

DEKALB COUNTY MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

2006



A Collaborative Project of the
DeKalb County Board of Education and the
DeKalb County Board of Health



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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes health behaviors of middle school students in DeKalb County, Georgia that put them at risk for injury and illness. Many of these behaviors begin during youth and put them at risk for various health conditions throughout adulthood. In DeKalb County, 42% of all deaths among youth aged 11-14 years result from the following: motor vehicle crashes (24%), other unintentional injuries (8%), homicide (5%) and suicide (5%). Among persons older than 20 years, 35% of deaths result from cardiovascular diseases and 22% from cancer (1). All of these causes of illness and death are related to six basic types of behavior: behaviors that result in unintentional injuries and violence; tobacco use; alcohol and other drug use; dietary behaviors; and physical activity.

In 1991, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, together with state and local departments of education and health, other federal agencies, and national education and health organizations, developed the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System to monitor specific health-risk behaviors that contribute to illness and death and to assess how the frequency of these behaviors change over time. By 2005, 40 states and 21 large cities participated in the high school Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)(2). Some states and large cities chose to conduct the YRBS in middle schools, also. In 2003, seven states and 6 large cities conducted a middle school survey.

In 2001, the DeKalb County School System contracted with the DeKalb County Board of Health to conduct the first Youth Risk Behavior Survey among students in DeKalb County public high schools (grades 9-12). This survey was repeated in high schools in the fall of 2003 and 2005. In the spring of 2006, Steps to a Healthier DeKalb (3) funded the first middle school survey (grades 6-8). The following report summarizes the 2006 findings. The text on the left side of each page introduces each question along with the overall percent of students who indicated engaging in each behavior. The graphs on the right side break each question down by gender, race, and grade level.

METHODS

All 19 traditional DeKalb County public middle schools* participated in the study. Classes from each school were chosen to participate in the survey. The number of classes varied (from three to six) depending on the population size of the school. The classes were randomly chosen from among all second period classes (excluding English as a Second Language and special education classes). All students within a selected class were eligible to participate.

Consent forms and information describing the survey were sent to parents of students from selected classes two weeks before survey administration. Students were required to bring a signed parental consent form in order to participate. Students could choose not to participate in the entire survey or to skip any question that they did not wish to answer. Participation in the survey was completely anonymous. Personally identifiable data were not collected and data are reported only in aggregate form.

Students completed a self-administered, 63-item questionnaire by recording their answers on a scannable (Scantron) answer sheet. Survey questions can be found in the Appendix on page 29. DeKalb County Board of Health employees administered the survey in each classroom.

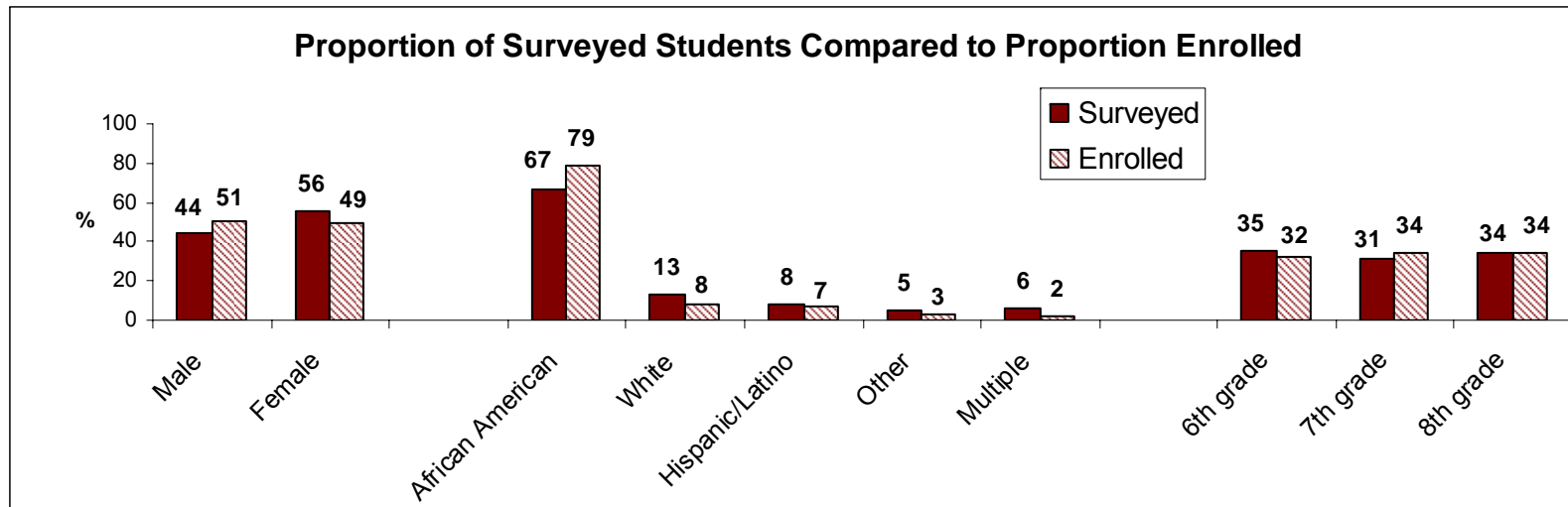
Results from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey are typically weighted (4) to ensure the results are representative of all DeKalb County middle school students. However, a 60% participation rate must be achieved in order to weight the data appropriately and this level of participation was not achieved in DeKalb County. Thus, the results reported here only represent those students who participated in the survey and may not accurately describe all students in grades 6-8 in DeKalb County public middle schools. For this reason, **no** comparisons can be made to state or national results.

*Avondale Middle, Bethune Middle, Cedar Grove Middle, Chamblee Middle, Chapel Hill Middle, Columbia Middle, Freedom Middle, Henderson Middle, Lithonia Middle, Miller Grove Middle, Peachtree Middle, Redan Middle, Ronald McNair Middle, Salem Middle, Sequoyah Middle, Shamrock Middle, Stephenson Middle, Stone Mountain Middle, Tucker Middle

SUMMARY

Demographics

A total of 1,272 students from 19 public middle schools in DeKalb County completed the survey. Unweighted demographic characteristics of the students are as follows: male (44.4%), female (55.6%); grade 6 (34.9%), grade 7 (31.0%) and grade 8 (33.9%); African-American (67.2%), white (13.4%), Hispanic/Latino (8.2%), other race (5.1%) and multiple races (6.1%). The graph below compares the proportion of students that were surveyed to the proportion enrolled. Since 79% of enrolled middle school students are African American and only 67% of surveyed students are African American, African-American students are likely underrepresented in the survey. Also, gender differences indicate that males may be underrepresented. Since the sample size for other and multiple races were too small for accurate estimates, they are excluded from race comparison sections of this report.

