



Tobacco Use

Health Risks Among Rhode Island Public High School Students 1997 through 2005

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is an anonymous and voluntary survey among random samples of high school students in over 50 states, territories, and municipalities nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention developed the YRBS to monitor risk behaviors for the major causes of mortality, disease, injury, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. In the spring of 1997, 2001, 2003 and 2005, Rhode Island (RI) administered the YRBS to 1,528, 1,392, 1,814 and 2,362 adolescents, with response rates of 60%, 63%, 66%, and 71% respectively. Weighted findings are representative of 9th to 12th grade public high school students statewide and can be used to make important inferences concerning health-risk behaviors. The RI Departments of Health, Education, and Mental Health, Retardation, and Hospitals provide funding and other support for the YRBS.

Donald Perry, MPA and Laura Pitt, MPH prepared this report. For additional information, contact Donald Perry, RI Department of Health (401) 222-7628 or Jan Mermin, RI Department of Education (401) 222-8954 or visit the RI YRBS website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/chic/statistics/yrbs.php>.

KEY FINDINGS

Cigarette Smoking

In the 2005 survey, 45% of Rhode Island teenagers reported that they had ever tried cigarettes. This continued a declining trend in smoking beginning in 1997 when the rate was 69%. The decline was experienced by both males and females, with the 2005 survey showing 43% of males and 46% of females ever smoking, compared to 69% for each group in 1997. In 2005, ever smoking increased by grade level, from 35% of 9th graders to 56% of 12th graders.

Nearly one sixth (16%) of Rhode Island students were current smokers in 2005 (i.e., smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days). This was a significant decrease from 1997, 2001 and 2003 when the figures were 35%, 25%, and 19% respectively. Similar declines occurred among both male and female students, with 15% of males and 17% of females being current smokers in 2005, both down from 35% in 1997. Ninth graders had the lowest percentage of current smokers in 2005 (13%), compared to 16% to 18% among 10th to 12th graders.

The percentage of students who were frequent smokers (i.e., smoked 20+ days in past 30 days) changed little between 2003 and 2005 (9% and 8%, respectively), but declined significantly from 19% in 1997. Frequent smoking rates also declined significantly among males and females, although somewhat faster for males. In general, frequent smoking rates increased across grade levels from 5% among 9th graders to 12% among 12th graders.

Smokeless Tobacco and Other Tobacco Use

Just 2% of Rhode Island female students reported using chewing tobacco or snuff on one or more of the past 30 days in 2005, which was consistent with data from earlier years. In contrast, 7% of males reported smokeless tobacco use in 2005, which was down from 10% in 1997. In 2005, males were three times as likely to smoke cigar products as females, with rates of 19% and 6%, respectively. The percentage of students using some type of tobacco product over the previous 30 days continued a significant downward trend from 29% in 2001 to 20% in 2005.

Age of Initiation, Use on School Property, Access to Tobacco Products, and Quitting Smoking

In 2005, 13% of Rhode Island students reported having their first cigarette before age 13. This was a continuation of a major downward trend starting in 1997 with a high of 24%. Rates were similar between male and female students and did not vary significantly by grade level.

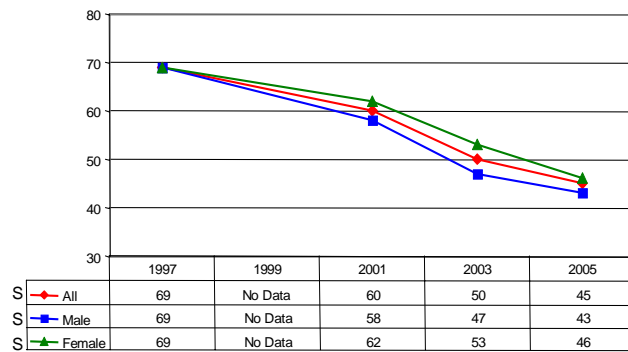
Only 8% of Rhode Island students in 2005 had smoked cigarettes on school property during the previous 30 days, down significantly from 20% in 1997, with similar rates and trends experienced by males and females. Among current smokers under age 18, 22% usually bought their cigarettes in a store or gas station in the past 30 days in 2005, down from 29% in 2001. This decrease was due entirely to a significant decline in the rate for males from 39% in 1997 to 22% in 2005. Among current smokers, 58% of female students tried to quit smoking during the past 12 months, compared to 44% of males.

