Québec Health Survey of High School Students

3RD EDITION

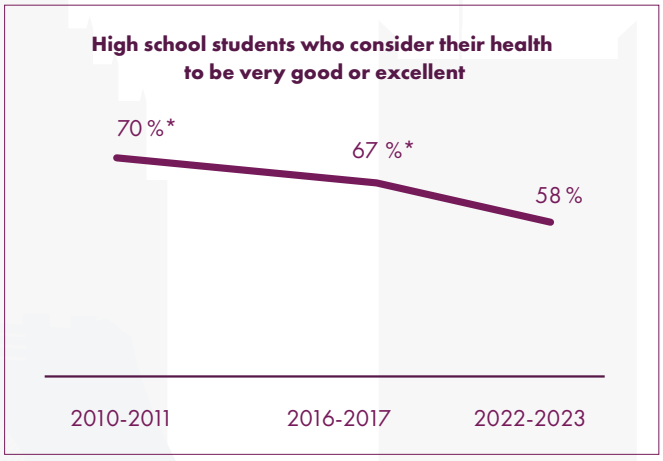
An Overview of Youth Health in Montréal

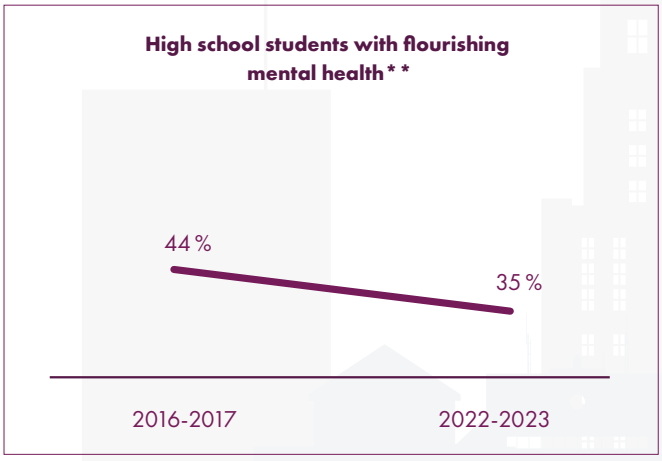
UNDERSTAND, MOBILIZE, TAKE ACTION

The Québec Health Survey of High School Students (QHSHSS) is a large-scale province-wide study on students' physical and mental health, lifestyle habits, and social adaptation. Conducted during the 2022–2023 school year, this is the third study cycle, following surveys in 2010–2011 and 2016–2017. Here is an overview of the Montréal results.

Youth health over the years

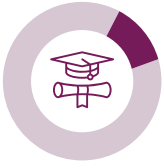
The proportion of students who perceive themselves to be in good health has declined since the previous study cycle.





*Non-significant difference between the first two survey cycles
**Data on "flourishing mental health" not available for the 2010–2011 survey cycle.

Survey data was collected in class between October 2022 and May 2023, i.e., shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic health emergency ended. The impact of the pandemic and its associated health measures on the behaviour, mental health, and learning of youth are thus crucial to interpreting the results. For instance, 43% of Montréal youth felt their mental health declined during the pandemic, and 47% reported a deterioration in their school learning experience.



The proportion of youth at risk of dropping out has remained stable.

15% of students are at high risk of dropping out, a proportion that has remained stable over the three survey cycles. However, the proportion of students highly engaged with school has declined since 2010–2011 (from 28% to 21%)

Note on methodology: unless otherwise indicated, all reported differences are statistically significant at an alpha level of 0.05.

Québec

Lifestyle habits and behaviours at a glance

The proportion of students who ate at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day declined (from 32% to 24% between 2010–2011 and 2022–2023).*

*Does not include 100% fruit juice.

The proportion of students who eat breakfast before going to school declined from 54% to 42% between 2010–2011 and 2022–2023.

The proportion of youth who are physically active during leisure and transportation (33%) has remained stable since 2016–2017.

42% of youth get the recommended amount of sleep during the school week, lower than in 2016–2017 (51%).

During both the school week and the weekend, 27% of students spend 4 or more hours in front of screens for communication or leisure activities.

Use of psychoactive substances (including tobacco and nicotine)

18% of youth engaged in excessive alcohol consumption in the 12 months preceding the survey (29% in 2010–2011).

13% consumed cannabis in the 12 months preceding the survey (19% in 2010–2011).

11% used an e-cigarette (with or without nicotine) in the 30 days preceding the survey (5% in 2016–2017).

3% smoked a cigarette in the 30 days preceding the survey (10% in 2010–2011).

Consensual sexual behaviours**

33% of youth in secondary 5 had engaged in at least one consensual sexual encounter in their lives (49% in the rest of Québec).