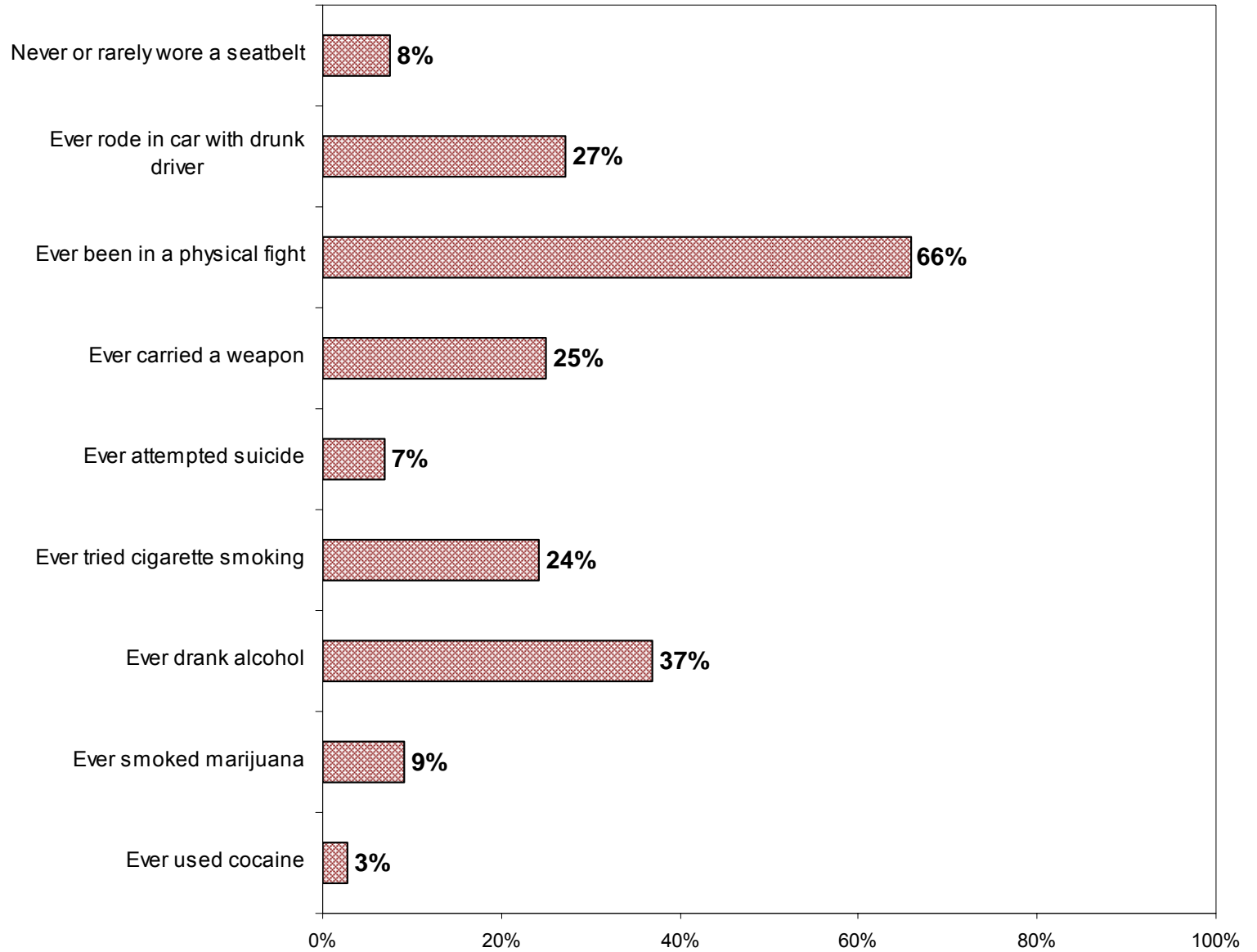


Risk behaviors

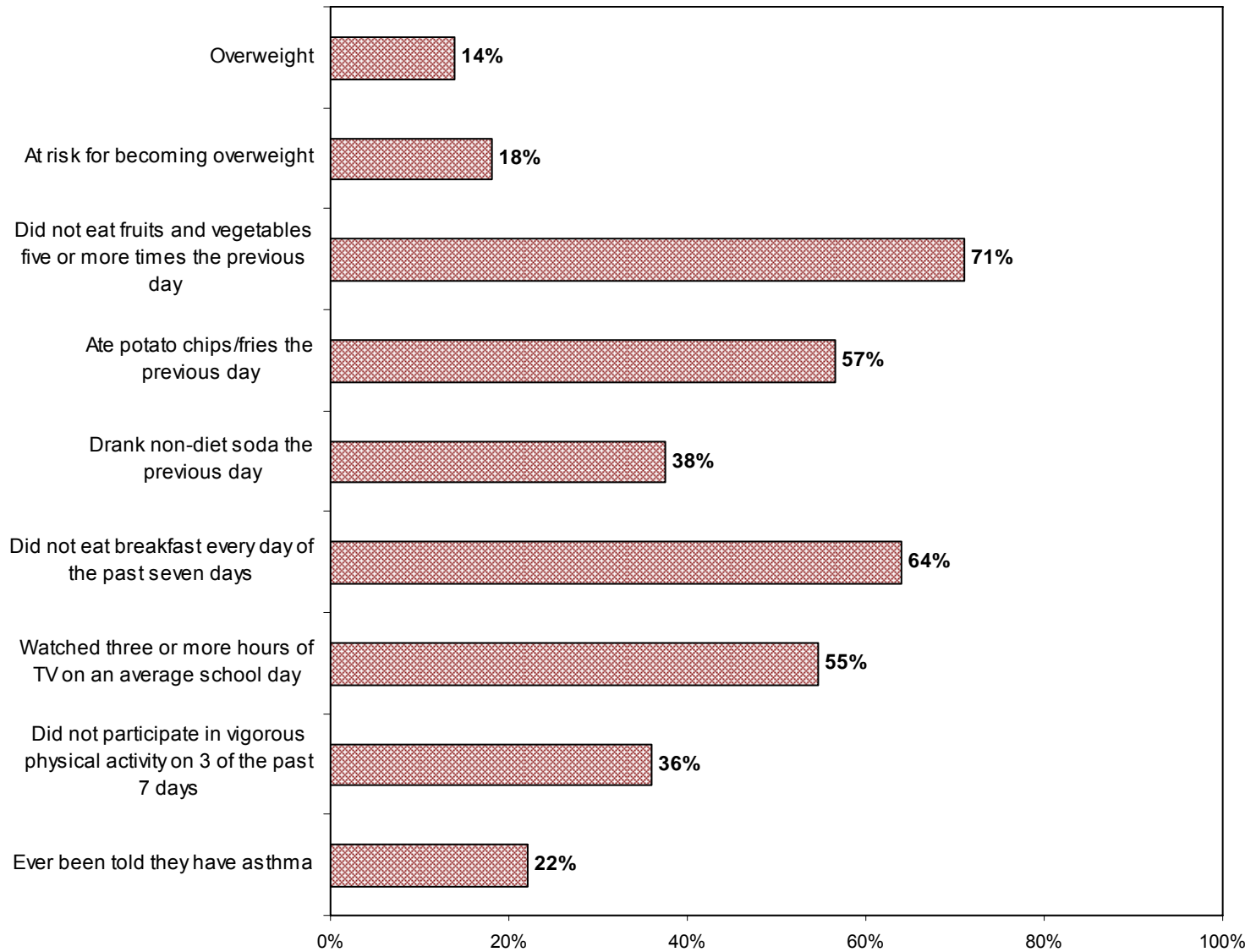
Overall, DeKalb students had relatively low rates of current tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, and were likely to wear seatbelts (Figure p. 9). Of students who rode a bicycle in the past 12 months, 76% never or rarely wore a bicycle helmet. About two-thirds (66%) had ever been in a physical fight and 7% had ever attempted suicide. Nearly one-third (32%) were either overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. Only 29% ate fruits and vegetables five or more times per day and 57% ate fries or potato chips on the day preceding the survey. Over half (55%) watched three or more hours of television and 20% played video/computer games for three or more hours on an average school day. About one-fourth (24%) lived one mile or less from school, but only 6% walked or biked to school on most days of the week.

Summary of Risk Behaviors

Dekalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2006



Summary of Risk Behaviors
DeKalb County Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2006



**SECTION 1:
UNINTENTIONAL
INJURIES AND VIOLENCE**

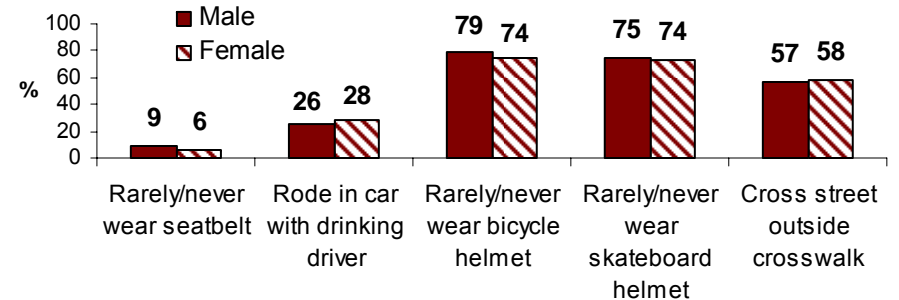
UNINTENTIONAL INJURIES

Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

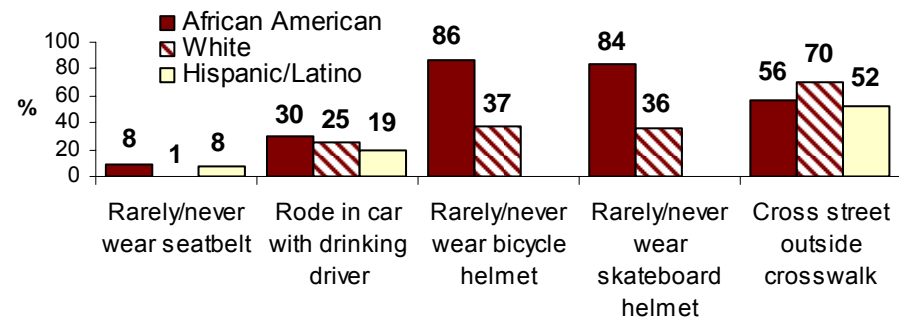
- **Rarely/never wear a seatbelt when riding in a car driven by someone else: 7.5%**
- **Rode in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol: 27.2%**
- **Of those who rode a bicycle in the past 12 months, those who rarely/never wore a bicycle helmet: 76.3%[†]**
- **Rarely/never wear a helmet when using rollerblades or riding a skateboard: 74.3%[†]**
- **Crossed the street outside a marked crosswalk one or more times in the past 30 days: 57.4%**

[†]Small sample size does not allow some comparisons.