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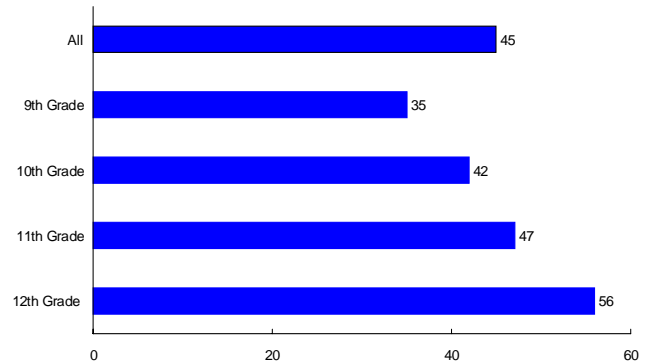
Risk Behavior: Cigarette Smoking

Rationale: Tobacco use is considered the chief preventable cause of death in the United States with 18% of all deaths attributable to tobacco use. Cigarette smoking increases risk of heart disease; chronic obstructive pulmonary disease; acute respiratory illness; stroke; and cancers of the lung, larynx, oral cavity, pharynx, pancreas and cervix. If current patterns of smoking behavior persist, an estimated 6.4 million U.S. persons who were under the age of 18 in 2000 could die prematurely from smoking-related illnesses.

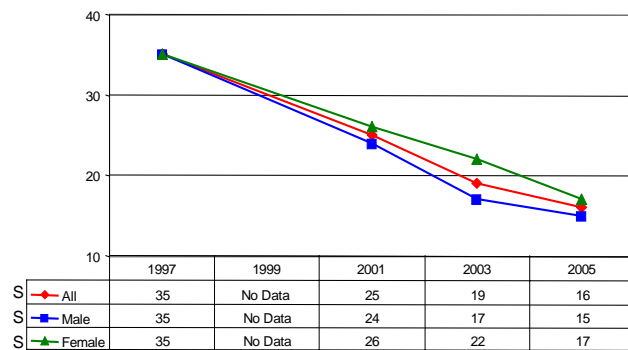
Percentage of RI high school students who ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs - YRBS



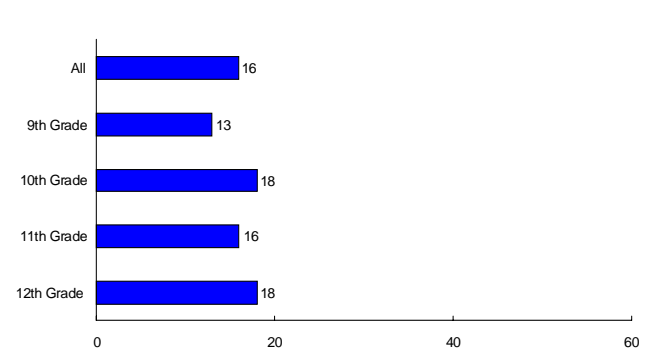
Percentage of RI high school students who ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs - 2005 YRBS



