

SUPPORTING BC YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCE UNHEALTHY EATING



A 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY FACT SHEET



This fact sheet uses data from McCreary Centre Society's BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). The most recent BC AHS was completed in 2018 by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19. For more information about the survey methodology please visit <http://mcs.bc.ca/>.

This fact sheet was prepared by Averyl Smatlan during a practicum placement completed as part of a Bachelor of Child and Youth Care at Douglas College.

Body dissatisfaction can lead some adolescents to adopt food related behaviours which can negatively impact their health (Rosewall, Gleaves, & Latner, 2018). One of the most common types of disordered eating is vomiting after eating, or purging (Kelty Mental Health, 2020). This fact sheet explores the prevalence of this behaviour among BC youth, and looks at some of the protective factors which are associated with youth being less likely to purge.

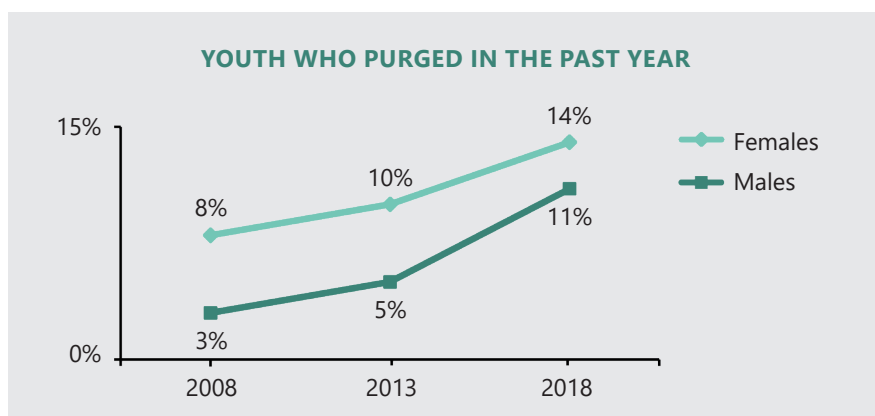
During the past 12 months, 13% of BC youth had vomited on purpose after eating (purged). Youth who identified as non-binary were more than twice as likely as males and females to have purged. For example, 29% of non-binary youth purged in the past year, compared to 14% of females.

Non-binary youth data was not available prior to 2018. However, data for males and females showed that rates of purging continued to increase from previous years.

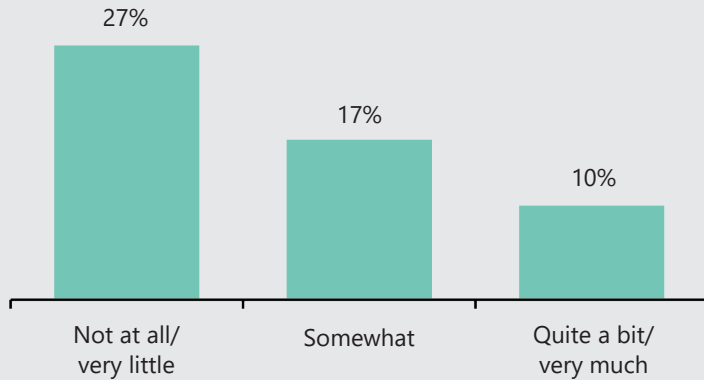
SUPPORTING YOUTH WHO PURGE

Youth were less likely to purge when they:

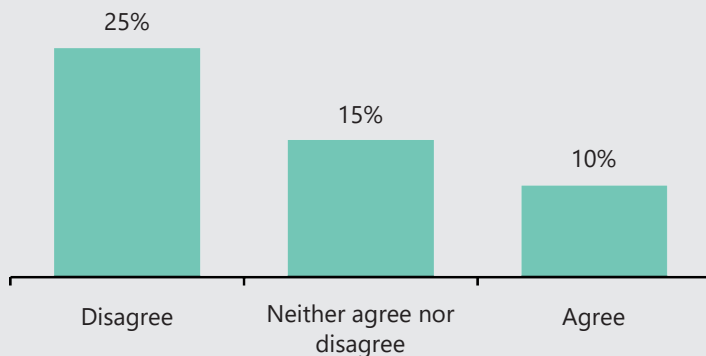
- Felt good about themselves (8% purged vs. 23% of youth who did not feel good about themselves).
- Had at least one close friend (12% vs. 16% of youth who had no friends).
- Had an adult in their community or neighbourhood who really cared about them (11% vs. 15% of youth who did not have an adult in the community who cared).
- Felt their family respected them
- Felt teachers cared about them.



YOUTH WHO PURGED IN THE PAST YEAR IN RELATION TO HOW MUCH THEY FELT RESPECTED BY THEIR FAMILY



YOUTH WHO PURGED IN THE PAST YEAR IN RELATION TO WHETHER THEY FELT TEACHERS CARED ABOUT THEM



SUMMARY

Eating disorders can be complex and potentially harmful (Manley, Rickson, & Standeven, 2000). The increase in purging among BC youth is concerning, and emphasizes the need for supportive relationships and other protective factors which can support youth to maintain healthier eating habits.

REFERENCES

- Kelty Mental Health. (2020, March 6). *Eating Disorders*. Kelty Mental Health Resource Center. <https://kelytmentalhealth.ca/info/eating-disorders>
- Manley, R. S., Rickson, H., & Standeven, B. (2000). Children and adolescents with eating disorders: Strategies for teachers and school counselors. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 35(4), 228.
- Rosewall, J., Gleaves, D., & Latner, J. (2018). An examination of risk factors that moderate the body dissatisfaction-eating pathology relationships among New Zealand adolescent girls. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, 6(38), 1-10.

FOR INFORMATION AND HELP WITH EATING DISORDERS:

Kids Help Phone

Youth needing immediate help and support can text: CONNECT to 686868

BC Children's Kelty Mental Health Resource Centre

Phone: 604-875-2084 or 1-800-665-1822 (toll-free anywhere in BC)
Email: kelytcentre@cw.bc.ca

National Eating Disorder Information Centre

Phone: 1-866-NEDIC-20 (toll-free)
Email: nedic@uhn.ca
Chat: [nedic.ca](https://www.nedic.ca)

