



## SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS AND INFLUENCES

The New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey (NBSWS) is a provincial initiative of the Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport (WCS). Data collection and analysis is conducted by the Health and Education Research Group (University of New Brunswick and Université de Moncton) in collaboration with WCS, and in cooperation with the Department of Education. The purpose of the survey is to examine the health and wellness attitudes and behaviours of students in grades 6-12.

Relationships with others in the home, school and community are important influences in the physical and emotional development of students. Such relationships contribute to experiences that either impede or positively impact students' growth and development.

### Healthy Eating

Family members influence students' eating routines and choices. Parents may play an important role in helping students develop healthy attitudes toward food through establishing consistent meal-time routines and modelling healthy food choices. During the adolescent years, students' peers are also important social influences that may affect their attitudes and behaviours related to healthy eating routines and choices (Health Canada, 2007).

- 53% of students reported eating lunch with friends.
- 60% of students reported eating at least one meal with a parent, step-parent or guardian on the previous day.
- 4% of those who reported eating dinner with their parent(s) indicated eating vegetables five or more times.

### Consuming Non-nutritious Foods

How marketing influences children and youth is the focus of the report, *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* This report asserts that current food and beverage marketing practices puts children's long-term health at risk. If children and youth are to develop eating habits that help them avoid early onset of diet-related chronic diseases, they must reduce their intake of high-calorie/low-nutrient snacks, fast foods, and sweetened drinks; which make up a high proportion of the products marketed to them (McGinnis, Appleton Gootman & Kraak, 2005).

% of students who consumed any of the following on the day before the survey:	2006-2007	2009-2010
Pop (Regular)	40%	39%
Pop (Diet)	15%	17%
High energy drinks (e.g. Red Bull®)	12%	16%

## Physical Activity

Physically active students are more likely than those who are inactive to report that they have active friends.

- 80% of active students reported having 3 or more close friends who were also active, whereas only 66% of inactive students reported similarly.

How many of your closest friends are physically active?	% of Students Reporting	
	Active	Inactive
None	4%	8%
1 or 2	16%	26%
3 or more	80%	66%

Parents can model healthy behaviours through participation in regular physical activity. Active parents often have active kids (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2002).

- 45% of the students with active parents were also physically active, while only 33% of the students with inactive parents were physically active.
- 58% of active students reported having active parents, compared to 45% of inactive students.

## Tobacco Use

Using tobacco at an early age has been associated with other risk behaviours, including problem alcohol and substance use (Health Canada, 2002).

How many of your closest friends smoke?	% of Students who Never Smoked	% of Students who Have Smoked in the Last 30 Days
None	76%	9%
1 or 2	16%	21%
3 or more	8%	70%

Students who have a parent who smokes are more likely to smoke. Female students are more likely to smoke than male students if they have a smoking parent. When both parents smoke, students are more likely to smoke than when only one parent smokes (Health Canada, 2002).

Do any of your family members smoke?	% of Students who Never Smoked	% of Students who Have Smoked in the Last 30 Days
Parent, Step-Parent or Guardian	35%	60%
Sibling	11%	41%

## Promoting Wellness at School

Health promoting schools can impact the wellness behaviours of students by modeling positive choices and encouraging empowerment and autonomy related to students' health (International Union for Health Promotion and Education, 2009).

Students reported on how many school staff they saw engaged in healthy behaviours:

<b>In general, how many of the school staff (e.g. teachers, custodians) do you see...?</b>	<b>Most of the School Staff &amp; Some of the Staff</b>	<b>A Few of the School Staff &amp; None of the Staff</b>
<b>Eating Healthy Foods</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>31%</b>
<b>Being Tobacco-Free</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>Being Physically Active</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>57%</b>

School-wide activities involving the entire school community or whole-class activities, in which students and staff work together, creates links between the groups, fosters school connectedness, and promotes the well-being of children and adolescents (Rowe and Stewart, 2009).

<b>Do you participate in any of the following activities at school?</b>	<b>Percentage of Students Reporting "Yes"</b>
<b>Dance (e.g., jazz, hip hop)</b>	<b>11%</b>
<b>Drama (e.g., plays, variety shows)</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Music (e.g., choirs, bands)</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Art (e.g., drawing, photography)</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Science or Technology (e.g., science fairs, school website)</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Student Clubs or Groups (e.g., peer helper, yearbook, TADD)</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Sports or Intramurals</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>22%</b>

## References

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The New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey Provincial Fact Sheets are available at [www.unbf.ca/education/herg](http://www.unbf.ca/education/herg) and [www.gnb.ca/wellness](http://www.gnb.ca/wellness)

- 127 schools participated in the 2009-2010 New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey.
- The survey data was collected from 21,078 students across New Brunswick.
- The students surveyed were in grades 6 to 12.

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