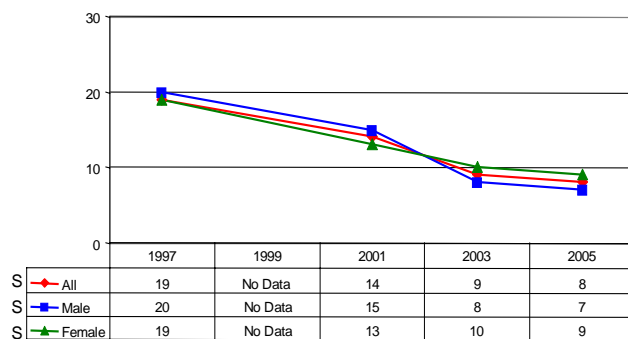
Current Smokers
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



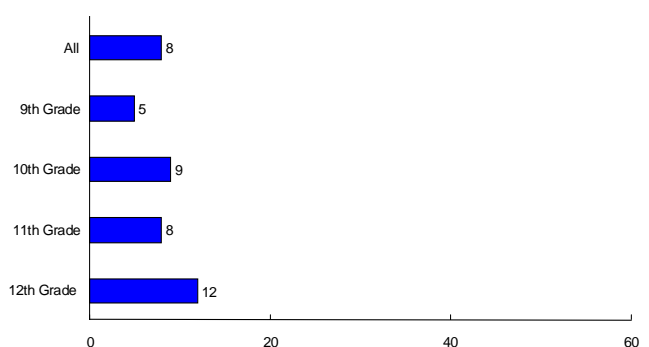
Current Smokers
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigarettes on one or more of the past 30 days - 2005 YRBS



Frequent Smokers
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



Frequent Smokers
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days - 2005 YRBS



Note: An "S" next to the line graph legend box denotes a statistically significant linear change.

Source: 1997 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1528)

2003 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1814)

2001 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=1392)

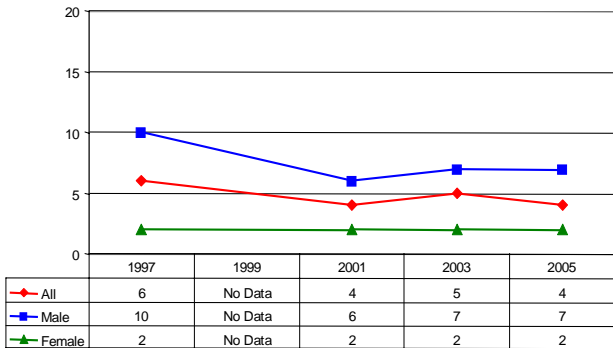
2005 Rhode Island Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=2362)

Tobacco Use

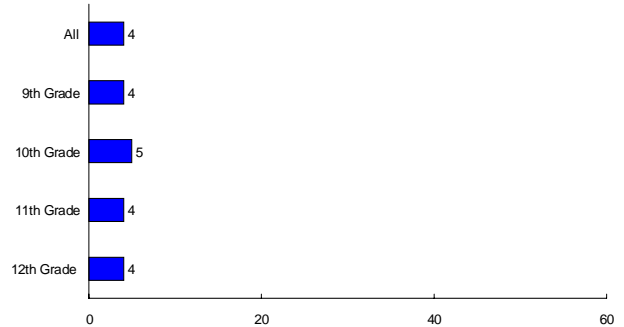
Risk Behavior: Smokeless Tobacco and Other Tobacco Use

Rationale: Smokeless tobacco use primarily begins in adolescence, with an average age of initiation of 16.7 years in the United States. Approximately 75% of oral cavity and pharyngeal cancers are attributed to the use of smoked and smokeless tobacco. Use of smokeless tobacco also causes gum recession and an increased risk of heart disease and stroke. The overall risk of oral and pharyngeal cancer is 7 to 10 times higher among cigar smokers compared to those who never smoked. Additionally, cigar smoking can cause lung cancer, coronary heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

