



Highlights from the 2008 BC Adolescent Health Survey



Injuries

A BC Adolescent Health Survey 2008 Fact Sheet



Injuries are the most preventable health concerns among BC youth, and many can be avoided with the implementation of effective education and prevention strategies. In 2008, 29% of BC youth were injured seriously enough to require medical attention, which was a decrease from 1998.

Males were more likely to be injured than females (33% vs. 25%), and were twice as likely to be injured three or more times in the past year (6% vs. 3% of females). Students aged 14 years or older were also more likely to get injured than their younger counterparts.

There were some gender differences in the location where youth reported getting injured. For example, 41% of males were hurt at a sports facility and 12% at home; compared to 36% of females who were injured at a sports facility and 18% at home.

For both genders, the most common type of injuries were sports-related, with 55% of youth who were injured reporting they were training for or playing sports when they were hurt. While the rate of sports-related injuries increased for males as they got older, the rate for females increased to age 15 and then declined.

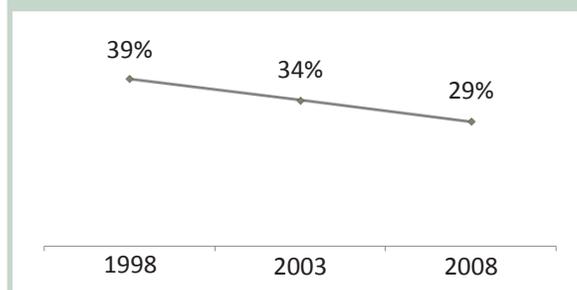
Data for this fact sheet comes from the 2008 BC Adolescent Health Survey (AHS), a 146-item survey completed by nearly 30,000 students in Grades 7 to 12 in schools across BC. In all, 50 of 59 school districts took part in the survey. Over 100,000 BC students have completed the survey since the first one was conducted in 1992.

The AHS was conducted by the McCreary Centre Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health of BC youth through research, information sharing, and community-based projects that address the unmet health needs of young people.

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Trends in having an injury in the past year that was serious enough to require medical attention





Rural and urban differences

Youth living in urban areas were generally less likely to get seriously injured compared to youth in rural areas (28% vs. 35%). In terms of what youth were doing when they got injured, youth in rural areas were more likely than youth in urban areas to be injured in a motor vehicle accident but were less likely to be injured playing or training for sports or other recreational activities.

How most serious injury occurred in past year		
	Urban	Rural
Playing or training for sports/recreational activities	57%	47%
Snowboarding/skiing†	6%	8%
Bicycle riding†	6%	7%
Fighting†	4%	5%
Riding/driving in motor vehicle	3%	6%

Note: Not all types of injury are shown in table.

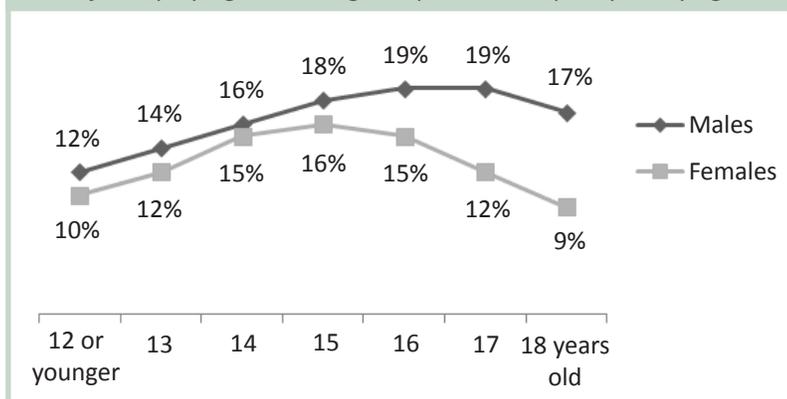
†The differences between urban and rural youth were not statistically significant.

Youth at risk

Some youth appeared to be at greater risk of getting injured:

- Youth born in Canada (31% vs. 18% of youth born outside of Canada). The rate of injury increased the longer youth lived in Canada from 15% among those who lived in Canada for up to 5 years, to 23% of those that lived in Canada for 6 or more years and 31% among youth that lived in Canada all their life.
- Youth who had been in government care such as a foster home, group home or on a youth agreement (37% vs. 29% among youth with no care history).
- Youth who had run away from home in the past year (44% vs. 27% who had never run away).
- Youth who often or always went to bed hungry because there was not enough food at home (43% vs. 28% who had never gone to bed hungry).
- Youth with a limiting physical health condition or disability (47% vs. 28% who did not have a physical disability). Also, youth with a long-term illness,

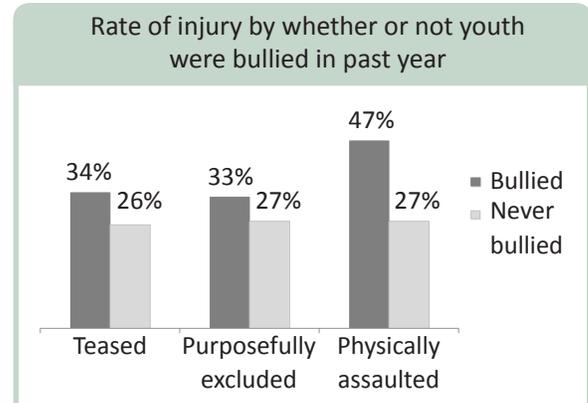
Injured playing or training for sports in the past year by age





mental or emotional condition, or who were over or underweight (43% vs. 28% of youth without these conditions).