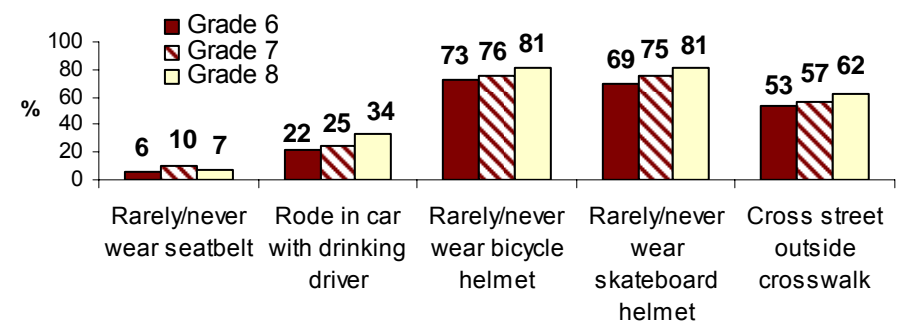
Unintentional Injuries, by Gender



Unintentional Injuries, by Race/Ethnicity



Unintentional Injuries, by Grade Level

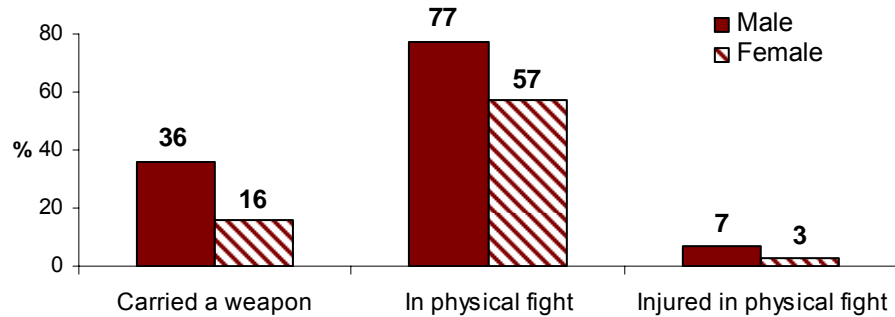


CARRYING WEAPONS AND PHYSICAL FIGHTING

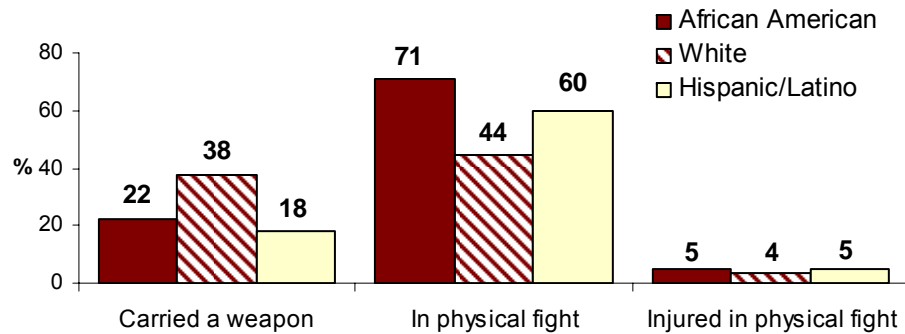
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- Ever carried a weapon such as a gun, knife or club: 25.0%
- Have ever been in a physical fight: 65.9%
- Were ever in a physical fight in which they were hurt and had to be treated by a doctor or nurse: 4.8%

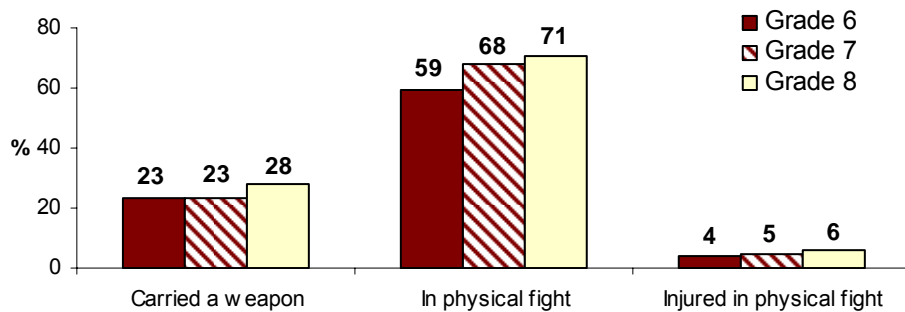
Weapons and Fighting, by Gender



Weapons and Fighting, by Race/Ethnicity



Weapons and Fighting, by Grade Level

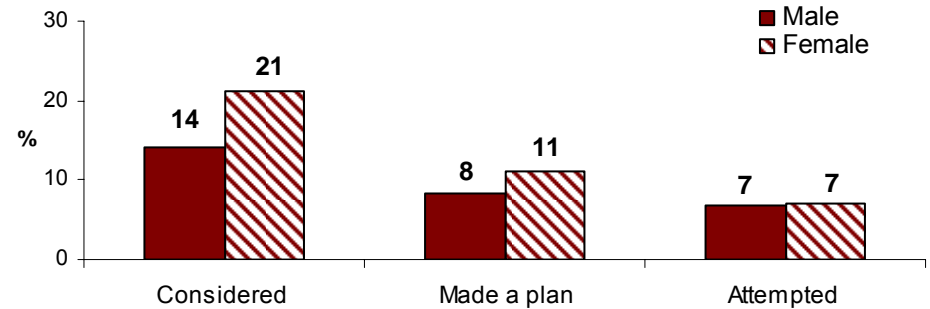


SUICIDAL THOUGHTS AND ACTIONS

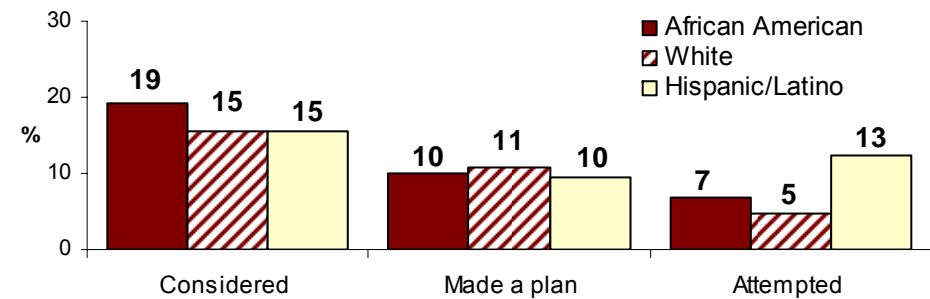
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Have ever seriously thought about killing themselves: 18.1%**
- **Have ever made a plan about how they would kill themselves: 9.9%**
- **Have ever tried to kill themselves: 7.0%**

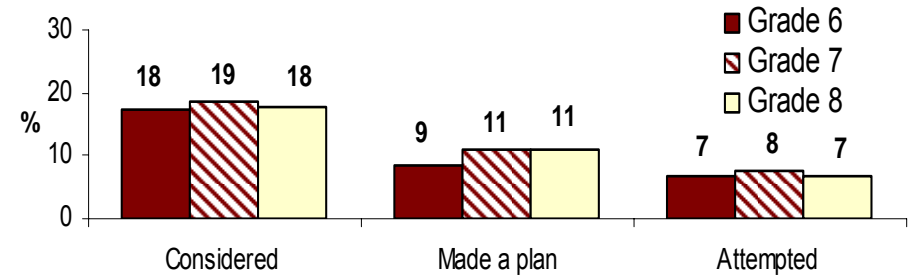
Suicidal Thoughts and Actions, by Gender



Suicidal Thoughts and Actions, by Race/Ethnicity



Suicidal Thought and Actions, by Grade Level



**SECTION 2:
TOBACCO**

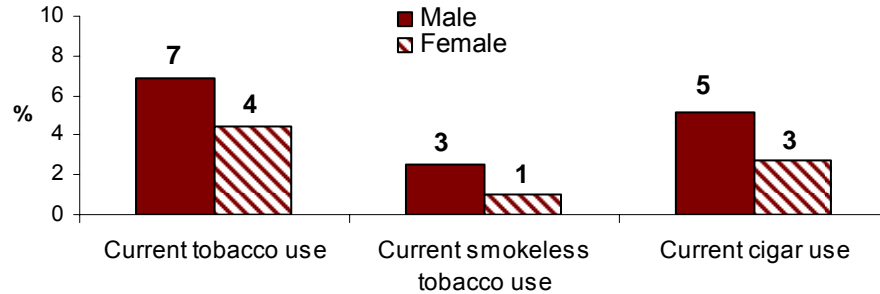
TOBACCO USE

Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

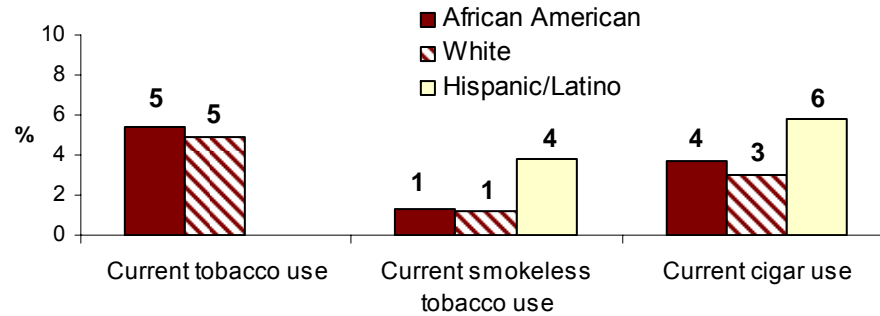
- **Used any form of tobacco on one or more of the past 30 days (“current tobacco use”): 5.5%[†]**
- **Used chewing tobacco or snuff on one or more of the past 30 days (“current smokeless tobacco use”): 1.7%**
- **Smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on one or more of the past 30 days (“current cigar use”): 3.8%**

[†]Small sample size does not allow some comparisons.

