

YOUTH SURVEY

FAIRFAX COUNTY

NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY in Fairfax County

Self-reported by 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students on the Fairfax County Youth Survey

23% report eating 5 or more fruits and vegetables daily



38% report being physically active 5 or more days a week



31% report getting at least 8 hours of sleep on an average school night



33% report drinking sugar-sweetened beverages daily



50% report playing video games or using a computer for things other than schoolwork for 3 or more hours on a typical school day



11% of female students report using unhealthy weight loss methods in the past month



What You Need to Know

Childhood obesity is a national epidemic that is linked with high blood pressure and chronic diseases such as diabetes. It is also associated with social and emotional problems such as being bullied and depression.

There are healthy behaviors that combat childhood obesity — eating five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, getting regular physical exercise, and limiting screen time. Other healthy behaviors, like getting adequate sleep, also contribute to overall health.

Of 6th graders (who take a separate survey than 8th, 10th, and 12th graders) surveyed in Fairfax County, 45% are physically active for an hour a day five or more days a week, but only 32% of 12th graders get that same amount of exercise.

Of 6th graders, 29% eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day, but only 21% of 12th graders do.

Good health is not about losing weight, but about maintaining a healthy weight in a healthy

way. Although 9% of youth report using unhealthy methods to lose weight (fasting, diet products without a doctor's care, vomiting/laxatives), it is more common for girls (11%) than boys (6%).

Nearly two-thirds of youth (64%) spend three or more hours on an average school day watching TV, playing video games, or using the computer for things other than schoolwork. Reducing the number of hours spent on screen time gives a child more time for activity and other interests.

What Can You Do?

BE ACTIVE

- Set a good example and get up and move! Walk whenever possible and move more around your house.
- Enroll kids in sports teams or lessons.
- Ask your kids what activities they enjoy and explore new physical activities.
- Make family time active time with games, biking, walking, dancing ...

REDUCE SCREEN TIME

- Increase the amount of time engaged in physical activity.
- Track screen time as a family.
- Set and enforce rules to reasonably limit screen time.

EAT WELL

- Make healthy food choices at the grocery store — fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat milk products, lean meats and fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- Compare nutrition labels and choose foods that are lower in fat and calories.
- Know how much is in a serving size of the food you eat.
- In restaurants, eat smaller portions, choose foods lower in fat and choose healthy substitutions. Avoid supersizes.
- Calories come from what you drink as well as what you eat. It all counts.

Adapted from the National Institutes of Health's *We CAN!*

Who Can Help?

Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services
<http://bit.ly/fairfaxNCS>

Fairfax County Public Schools, Food and Nutrition Services
<http://bit.ly/FCPSfood>

Fairfax County Health Department
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health

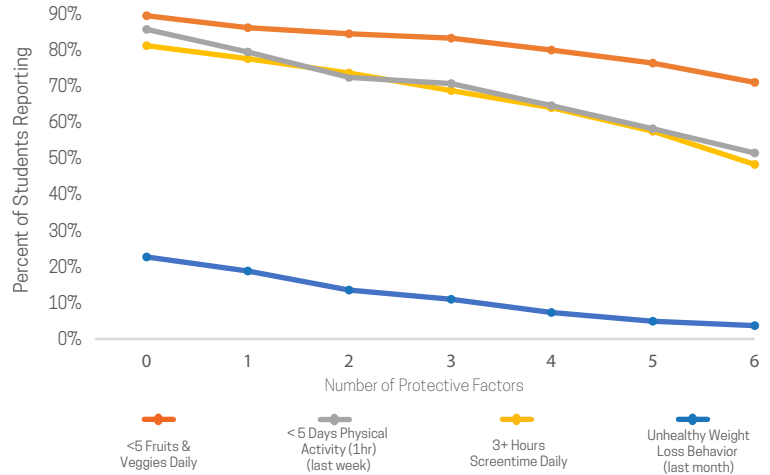
Fairfax County Park Authority
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

3 THREE to SUCCEED

The Factors That Matter

Data from the Youth Survey reinforces decades of research that shows that when youth have protective factors (also known as assets) in their lives, they do better in lots of different areas. **Having just three protective factors dramatically reduces the likelihood that youth will engage in risky behaviors.** The Youth Survey shows that every protective factor makes a difference.

Young people in Fairfax County report positive influences from the people and opportunities in their lives. Take action to be an asset in a young person's life and help to build a stronger, more positive community that benefits ALL children and youth.

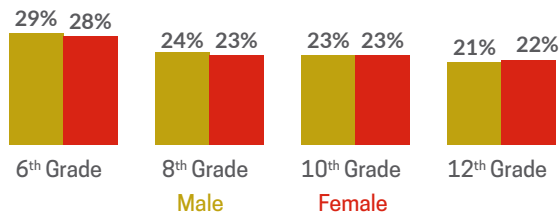


Protective Factors

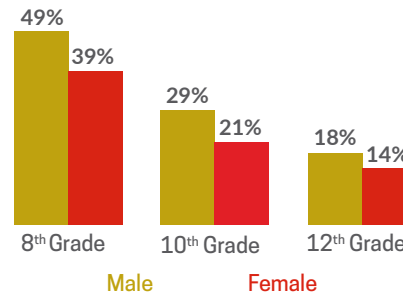
Having high personal integrity
Having community adults to talk to
Performing community service

Participating in extracurricular activities
Having teachers recognize good work
Having parents available for help

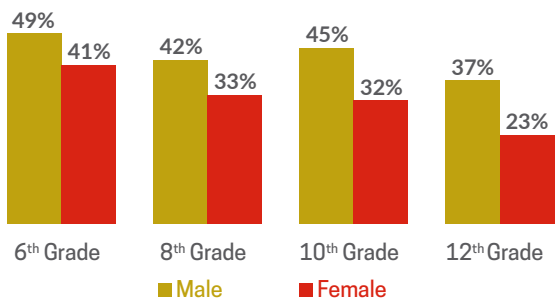
5+ Fruits/Veggies per Day



8+ Hours of Sleep on an Average School Night



60 Mins of Physical Activity on 5+ Days/Week



Related Factors

Youth who get an hour of physical activity on five or more days a week are less likely to experience depressive symptoms than youth who get less (23% vs 32%). (2018 Fairfax County Youth Survey)

Regular physical activity can reduce your risk of depression and help you sleep better. Doing aerobic or a mix of aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities 3 to 5 times a week for 30 to 60 minutes can give you these mental health benefits. (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

Fairfax County Prevention System
<http://bit.ly/FairfaxPrevention>

National Institutes of Health – We CAN!
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan

CDC - Overweight & Obesity
www.cdc.gov/obesity

Partnership for a Healthier America
www.ahealthieramerica.org

The Fairfax County Youth Survey was administered in the fall of 2018.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.



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