- Youth who had been physically abused (37% vs. 27% who had not been physically abused) or sexually abused (39% vs. 28% who had not been sexually abused).
- Youth with a partner who had been the victim of dating violence in the past year (45% vs. 33% of those who were not the victims of dating violence).
- Youth who rarely or never felt safe at school (40% vs. 28% who often or always felt safe at school).
- Youth who carried a weapon such as a knife or club while at school during the past month (50% vs. 27% who did not carry weapons).
- Youth who were involved in a physical fight within the past 12 months (45% vs. 24% who were not involved in a physical fight).
- Youth who were bullied (teased, excluded or assaulted at school, on the way to or from school or through the Internet). For example, youth who had been cyber-bullied were more likely to be injured (37% vs. 27% not cyber-bullied).
- Youth who reported being discriminated against on the basis of race (35% vs. 28% who had not experienced discrimination), sexual orientation (39% vs. 28%) or physical appearance (37% vs. 27%).
- Youth experiencing challenges to their mental health. For example, those who cut or injured themselves on purpose (36% vs. 29% who did not self-harm) or seriously considered suicide (35% vs. 28% who had not considered killing themselves). Additionally, among youth who attempted suicide in the past year, 7% reported that an attempt had resulted in an injury, poisoning or overdose that required medical attention.

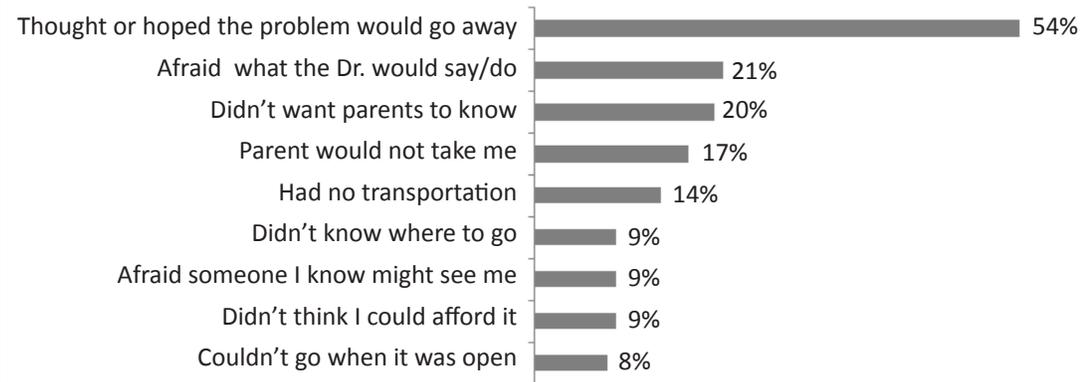


Substance use

- There was a link between injury rates and substance use, and 12% of those who had used alcohol or drugs in the past year reported getting injured as a direct consequence of their substance use.
- Young people who drove after drinking alcohol were more likely to report injuries in the past year than those who had not driven after drinking (44% vs. 28%). Similarly, those who drove after using marijuana were more likely to sustain injuries (48% vs. 28% who did not drive under the influence of marijuana).
- In the past month, 40% of youth who were a passenger in a vehicle driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol had been injured in the past year. This is compared to 26% of youth who had not ridden with a drunk driver.



Reasons for not accessing medical help when they thought they needed it among injured youth



Access to health care

Youth were asked if there were times in the past year when they did not access needed medical help (e.g., if they were hurt or sick). Although the question did not relate specifically to injuries, 21% who had been seriously injured in the past year did not obtain medical attention when they were sick or hurt, compared to 10% who had not been injured.

Injury prevention

Although the percentage of youth who always wore a bicycle helmet declined over the past decade, the number of BC youth who always wore a seatbelt when in a motor vehicle increased and drinking and driving rates decreased.

Injury prevention behaviour		
	1998	2008
Always wear seatbelt	55%	66%
Always wore helmet in past year [^]	30%	24%
Did not drink and drive in past month	94%	96%

[^] of youth who rode a bike in past year

Summary

In the last decade, youth injuries rates have declined. However, injury rates remain an important health concern, as most injuries are avoidable, and rates could be further decreased with proper use of safety equipment such as seatbelts and helmets.

Some groups of youth are at increased risk for injury. School and health professionals working with youth in these circumstances should be aware of this increased risk of injury as these youth could benefit from targeted injury prevention strategies.



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