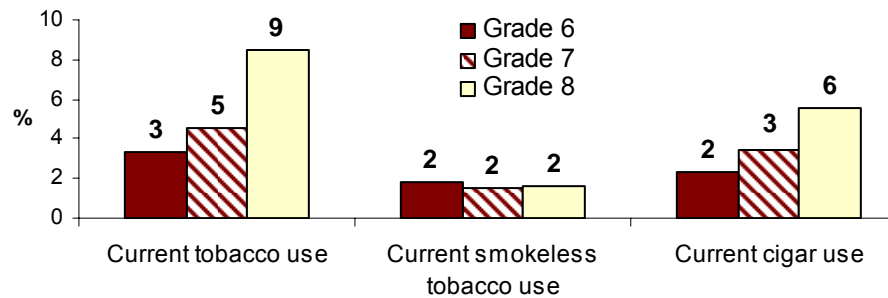
Tobacco Use, by Gender



Tobacco Use, by Race/Ethnicity



Tobacco Use, by Grade Level



CIGARETTE USE

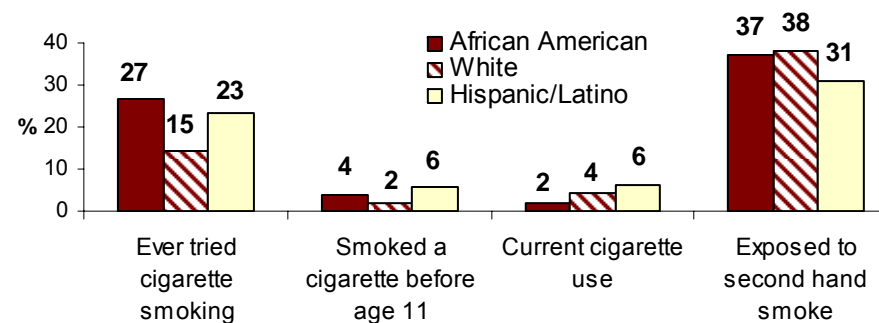
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Have ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs: 24.2%**
- **Smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before age 11 years: 3.8%**
- **Smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days (“current cigarette use”): 2.4%**
- **Were in the same room or riding in a car with someone who was smoking cigarettes on one or more of the past seven days (“exposed to second hand smoke”): 36.2%**

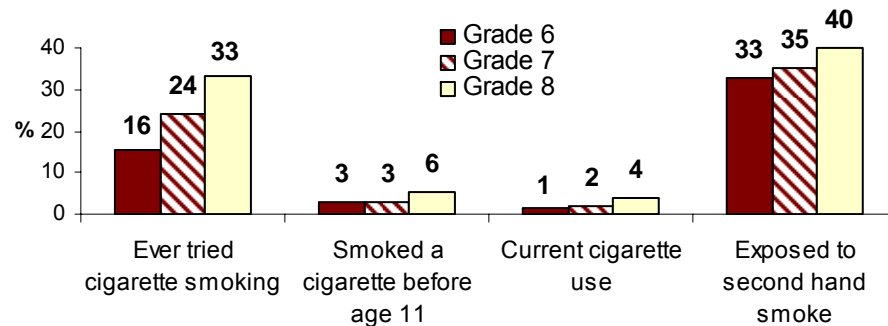
Cigarette Use, by Gender



Cigarette Use, by Race/Ethnicity



Cigarette Use, by Grade Level



**SECTION 3:
ALCOHOL AND OTHER
DRUG USE**

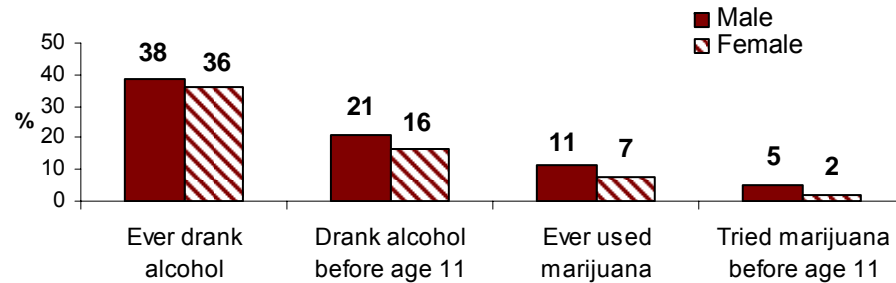
ALCOHOL AND MARIJUANA USE

Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

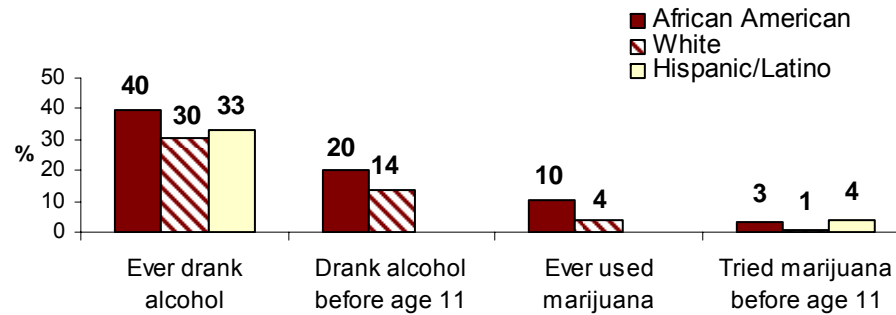
- **Ever had a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips: 36.9%**
- **Had their first drink of alcohol other than a few sips before age 11 years: 18.4%[†]**
- **Ever used marijuana: 9.1%[†]**
- **Tried marijuana for the first time before age 11 years: 3.2%[†]**

[†]Small sample size does not allow some comparisons.

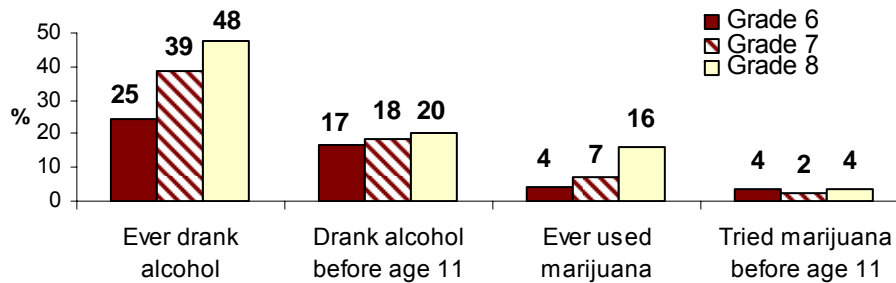
Alcohol and Marijuana Use, by Gender



Alcohol and Marijuana Use, by Race/Ethnicity



Alcohol and Marijuana Use, by Grade Level

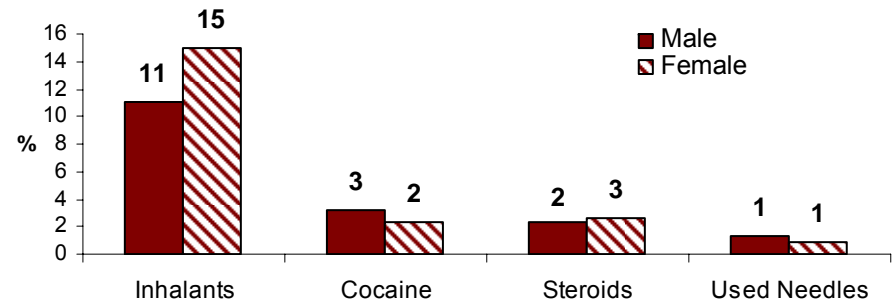


OTHER DRUG USE

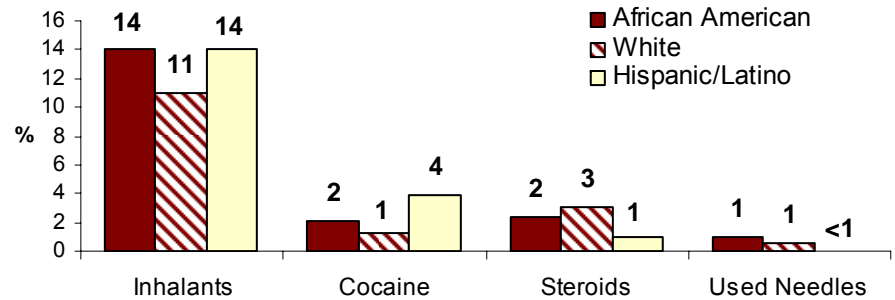
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- Ever sniffed glue, breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high: 13.2%
- Ever used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase: 2.7%
- Ever used steroids: 2.4%
- Ever used a needle to inject any illegal drug into their body: 1.0%

