

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth (MiPHY)

Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth



## 1. What is MiPHY?

The MiPHY is an online, anonymous student survey developed by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). The MiPHY is available to all Michigan schools to assess risk behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (ATOD), violence, sexual behavior, physical activity, and nutrition in Grade 7, 9, and 11.

## 2. What is a youth risk behavior survey?

It is a questionnaire designed to gather data that will create an accurate picture of behaviors associated with the leading causes of injury and death among adolescents. Data will be used to protect youth and prevent the risky behaviors that jeopardize their future.

## 3. Why are youth taking this survey in school?

In our community, our schools provide the best opportunity to reach large numbers of youth in a setting that's designed for thoughtful assessment and reflection.

## 4. What kinds of questions are in the survey?

The survey, which is **anonymous** and voluntary, provides a glimpse inside the lives of youth, from the amount of alcohol they consume to the amount of exercise they get. The MiPHY provides student results on health risk behaviors including substance use, violence, physical activity, nutrition, sexual behavior, and emotional health. The survey also measures risk and protective factors most predictive of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and violence. The instrument was developed from two well-known and reliable surveys currently used in Michigan and the nation: the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Communities that Care Survey (CTC). This allows the results to be easily compared to local, state, and national health behavior statistics.

## 5. Why are schools doing this kind of student self-assessment?

Results from the MiPHY help schools make data-driven decisions to direct and improve programming funded under the Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools (SDFS) program as well as other prevention and health promotion programming. Further, federal funding for Safe and Drug Free Schools and Drug Free Communities requires specific needs assessment and reporting, which the MiPHY meets. It also aligns with school health improvement initiatives (like the Coordinated School Health Program).

## 6. Who will be taking the MiPHY?

The MiPHY is available and free of charge, to all school districts in Michigan. It is administered every two years to assess risk behaviors, risk factors, and protective factors associated with alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (ATOD) and violence in Grade 7, 9, and 11.

## 7. Are schools required to use the MiPHY?

No. Schools don't have to use MiPHY. There are several options for assessing youth risk behavior. But, schools *are* required to do some kind of needs assessment in order to receive Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools dollars. The MiPHY is only one option. However, it is the only survey in Michigan developed in consultation with state Safe and Drug Free Schools Coordinators, school administrators, and prevention experts.

**8. What are the benefits of using the MiPHY?**

There are numerous advantages. It's available free of charge to districts and communities. The no cost survey administration and reports allow more Title IV funds to be used for prevention activities. In addition, it's endorsed by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) as the recommended survey for local assessment of student health risk behaviors and related risk and protective factors.

Other benefits include:

- The MiPHY reduces the burden of conducting multiple student surveys. The comprehensive scope of the MiPHY makes additional student health surveys obsolete, allowing more time for instruction.
- The web-based format eliminates the ongoing cost of paper, pencils, survey purchase, interpretation, and data collection.
- It has an online, automated rapid report system.
- It meets needs assessment and reporting requirements for SDFS and aligns with school health improvement initiatives.

**9. How are youth reacting to the survey?**

They are reacting positively and taking the survey very seriously.

**10. How long does it take to complete the survey?**

It takes students approximately 30-40 minutes to complete the online survey, which is anonymous, confidential, and voluntary.

**11. Why are we using school time to complete it?**

As public schools, we participated in the survey because we have a responsibility to our community and to meeting the needs of our youth. Many students, even high-achieving students, find it difficult to perform academically when basic needs of safety and security are threatened. We believe it is a good investment of school time to collect data that the entire community can use to improve services to youth.

In addition, we think the survey provides a positive opportunity for youth to tell us about themselves, their behaviors and their world. Survey data also bring grant dollars into the community and provides opportunities that were not available before these data existed. The survey is a positive, community-supported endeavor and the public schools are pleased to be a key part of it.

Finally, although the assessment was completed within school buildings, the results reflect attitudes and behaviors of our youth in schools and communities. That's why the schools, community agencies, community services, youth organizations and community members have joined together to examine the results and develop next steps. We need to continue to work together as a community to create safe, nurturing environments at home, school, and in neighborhoods where youth live.

**12. Are youth required to take the survey?**

No. Parents are notified in advance and can review the survey at their school district superintendent's office and choose to exclude their student(s) from participating.

**13. How will students' identities be protected?**

Privacy is ensured via a secured web survey portal. Students do not provide names or other identifying information. The reports only provide combined (aggregate) results across large groups of students.

**14. Can the results be compared to other student risk assessments?**

Results from the MiPHY can be tracked year-to-year through trend analysis and benchmarked to Michigan Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) results. MiPHY results also can be compared to the results of the National YRBS and Monitoring the Future Survey.

**15. How will the results be used?**

We will use these data to help make decisions about how we meet the needs of our youth. We are planning to use them to: evaluate our drug and alcohol prevention programs, guide the planning for our after-school or extra-curricular programs, and decide which areas need additional focus within our health curriculum. Guidance from MDE/MDCH will be provided on the use of MiPHY and other data to inform local efforts to reduce drug use, violence, and related problem behaviors and promote healthy youth development.

**16. How do we know the results are accurate?**

The assessment incorporates essential elements of two well-known surveys currently used in Michigan and throughout the nation: the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and the Communities that Care Survey (CTC). In addition, the MiPHY sampling strategy ensures a representative sample and results, which eliminates the burden, especially in large buildings, of having to survey all students.

**17. Has this been done before?**

This kind of data collection is not new. Michigan schools have been collecting these kinds of data for 12-14 years, using paper and pencil surveys. The difference now is, the MiPHY is online, standardized, and offers quick access to the results. Other states, such as California, have been collecting these kinds of data electronically for several years.

**18. What do the results indicate?**

These results give us a good snap shot of youth risk behaviors this year. We've identified strengths and challenges that we plan to address with key community partners. We are looking forward to continuing use of the MiPHY in future years in order to track trends in these behaviors over time.

**19. As a citizen, what can I do?**

- Talk with the children in your life about health risks and healthy habits.
- Set a good example by making healthier choices in your life.
- Visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/> to learn more about healthy lifestyles.
- Contact the health department or your local school district to see how you can get involved.
- Work with your schools to host discussions of these results and help parents connect with each other and share "best practices" for positively influencing youth behavior.
- Seek out resources like: [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org) which includes books, videos, posters, brochures that support the healthy development of all children and adolescents.

**20. How can I learn more about the MiPHY?**

More information about the Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth can be found at the Michigan Department of Education website at [www.michigan.gov/miphy](http://www.michigan.gov/miphy).