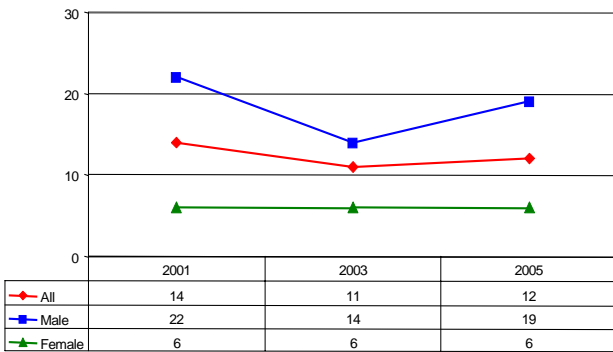
Percentage of RI high school students who used chewing tobacco, snuff or dip on one or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



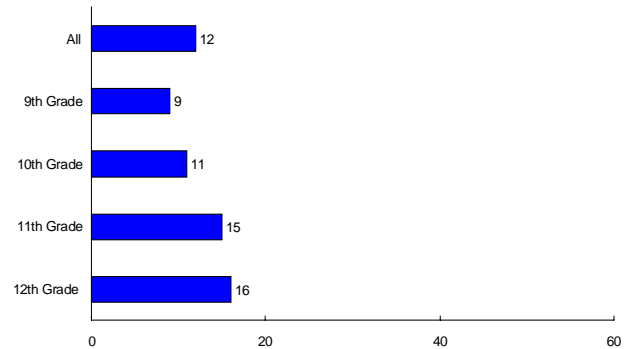
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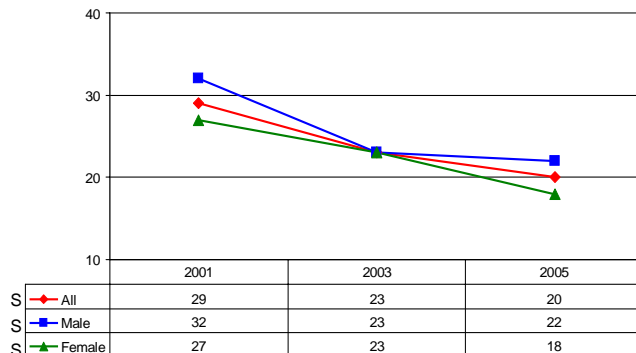
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on one or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



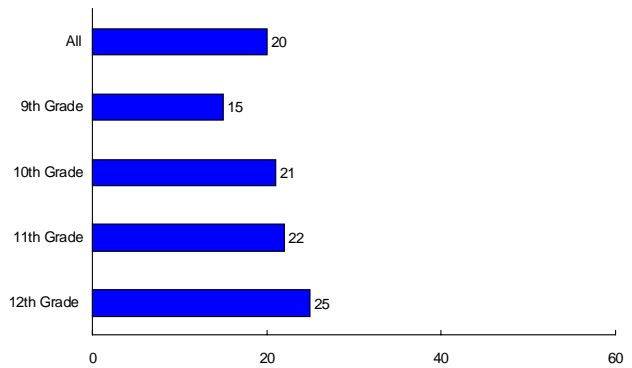
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on one or more of the past 30 days - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who used any tobacco on one or more of the past 30 days* - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who used any tobacco on one or more of the past 30 days* - 2005 YRBS



* Smoked cigarettes or cigars or used chewing tobacco, snuff or dip on 1+ of the 30 days preceding the survey