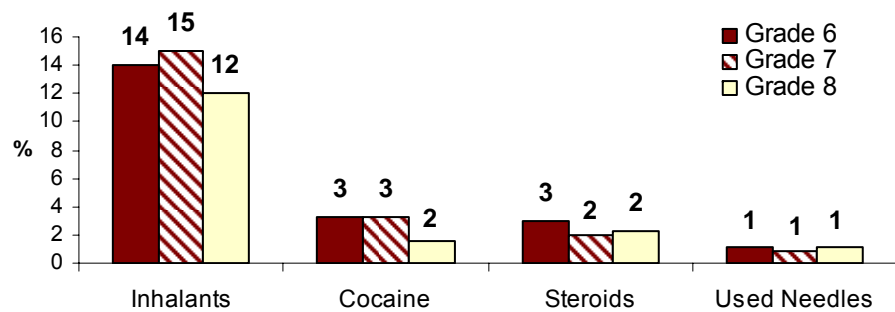
Other Drug Use, by Gender



Other Drug Use, by Race/Ethnicity



Other Drug Use, by Grade Level



**SECTION 4:
WEIGHT AND DIETARY
BEHAVIORS**

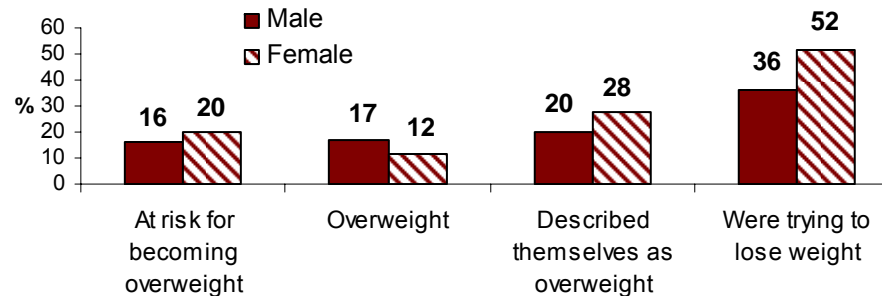
**WEIGHT AND SELF
PERCEPTION OF WEIGHT**

Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

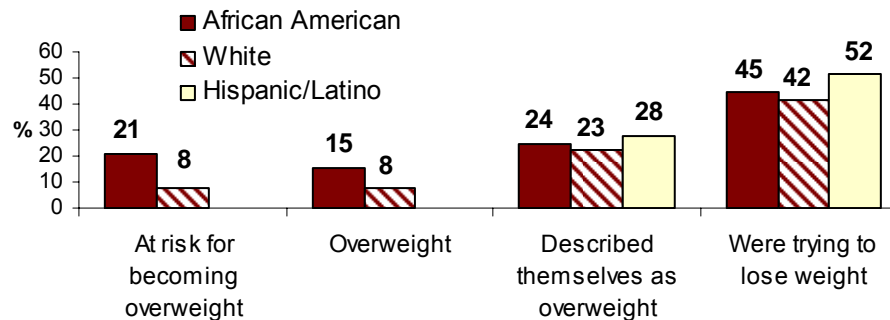
- **Are at risk for becoming overweight[†]: 18.0%[†]**
- **Are overweight[§]: 13.9%[†]**
- **Describe themselves as slightly or very overweight: 24.3%**
- **Are trying to lose weight: 44.7%**

[†]Small sample size does not allow some comparisons.
[‡]Were at or above 85th percentile but below 95th percentile for Body Mass Index by age and sex based on reference data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey I.
[§]Were at or above 95th percentile for Body Mass Index by age and sex based on reference data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey I.

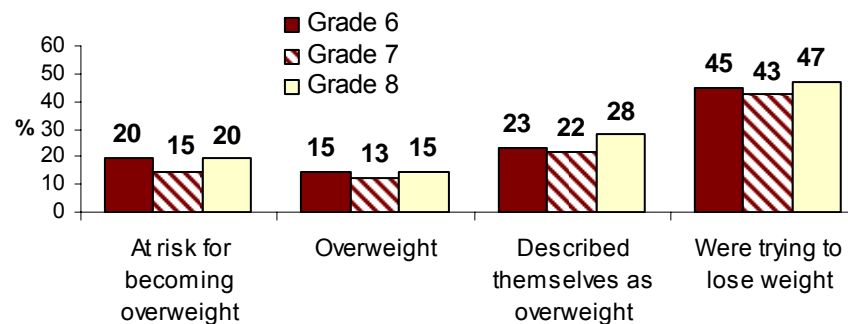
Body Weight, by Gender



Body Weight, by Race/Ethnicity



Body Weight, by Grade Level

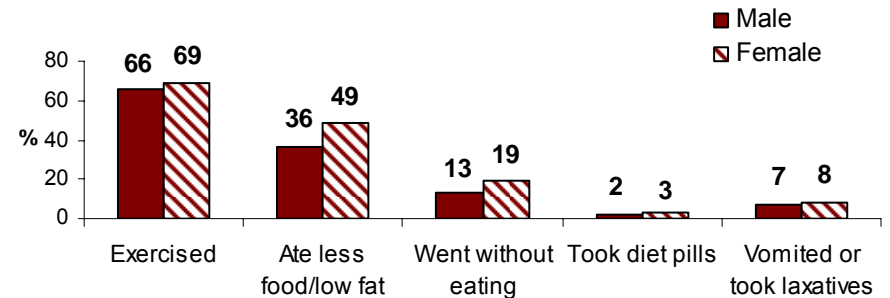


STRATEGIES FOR WEIGHT LOSS AND WEIGHT CONTROL

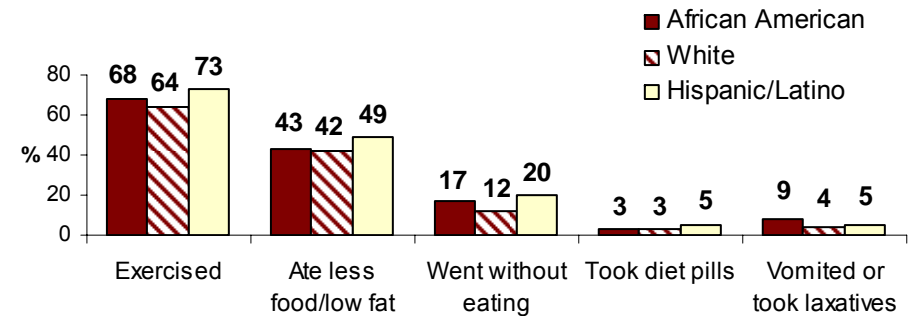
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- Ever exercised to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight: **67.5%**
- Ever ate less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight: **43.2%**
- Ever went without eating for 24 hours or more to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight: **16.8%**
- Ever took diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor's advice to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight: **2.8%**
- Ever vomited or taken laxatives to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight: **7.7%**

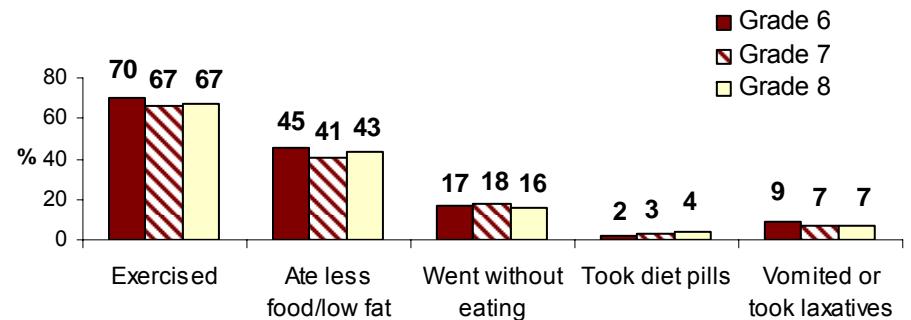
Strategies for Weight Control, by Gender



Strategies for Weight Control, by Race/Ethnicity



Strategies for Weight Control, by Grade Level



Dietary Behaviors

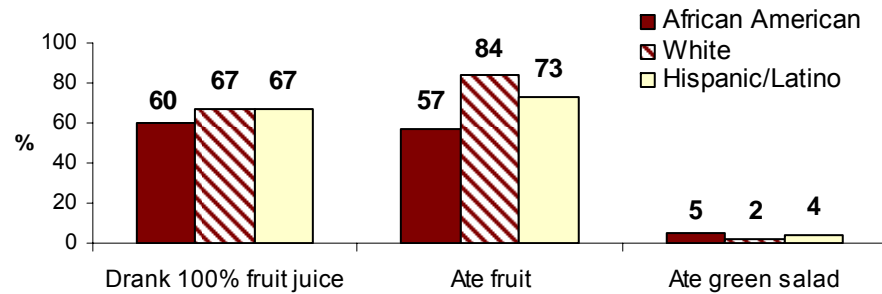
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Drank 100% fruit juices one or more times on the previous day: 61.3%**
- **Ate fruit one or more times on the previous day: 62.9%**
- **Ate green salad one or more times on the previous day: 4.8%**