The use of a condom during the last consensual sexual encounter among students aged14 and over dropped from 72% in 2010–2011 to 61% in 2022–2023.

Work/school balance

35% of students worked during the school year. Among working students, 16% worked more than 16 hours per week. Students who devote more hours per week to their jobs are more likely to experience negative effects on their educational success.

Satisfaction with personal appearance

39% of students were satisfied with their personal appearance, a reduction compared to 2010–2011, (50%).

** Questions concerning consensual sexual behaviours were only given to students aged 14 and over. Students could elect not to answer this section of the survey if they were uncomfortable doing so.

How Montréal differs from the rest of Québec

Where results are better in Montréal than in the rest of Québec...

Fewer students at high risk of dropping out (15% vs. 19%)

Fewer youth who had engaged in excessive alcohol consumption in the previous 12 months (18% vs. 33%)

Fewer students who had tried cigarette smoking (12% vs. 15%)

Fewer students who had used an e-cigarette (22% vs. 33%)

Among working students, fewer who work 16 hours or more per week during the school week (16% vs. 19%)

More youth physically active in their leisure or transportation during the school year (33% vs. 30%)

...and where they are worse

Fewer students who consider themselves in good health (88% vs. 91%)

Fewer youth who eat breakfast every day before school (42% vs. 46%)

Fewer students satisfied with their appearance (39% vs. 42%)

Fewer students who get the recommended amount of sleep during the school week (42% vs. 52%)

More youth who feel the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted their school learning experience (47% vs. 44%)

Fewer youth 14 years and over who used double protection during their last consensual sexual encounter (condom and contraception) (20% vs. 41%)*

* Questions concerning consensual sexual behaviours were only given to students aged 14 and over. Students could elect not to answer this section of the survey if they were uncomfortable doing so.

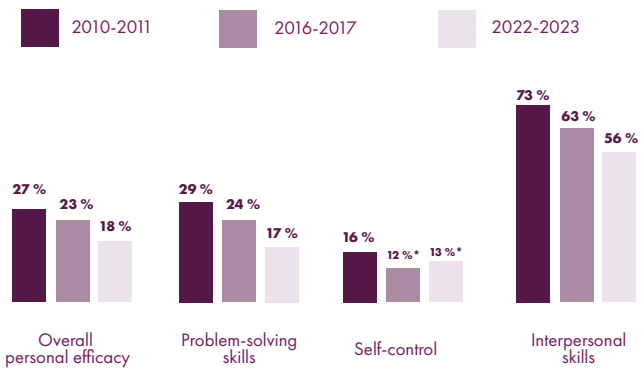
Self-esteem and personal skills: assets for life

High self-esteem and well-developed personal and social skills are important assets that can positively impact young people's lifestyle habits and behaviours. They are associated with better long-term health and educational success, and they represent shared foundations for action among practitioners working with youth in various sectors (health, education, community).

In addition to self-esteem, the QHSHSS measures several personal and social skills: problem-solving, self-control, self-efficacy, and interpersonal skills.

Proportion of students with high levels of self-esteem

Proportion of students with high levels of overall self-efficacy, problem-solving, self-control, and interpersonal skills.



* Non-signifiant difference between the 2016-2017 and 2022-2023 cycles.

Differences between sub-groups

Certain factors measured in the QHSHSS are more prevalent among girls, while others are higher among boys.

Areas of concern for girls*

They are proportionately more likely to:

- have poorer physical and mental health
- consume substances (e-cigarettes, alcohol, drugs)
- use a screen for 4 hours or more per day
- not get enough sleep on school nights
- not be physically active in their leisure activities or transportation
- have low self-esteem, overall self-efficacy, and interpersonal skills

Areas of concern for boys*

They are proportionately more likely to:

- have a high risk of dropping out
- experience at least one injury at work
- have low levels of self-control

* In 2022–2023, data were reported according to gender and not sex as with previous study cycles.

Favourable social environments for the health and educational success of youth

Young people flourish in safe and healthy environments, especially those that foster the development of personal and social skills and that help them get through tough times. The QHSHSS measures four aspects of students' social environments: family, friends, school, and community.

73%: proportion with a high level of social support from **family**
76% in 2016–2017

30%: proportion with a high level of social support at **school**
35% in 2016–2017

56%: proportion with a high level of social support from **friends**
64 % in 2016-2017

43%: proportion with a high level of social support in the **community**
47% in 2016-2017

Réseau réussite Montréal

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Québec

Living conditions key to students' health

Favourable socioeconomic conditions represent protective factors for students' physical and mental health. For example, students who feel their family is economically more well-off than average, whose parents have post-secondary educations, and whose parents have jobs are more likely to report having very good or excellent health and flourishing mental health. This underscores the importance of actions aimed at reducing socioeconomic inequalities in Montréal.