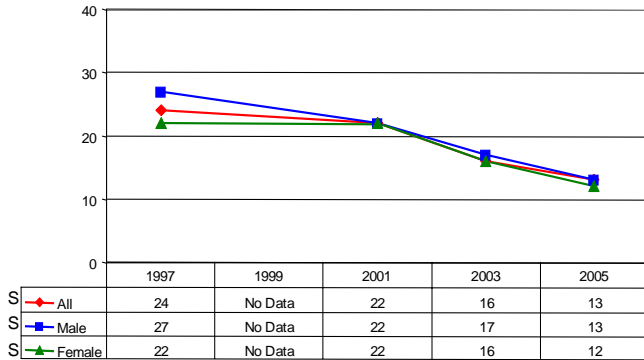
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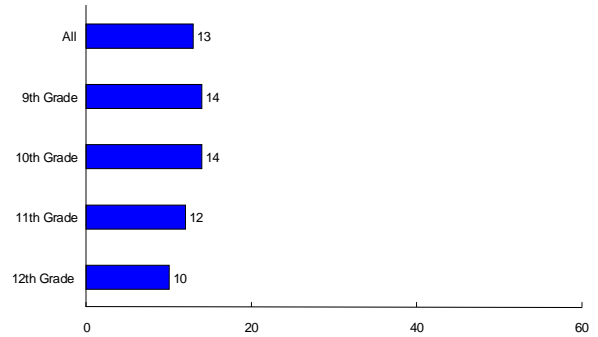
Risk Behavior: Age of Initiation, Use on School Property, Access to Tobacco Products, and Quitting Smoking

Rationale: The age when young people first start using alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drugs is a predictor of later alcohol and drug problems, especially if use begins before age 15. Approximately 46% of school districts in the United States prohibit tobacco use by students, staff, and visitors in buildings, on all school property, in school vehicles, and during school events on or off campus.

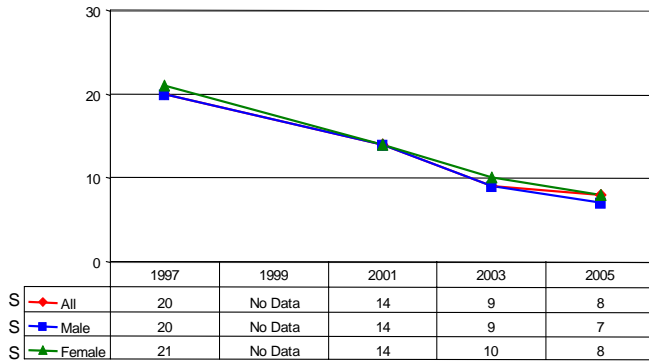
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked a whole cigarette for the first time before age 13 - YRBS



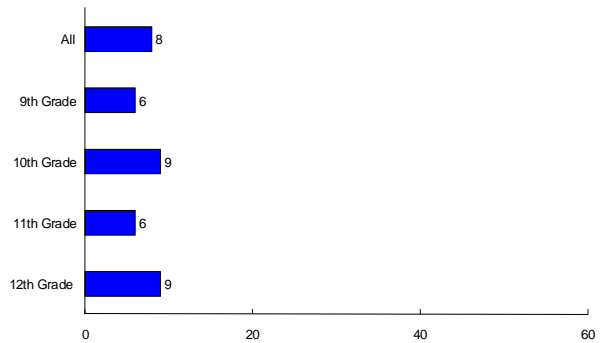
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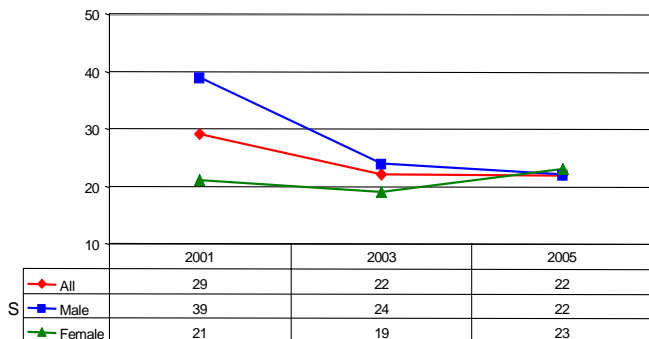
Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigarettes on school property on one or more of the past 30 days - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who smoked cigarettes on school property on one or more of the past 30 days - 2005 YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students less than 18 years of age who are current smokers and usually purchased cigarettes at a store or gas station during the past 30 days - YRBS



Percentage of RI high school students who are current smokers and have tried to quit smoking during the past 12 months - YRBS