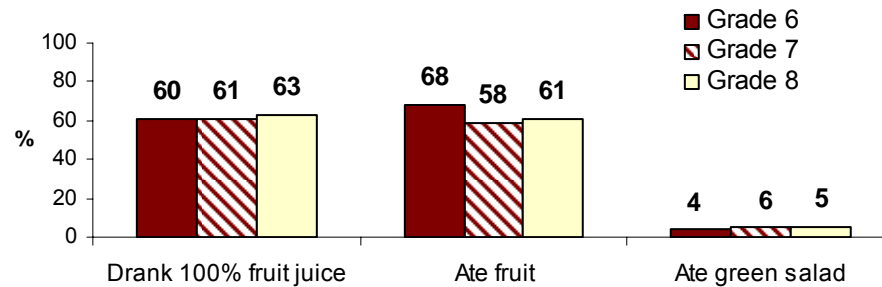
Dietary Behaviors, by Gender



Dietary Behaviors, by Race/Ethnicity



Dietary Behaviors, by Grade Level

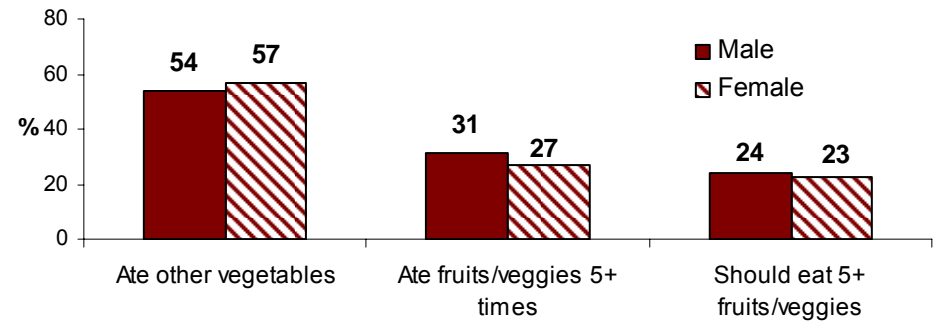


Dietary Behaviors (continued)

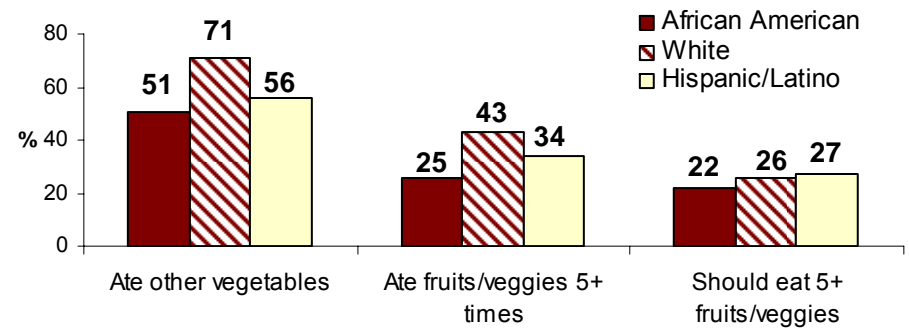
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Ate other vegetables one or more times on the previous day: 55.2%**
- **Ate fruits and vegetables five or more times on the previous day: 29.0%**
- **Responded that they should eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day to maintain a healthy diet: 23.2%**

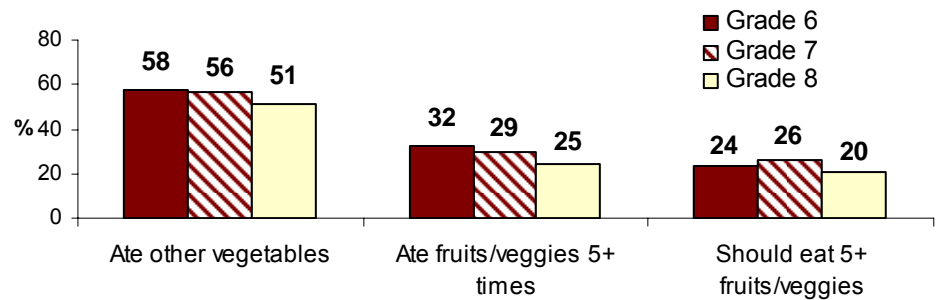
Dietary Behaviors, by Gender



Dietary Behaviors, by Race/Ethnicity



Dietary Behaviors, by Grade Level

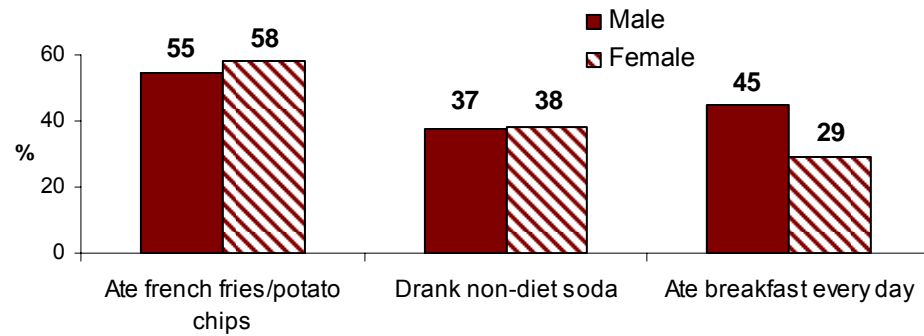


Dietary Behaviors (continued)

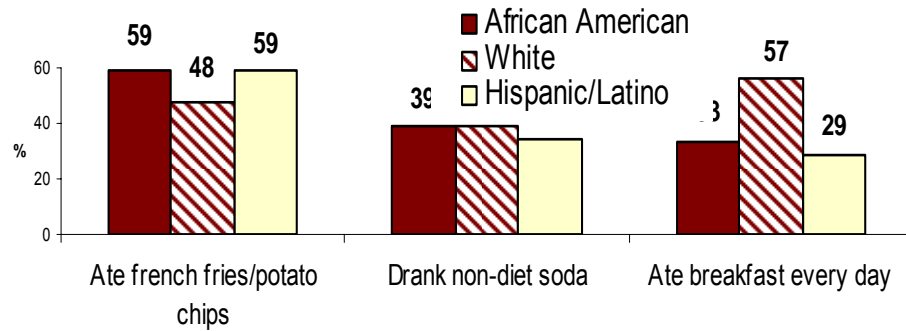
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Ate French fries/potato chips one or more times on the previous day: 56.5%**
- **Drank one or more cans or bottles of non-diet soda on the previous day: 37.6%**
- **Ate breakfast on seven of the past seven days: 35.8%**

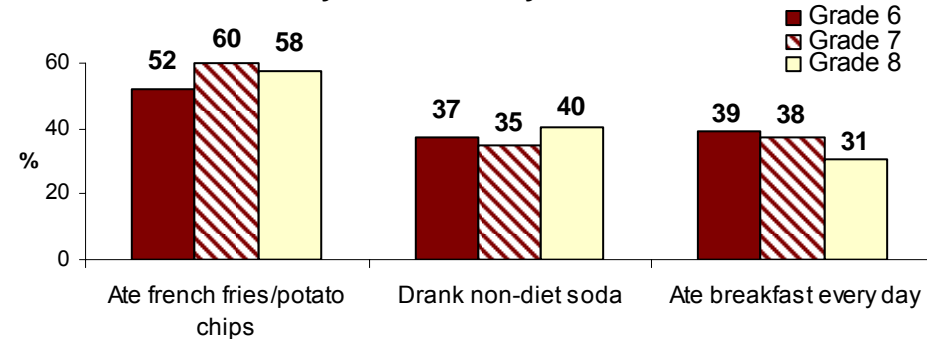
Dietary Behaviors, by Gender



Dietary Behaviors, by Race/Ethnicity



Dietary Behaviors, by Grade Level



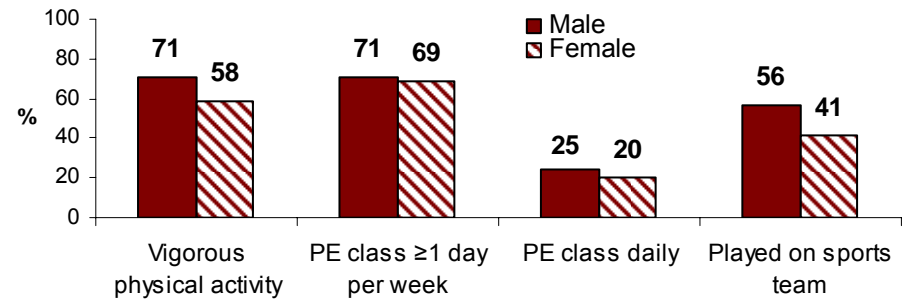
**SECTION 5:
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

