

2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey: Question topics and sources

The BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) provides information about the current health of BC youth, including new and emerging health issues, as well as information about trends over time.

The 2023 BC AHS survey items came from a variety of sources, including other youth surveys and previous versions of the BC AHS. Some questions were developed specifically for the 2023 BC AHS and were extensively piloted with youth aged 12–19 across the province. This resource summarizes the 2023 BC AHS survey item and question sources.



Question topics

Question topic	Specific Items
Background	Age, grade, gender identity, sexual orientation, family background, racial identity, religion, cultural pride, place of birth, length of time in Canada, living situation, housing instability, caretaking responsibilities, government care experience, language spoken at home
Economic well-being	Food security, material deprivation, hours worked and reasons for working
Family	Connectedness, monitoring, time together
School	Connectedness, school safety, reasons for absences, school plans
Community	Presence of caring adults, connectedness, in-person and online friendships, dating relationships, connectedness to land and nature
Physical health	Perceived health, health conditions and disabilities, access to health care, body image, sleep, eating behaviours, nutrition, dental care
Mental health	Perceived mental health, suicidality, self-harm, bereavement, subjective well-being, hopefulness, happiness, loneliness, stress and despair, access to mental health services (including virtual services), accessing reliable information on mental health
Injuries	Accidental injuries, concussions
Safety and violence	Neighbourhood safety, physical and sexual abuse, dating violence, sexual harassment, peer victimization, perpetration of violence, cyberbullying, discrimination
Sexual behaviour <i>Students who have not had sex do not answer these questions</i>	Sexual activity, age of first sex, number of partners, use of protection, history of STI's and pregnancy, helpful and inclusive sex education, accessing reliable information on sexual health
Substance use <i>Students who have not used substances are instructed to skip specific questions</i>	Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, vaping, and other substance use; age of first use; frequency of use; consequences of use; reasons for use; problematic substance use; driving after substance use
Technology use	Phone use, use after bedtime, interrupted sleep, problematic social media use
Leisure and extracurricular activities	Participation in extracurricular activities, barriers to participation, exercise, swimming confidence, enjoyment of physical activity, gambling and gaming, problematic gambling and gaming behaviour, meaningful activity engagement

Question sources

Using previously validated items ensures questions are understood by students, and ensures the BC AHS complements other studies while providing additional information specific to BC.

Examples of external sources of items included on the 2023 BC AHS

Active Lives Children and Young People Survey; *Sport England*

Census 2021: Individual Questionnaire England; *Office for National Statistics*

Centre for Addictions Research of BC (CARBC)

Nova Scotia Drug Use Survey (NSDUS); *Addictions Services, Nova Scotia Department of Health*

Centre for Excellence in Youth Engagement (CEYE)

Children's Worlds: The International Survey of Children's Well-being (ISCWeB)

COMPASS Student Questionnaire; *University of Waterloo*

Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC); *World Health Organization (WHO)*

Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM) Child Scale; *Government of Canada*

Minnesota Student Survey (MSS); *Adolescent Health Program, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

Multidimensional Students Life Satisfaction Scale—Brief (BMSLSS)

National Food Security Survey; *United States Department of Agriculture*

National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY); *Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada*

Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS); *Centre for Addiction and Mental Health*

Race Relations in Canada Survey; *Environics Institute for Survey Research & Canadian Race Relations Foundation*

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD)

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health); *Carolina Population Center, University of North Carolina*

The SCOFF questionnaire

Thriving Youth, Thriving Communities Survey (TYTCS); *The Saskatchewan Alliance for Youth and Community Well-being*

Tobacco Use in British Columbia; *Angus Reid*

Urban Indian Youth Health Survey (UIYHS); *School of Nursing, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis*

Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS); *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia*

For more information about the BC Adolescent Health Survey, please visit mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs.

