

## Why Ohio Conducted the YRBS

The YRBS helps Ohioans identify high school students' current health and safety habits so improvements can be made where needed. Establishing healthy lifestyles for Ohio youth can lead to improved learning in the classroom and longer, more productive lives for Ohio's population.

People develop behavior patterns in their childhood and teen years which can eventually strengthen or threaten their quality and length of life. Currently, many adolescents in the United States use tobacco, alcohol, eat too much fat, consume too few fruits and vegetables and fail to exercise regularly. Students often can improve their health by making simple changes to what they do each day. Parents, school staff members and community groups can help students make the behavior changes necessary to improve their health by developing and supporting activities and environments that encourage healthy behaviors.

The 2005 YRBS provides Ohio with a reference point for evaluating future trends in health habits of youth. Survey results serve as a valuable tool, particularly for legislators, policymakers, school administrators and teachers as they make decisions about new disease prevention and health promotion policies, services, programs and educational activities. Specifically, YRBS findings form a valuable base upon which Ohio can strengthen its ability to:

- Establish disease prevention and health promotion policies.
- Plan and implement health-related programs and services.
- Secure funding for health-related programs.
- Allocate limited resources toward targeted needs and priorities.
- Conduct future research and note progress or deficiencies.
- Enact laws to prevent injuries and unnecessary deaths.

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