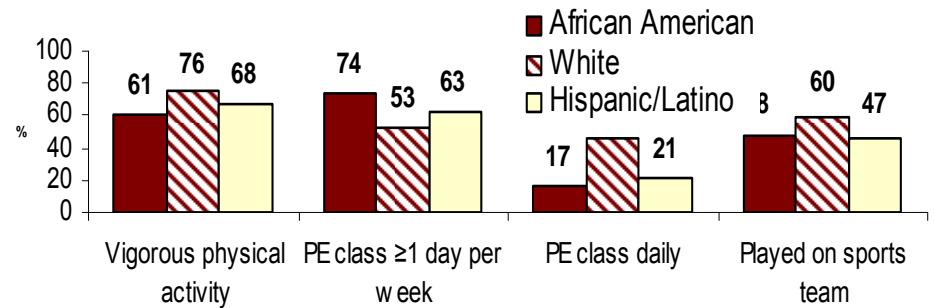
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Participated in physical activity that made them sweat and breathe hard for 20 minutes or more on three or more of the past seven days (“vigorous physical activity”): 63.7%**
- **Attended physical education (PE) classes one or more days during an average school week: 69.5%**
- **Attended physical education (PE) classes daily in an average school week when they were in school: 22.3%**
- **Played on one or more sports teams: 47.7%**

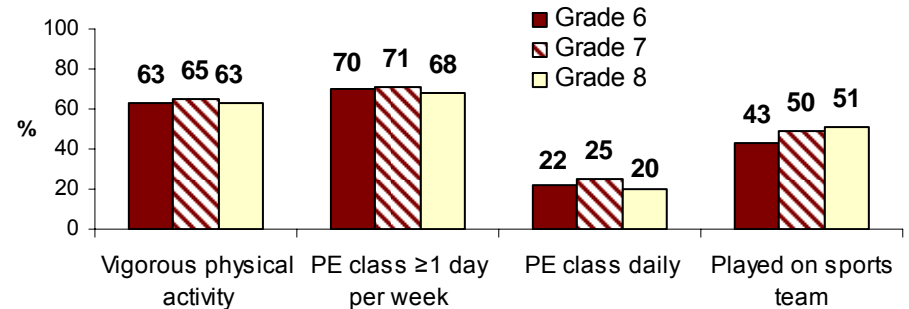
Physical Activity, by Gender



Physical Activity, by Race/Ethnicity



Physical Activity, by Grade Level

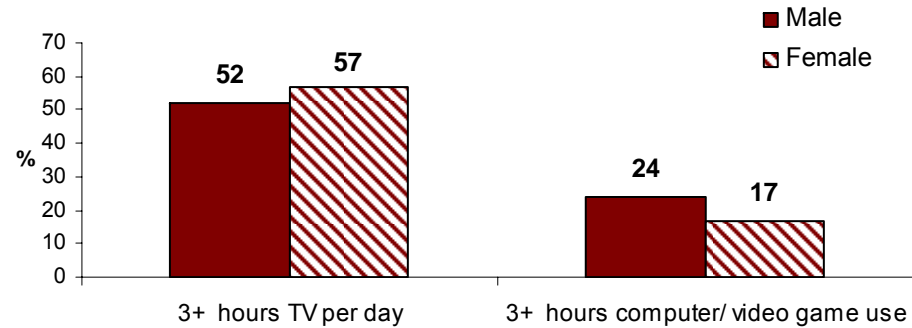


SEDENTARY BEHAVIOR

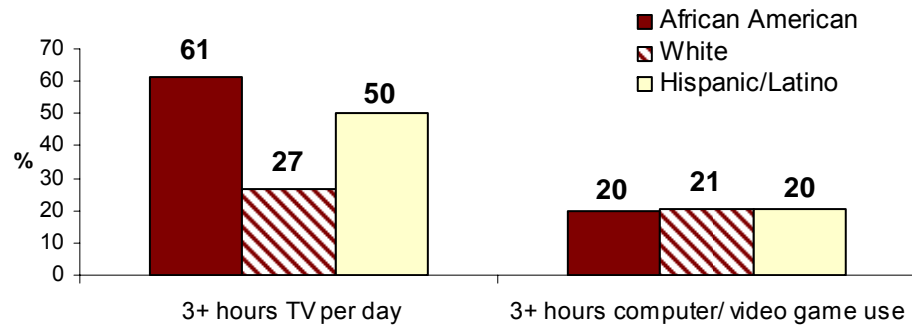
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Watched three or more hours per day of TV on an average school day: 54.7%**
- **Played video or computer games or used a computer for something that was not school work for three or more hours on an average school day: 20.3%**

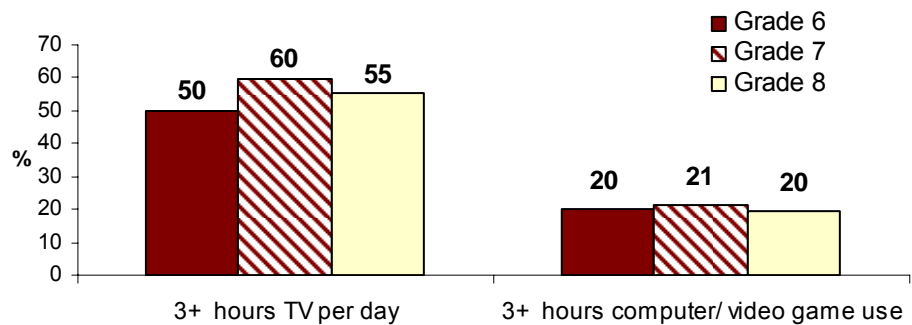
Sedentary Behavior, by Gender



Sedentary Behavior, by Race/Ethnicity



Sedentary Behavior, by Grade Level



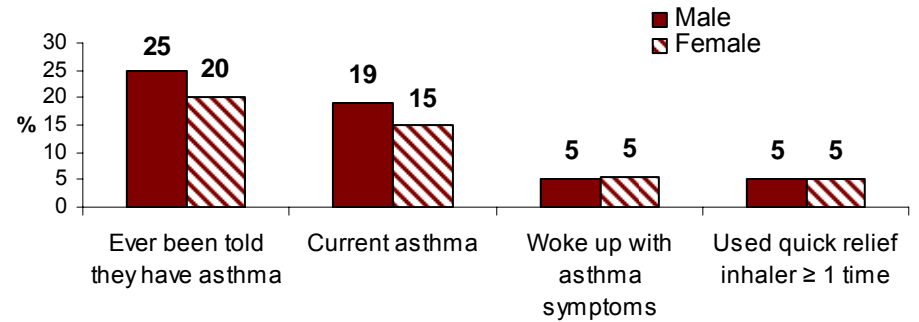
**SECTION 6:
OTHER HEALTH
BEHAVIORS**

ASTHMA

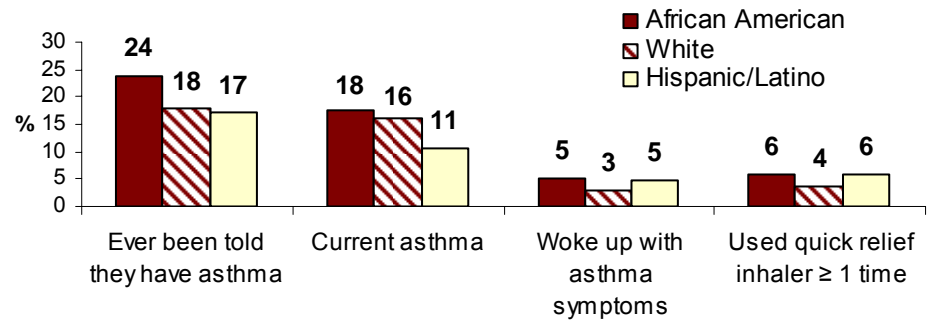
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Have ever been told by a doctor or nurse that they had asthma: 22.1%**
- **Currently have asthma: 16.8%**
- **Woke up at night with asthma symptoms more than two times in the past 30 days: 5.3%**
- **Used their quick-relief inhaler one or more times in the past seven days: 5.2%**

