

# 2014 FACTS

## YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

**10%** of students were obese  
\*above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for Body Mass Index (BMI)

**16%** of students were overweight  
\*above the 85<sup>th</sup> but below the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for BMI

### Key Indicators for Nutrition

High school students who:

	St. Mary's %	Maryland %
Did not eat any vegetables in the week before the survey	6.2*	8.4
Did not eat any fruit in the week before the survey	16.9	15.9
Did not eat any salad in the week before the survey	38.6*	42.0
Drank 1 or more sodas in the week before the survey	19.7*	16.6
Did not drink soda in the week before the survey	24.1*	29.0

(\* difference between local and state data is statistically significant)


### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

At a very young age, children develop the habits and behaviors that will influence their life-long health. Healthy kids are more likely to grow into healthy adults. Healthy eating and active living can reduce the risk for being overweight or obese and help to prevent the development of chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart disease and high blood pressure.

### Average Day

**27%** watched 3+ hours of television

**39%** played 3+ hours of video or computer games  
(Non-school related)



Excessive screen time is linked to elevated blood pressure, high cholesterol and being overweight or obese among youth.

**ONLY  
22%**

of students were physically active for 60 minutes a day



# TIPS

## YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

### What PARENTS Can Do...

- **Focus on overall diet rather than specific foods.** Children should eat whole, minimally processed, nutritious foods – food that is as close to its natural form as possible.
- **Cook more foods at home and get kids involved.** Eating home cooked meals is healthier for the whole family. Children enjoy helping adults shop for groceries, selecting what goes in their lunch boxes, and helping to prepare meals. These are also great opportunities to teach them about nutritional values of different foods, how to read food labels, and meal planning for a healthier diet.
- **Keep a variety of healthy snacks available.** Keep plenty of fruit, vegetables, whole grain snacks, and healthy beverages (such as water or milk) easily accessible to avoid the temptation to reach for high calorie snacks, such as sodas, chips or cookies.
- **Make physical activity fun.** Fun activities can be anything your child enjoys, either structured or unstructured. Ensure they're physically active at least one hour per day.
- **Set a positive example.** Make physical activity part of your family's daily routine by taking family walks or playing active games together.
- **Help create a community environment that promotes physical activity and healthy eating.** Learn more at [www.HealthyStMarys.com](http://www.HealthyStMarys.com)



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### What the COMMUNITY Can Do...

- **Advocate for school wellness policies that support healthy eating and physical activity.** Encourage the availability of healthy meals and snacks in schools. Talk to school administrators and teachers about expanding recess time, ensuring adequate before and after school programs promoting physical activity, and using physical activity within a classroom to promote learning.
- **Implement strategies that promote healthy eating and active living in our county.** Promote workplaces that encourage employee wellness. Implement physical environment strategies – such as sidewalks, trails, parks, adequate grocery stores, and bicycle lanes – that support healthy eating and active living for everyone.
- **Educate consumers on how, why and where to buy local farm products, and provide resources to farmers to promote individual enterprises.** Promote Southern Maryland's Buy Local Program – *So. Maryland So Good*.

