks- 29.1%, Unhealthy weight loss- 8.6%, Did not eat fruits or veggies- 2.7%; Not Transgender: Drank sugary drinks- 28.8%, Unhealthy weight loss- 9.4%, Did not eat fruits or veggies- 2.7%.)



About the Youth Survey data: All data are self-reported and are from the 2023 - 2024 Youth Survey for 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students, unless otherwise noted. The survey was not administered in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions on the frequency of eating fruits and vegetables were modified in 2021. Unhealthy weight loss behaviors include vomiting, taking laxatives, taking diet pills or liquids without a doctor's advice, and going without eating in the last 24 hours. Sugary drinks include soda or pop, energy drinks, and other sweetened beverages.

4 Three to Succeed



- Drank Sugary Drinks Daily (Past Week)
- Unhealthy Weight Loss Behaviors
- Did Not Eat Fruits or Veggies (Past Week)

Data shows that having at least three protective factors, or assets, reduces the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors and builds resilience among youth:

- Accepting responsibility for one's actions
- Having teachers recognize good work
- Participating in extracurricular activities
- Performing community service
- Having community adults to talk to
- Having parents available for help

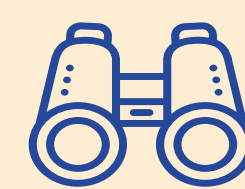
Be an asset in a young person's life and help build a stronger, more positive community for all.

5 What We Can Do



Make Healthy Food Choices

- Model healthy eating at home. Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Choose low-fat protein with fewer red and processed meats.
- Engage children and youth in menu planning, cooking and experiment with new and different fruits and vegetables.
- Drink water, choose unsweetened beverages and limit sugary drinks.
- Reduce salt intake and limit sodium to 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day.
- Know how to read food labels and understand what is a serving size and what is portion. In restaurants, eat smaller portions, choose foods lower in fat and choose healthy substitutions.
- Learn to recognize internal hunger and fullness cues.
- Encourage physical activity as diet and exercise are linked to a healthy lifestyle.



Watch for Signs of Unhealthy Weight Loss Behaviors

- Educate yourself on eating disorders.
- Look for changes in behavior around food such as: skips meals (or eats unusually small portions); stops eating food they used to enjoy; eats a lot of food that seems out of control; talks a lot about weight, food, calories, or dieting; goes to the bathroom right after meals.
- Notice changes in activities such as excessive exercise even when sick/injured; stops doing regular activities, spends more time alone; believes they are too big; and asks often how they look.
- Listen non-judgmentally and be open to talk with your child.
- Be a good role model and do not engage in "fat talk" about yourself.
- Seek professional help if you are concerned and notice any of these signs.

6 For Help & Information

Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board (CSB)

www.bit.ly/FairfaxCSB
Entry & Referral: 703-383-8500
24-Hr Emergency Services: 703-573-5679

CSB Wellness, Health Promotion Prevention

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/prevention

Fairfax County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services

www.bit.ly/FCPSfood
703-813-4800

Fairfax County Public Schools Intervention and Prevention Services

www.bit.ly/FCPSSafetyWellness
571-423-4020

Fairfax County Health Department

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/
703-246-2411

- **Fairfax Food Council:** www.fairfaxcounty.gov/food-council/
- **National Institute of Health:** www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/
- **MyPlate | USDA:** www.myplate.gov/
- **Cooking Matters:** www.cookingmatters.org/
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** www.cdc.gov/obesity/
- **Partnership for a Healthier America:** www.ahealthieramerica.org/
- **Healthy Eating for Kids | Cleveland Clinic:** www.bit.ly/4judllk
- **Academy for Eating Disorders:** www.aedweb.org/home
- **FEAST:** www.feast-ed.org/
- **Eating Disorders | FCPS:** www.fcps.edu/node/37440
- **National Eating Disorders Association:** www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/
- **Farmers Markets | Fairfax County Park Authority:** www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets
- **Developmental Assets Framework | Search Institute:** www.searchinstitute.org/resources-hub/developmental-assets-framework