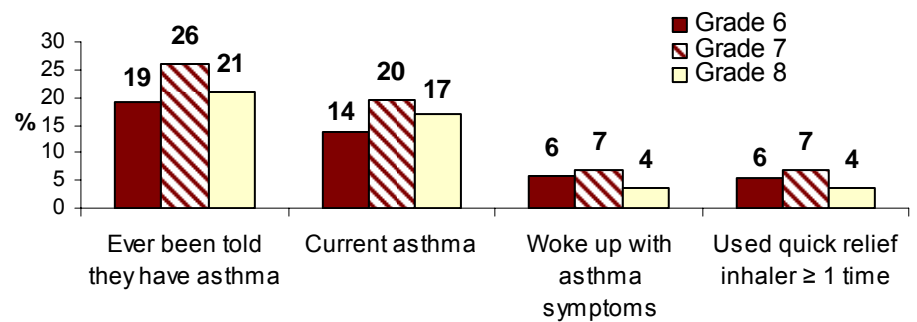
Asthma, by Gender



Asthma, by Race/Ethnicity



Asthma, by Grade Level

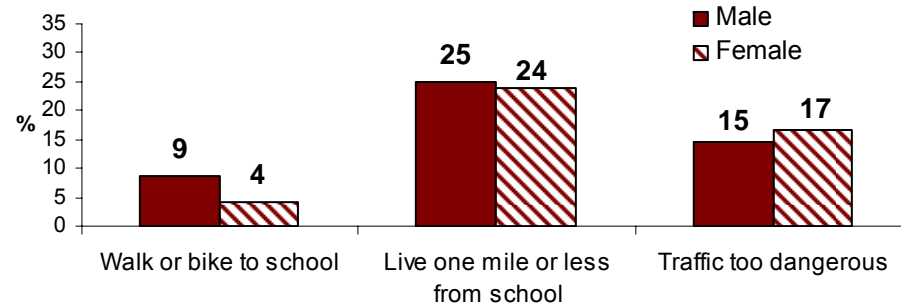


WALKING AND BIKING TO SCHOOL

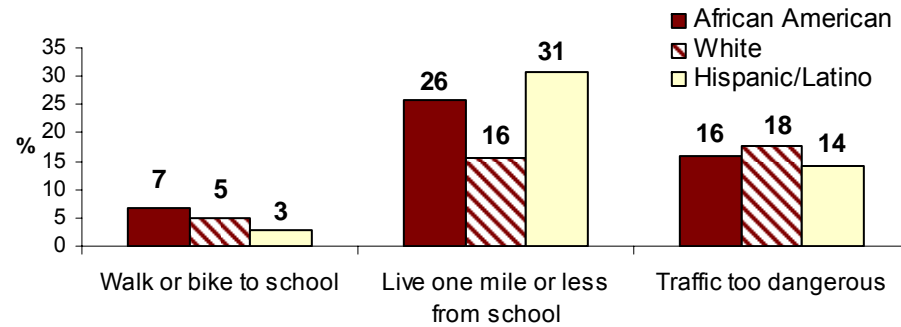
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- Walk or bike to school most days of the week: 6.2%
- Live one mile or less from the school: 24.4%
- Responded that the main reason they do not walk or bike to school is that it is too dangerous because of traffic: 15.8%

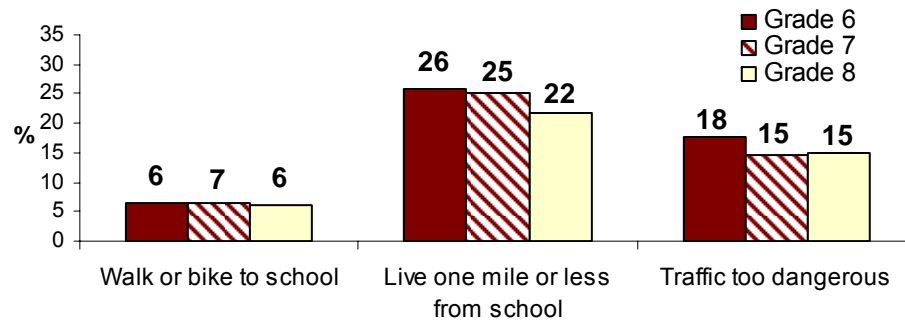
Walking/Biking to School, by Gender



Walking/Biking to School, by Race/Ethnicity



Walking/Biking to School, by Grade Level

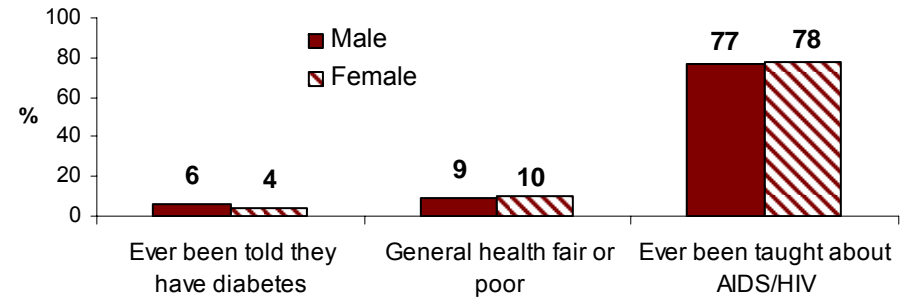


OTHER HEALTH BEHAVIORS

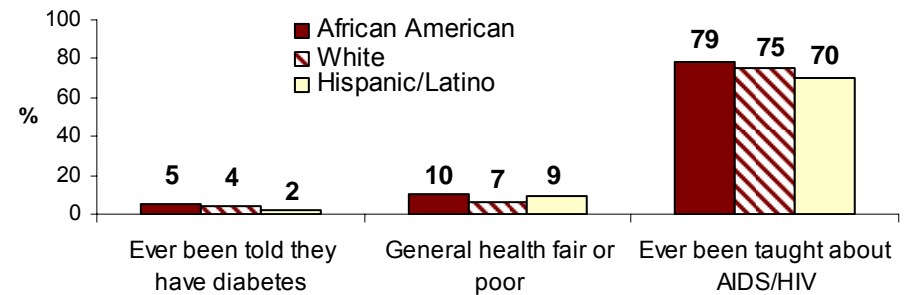
Percentage of DeKalb County middle school students who:

- **Have ever been told by a doctor or nurse they have diabetes: 4.8%**
- **Described their general health as fair or poor: 9.6%**
- **Have ever been taught in school about AIDS or HIV infection: 77.1%**

Other Health Behaviors, by Gender



Other Health Behaviors, by Race/Ethnicity



Other Health Behaviors, by Grade Level



APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How old are you?
2. What is your sex?
3. In what grade are you?
4. How do you describe yourself?
5. How do you describe your health in general?
6. How tall are you without your shoes on?
7. How much do you weigh without your shoes on?
8. How often do you wear a seat belt when riding in a car?
9. When you ride a bicycle, how often do you wear a helmet?
10. When you rollerblade or ride a skateboard, how often do you wear a helmet?
11. Have you ever ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol?
12. Have you ever carried a weapon, such as a gun, knife, or club?
13. Have you ever been in a physical fight?
14. Have you ever been in a physical fight in which you were hurt and had to be treated by a doctor or nurse?
15. Have you ever seriously thought about killing yourself?
16. Have you ever made a plan about how you would kill yourself?
17. Have you ever tried to kill yourself?
18. Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?
19. How old were you when you smoked a whole cigarette for the first time?
20. During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigarettes?
21. During the past 30 days, on the days you smoked, how many cigarettes did you smoke per day?
22. During the past 30 days, how did you usually get you own cigarettes?
23. During the past 7 days, on how many days were you in the same room or riding in a car with someone who was smoking cigarettes?

24. During the past 30 days, on how many days did you use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip, such as Redman, Levi Garrett, Beechnut, Skoal, Skoal Bandits, or Copenhagen?
25. During the past 30 days, on how many days did you smoke cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars?
26. Have you ever had a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips?
27. How old were you when you had your first drink of alcohol other than a few sips?
28. Have you ever used marijuana?
29. How old were you when you tried marijuana for the first time?
30. Have you ever used any form of cocaine, including powder, crack, or freebase?
31. Have you ever sniffed glue, breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high?
32. Have you ever used steroids?
33. Have you ever used a needle to inject any illegal drug into your body?
34. How do you describe your weight?
35. Which of the following are you trying to do about your weight?
36. Have you ever exercised to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?
37. Have you ever eaten less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?
38. Have you ever gone without eating for 24 hours or more to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?
39. Have you ever taken any diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor's advice to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?
40. Have you ever vomited or taken laxatives to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?
41. Yesterday, how many times did you drink 100% fruit juices such as orange juice, apple juice, or grape juice?
42. Yesterday, how many times did you eat fruit?
43. Yesterday, how many times did you eat green salad?
44. Yesterday, how many times did you eat French fries or potato chips?
45. Yesterday, how many times did you eat other vegetables?
46. Yesterday, how many cans or bottles of non-diet soda did you drink?
47. On how many of the past 7 days did you eat breakfast?

48. How many servings of fruits and vegetables should you eat per day to maintain a healthy diet?
49. On how many of the past 7 days did you exercise or participate in physical activity for at least 20 minutes that made you sweat and breathe hard, such as basketball, soccer, running, swimming laps, fast bicycling, fast dancing, or similar aerobic activities?
50. On an average school day, how many hours do you watch TV?
51. On an average school day, how many hours do you play video or computer games or use a computer for something that is not school work?
52. In an average week when you are in school, on how many days do you go to physical education classes?
53. Do you play on any sports teams?
54. Have you ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school?
55. Has a doctor or nurse ever told you that you have asthma?
56. During the past 12 months, have you had an episode of asthma or an asthma attack?
57. In the past 30 days, did you wake up at night with asthma symptoms more than two times?
58. In the past 7 days, how many times did you use your quick-relief inhaler?
59. Has a doctor or nurse ever told you that you have diabetes?
60. In the past 30 days, how many times did you cross the street outside a marked crosswalk?
61. How do you get to school most days of the week?
62. About how many miles is it from where you live to your school?
63. What is the main reason that you do not walk or ride a bicycle to school?

REFERENCES

1. 1994-2004, Office of Health Information and Policy, Georgia Department of Public Health
2. More information about the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System can be obtained from <http://www.cdc.gov/yrbss>.
3. More information about Steps to a Healthier DeKalb can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/steps>.
4. More information about the methodology of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5312.pdf>.

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- Westat Corporation

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