Youth Risk Behavior Surveys

OBESITY AND DIETING

LOUISIANA 2008 & 2009
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ABOUT OBESITY

Childhood obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. Compared to twenty years ago, children aged 6 – 11 are now twice as likely to be obese and adolescents aged 12-19 are now three times as likely to be obese. Children who are overweight or obese are more likely to develop chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, and some cancers. Overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.

LOUISIANA STATISTICS

The 2008 and 2009 surveys asked students how they perceived their weight. Additionally each student’s actual Body Mass Index (BMI) was calculated based on information (weight and height) provided by the students.

» In 2009, although 27.1% of all students perceived themselves as overweight (Figure 1), 18.0% were actually overweight (Figure 2). Almost the same percent perceived themselves as overweight in 2008 compared to 2009, and the actual percent overweight was also similar between the two years. National trends are similar to those of Louisiana, with the perception of overweight much greater than the actual overweight percentages.

FIGURE 1
OVERWEIGHT

In 2008 and 2009, the percentage of overweight individuals among Louisiana students was slightly higher than the U.S. student average: about 18% compared to 16% (Figure 2), and there was little or no change in those years.

> In both 2008 and 2009, black students were more likely to be overweight than white students (Fig. 2).

> Gender and grade level percentages varied from 2008-2009.

*Percentage of students with a BMI ≥85th percentile and ≤95th percentile for age and sex, based on reference data.
Obesity was also higher among black students (19.1%) than white students (11.8%) in 2008, but the opposite was true in 2009 (12.8% versus 16.2%) (Figure 3).

In both years, obesity was higher among males than females (Figure 3).

Similar to overweight percentages, obesity in 2008 and 2009 was higher among Louisiana students than the U.S. student average: 15.6% vs. 13% in 2008 and 14.7% vs 12% in 2009 (Figure 3).

*Among the 17.6% of students with a BMI ≥95th percentile by age and sex, based on reference data.
TRIED TO LOSE WEIGHT

The percent of students who tried to lose weight was similar between Louisiana and nationally, in both 2008 and 2009 (Figure 4).

» Female students were more likely to perceive themselves as overweight (Figure 1) and also were more likely to try to lose weight in both 2008 and 2009 (Figure 4).

» More white than black students perceived themselves as overweight (Figure 1) and also were more likely to try to lose weight in both survey years (Figure 4).

*Percentage of students who tried to lose weight during the 30 days before the survey.

FIGURE 4
ATE LESS OR EXERCISED TO LOSE WEIGHT

In 2009, 62.4% of Louisiana students reported that they ate less or exercised in order to lose or maintain weight, compared to 69.8% nationally (Figure 5). This is a decrease from 2008 for Louisiana, but an increase nationally.

- This survey’s summary shows that eight control strategies varied by gender. More female students attempted to control weight through exercise or by eating less than male students in both survey years (Figure 5), and the gap was wider in 2009 than 2008.
- More white than black students ate less or exercised to lose weight in both years (Figure 5).

![Graph](image)

*Percentage of students who exercised or who ate less food, ate fewer calories or ate foods low in fat to lose weight or keep from gaining weight in the 30 days before the survey.
SUMMARY OF WEIGHT LOSS STRATEGIES

Although many young people understand the importance of physical activity and proper nutrition as it is related to weight management, some young people use unhealthy weight loss strategies that can have long-lasting repercussions to their health.

» In 2009, 13% of students went without eating for 24 hours or more (fasted) to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight during a 30 day period, a decrease from 15% in 2008.

» 8.0% of students took diet pills, powders or liquids without a doctor’s advice during a 30 day period to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight in 2009, also a decrease from 8.8% a year earlier.

» In 2009, 6.7% of students vomited or took laxatives during a 30 day period to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight, which is a very slight increase from 2008 (%).

» In both survey years, male students were more likely to take diet pills, powders or liquids, vomit or take laxatives than female students. Female students were more likely to fast to lose weight.

For more information on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, go to http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/yrbs/index.htm.
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