What is the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS)?
The survey collects anonymous information from students in 6th to 12th grades about health-related attitudes and behaviors, including: unintentional injuries and violence; mental health; school safety and physical fighting; tobacco and other substance use; physical activity and nutrition; sexual behaviors (high school only); basic demographic information such as age; and risk and protective factors. The survey is administered every two years to randomly selected schools. In 2013, over 40,000 students participated from over 220 middle and high schools.

How do Colorado communities benefit from HKCS data?
- Provides state and regional estimates of a wide range of youth health behaviors, that are comparable to national estimates
- Tracks trends in behaviors at state, regional and local levels over time
- Increases public awareness about health and behavior issues that impact youth
- Provides support for healthier learning environments through school health education policies and programs
- Educates leaders to shape effective public policy
- Brings funding into our state and local communities
- Informs program planning and grant applications
  Grants that utilize HKCS data include:
  - Safe Schools/Healthy Students
  - Title IV 21st Century Schools
  - Drug Free Communities
  - Persistent Drunk Driving
  - Chronic Disease Prevention Grants

How will the HKCS benefit our school?
- Each school receives a report with its own results.
- Results can be used to support grant applications, needs assessments and program planning to focus on prevention.

Is participation confidential?
Yes, for both students and schools! Students do not put their name on the survey. Teachers follow protocols to protect confidentiality while the survey is being completed, such as not walking around the classroom; having students insert completed surveys directly into the return mailing envelope, and sealing the return envelope in the presence of students. Individual data are never released, only summaries of combined data. Participating schools are not identified in any public release information.
**How long does the survey take?**
A single class period. The time to distribute the surveys in class, providing directions to the students, and complete and return the surveys typically takes about 45 minutes.

**Why does the HKCS ask about sensitive topics (like sex or drugs)?**
Information about these behaviors helps Colorado provide resources and education necessary to prevent unhealthy behaviors and promote healthy behaviors. Students who complete the survey are instructed beforehand that their answers are completely anonymous and that they may skip any questions they do not feel comfortable answering.

**Can answering the survey questions influence students to try unhealthy behaviors?**
There is no research evidence to suggest that health surveys influence youth behavior or experimentation in unhealthy behaviors. This holds true even after repeated administration of the questionnaire. It's reassuring to know that many health-related behaviors – including sexual behaviors, tobacco use, and some forms of violence – have declined since 1991, at the same time that youth survey activities have increased nationwide.

**Can I see a copy of the survey?**
Yes. It's online at [www.HealthyKidsColo.org](http://www.HealthyKidsColo.org), or contact your child’s school.

**Do I need to give permission for the survey?**
Districts may vary in their policies about survey consent, so contact your district for questions regarding parent permission. Colorado law requires informed parental consent for surveying youth in schools. The requirement is met when parents are informed that their student has been asked to participate in a survey and given the option to opt the child out of participation.

**Does my child have to participate?**
Participation in the survey is not required, but your child's participation is valuable in order to have high participation rates to obtain valid health information representing the whole student population in Colorado.

**If I have any further questions, who can I contact?**
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