

• The Year 7 Health Survey: a trend analysis from 2019 to 2025



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Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as traditional custodians of the ACT and recognise any other people or families with connection to the lands of the ACT and region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this city and this region.



Our Health Journey artwork by Lynnice Church, Ngunnawal, Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi, 2020.

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Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Contents	4
List of Tables	5
List of Figures.....	6
Executive Summary	7
Year 7 Health Survey.....	9
The 2025 survey.....	9
Notes	10
Methods.....	10
Limitations	10
Survey findings	11
Sample demographics	11
Gender	11
Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander participants.....	12
Nutrition.....	13
Fruit.....	13
Vegetables	14
Discretionary food	15
Fast food	17
Discretionary snacks	18
Discretionary drinks	19
Breakfast	23
Mealtime behaviours	24
Physical activity	29
Sedentary behaviour	30
Travelling in a vehicle.....	31
Reading and writing	32
Recreational screen time	34
Sleep	36
Sleep behaviours.....	37
Self-rated health	41
References.....	43

List of Tables

Table 1: Gender of ACT Year 7 students, 2019–2025	11
Table 2: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 2019–2025	12
Table 3: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week by gender, 2019–2025.....	22
Table 4: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually helped with dinner preparation, setting the table and clean up one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	25
Table 5: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner with most of their family one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	26
Table 6: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while watching TV one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	27
Table 7: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while using an electronic device one or more times in a week, 2020–2025.....	28
Table 8: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who travelled in a vehicle up to 2 hours per day in a typical week by gender, 2020-2025	32
Table 9: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who read and write up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, by gender, 2020-2025	33
Table 10: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who engage in recreational screen use up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, by gender, 2020-2025	35
Table 11: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who self-rated their health as very good/ excellent, good and fair/poor in the past month by gender, 2020–2025	42

List of Figures

Figure 1: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate 2 or more serves of fruit daily, 2019–2025	13
Figure 2: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate 5 or more serves of vegetables daily, 2019–2025	14
Figure 3: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed any discretionary food one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025	16
Figure 4: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed fast food one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025	17
Figure 5: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed discretionary snacks one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025	18
Figure 6: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed any discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025	19
Figure 7: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025	21
Figure 8: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who ate breakfast daily, 2020–2025	23
Figure 9: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually helped with dinner preparation, setting the table and clean up one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	24
Figure 10: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner with most of their family one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	26
Figure 11: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while watching TV one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	27
Figure 12: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while using an electronic device one or more times in a week, 2020–2025	28
Figure 13: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who were physically active for 60 minutes or more daily in the past week, 2019–2025	29
Figure 14: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who travelled in a vehicle for up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, 2020–2025	31
Figure 15: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who read and write (excluding schoolwork) for up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, 2020–2025	33
Figure 16: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who engaged in screen-based activities in their free time for 2 hours or less per day in a typical week, 2020–2025	34
Figure 17: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who met the daily sleep guideline of 9–11 hours, 2020–2025	36
Figure 18: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who went to sleep at the same time at night on most days, 2020–2025	37
Figure 19: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who woke up at the same time in the morning on most days, 2020–2025	38
Figure 20: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who fell asleep using an electronic device on most days, 2020–2025	39
Figure 21: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who woke up during the night to use an electronic device on most days, 2020–2025	40
Figure 22: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who self-rated their health as very good/excellent, good and fair/poor in the past month, 2020–2025	41

Executive Summary

Covering the period 2019–2025, this report provides insights into nutrition, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, sleep, and self-rated health among Year 7 adolescents in the ACT. The findings are intended to inform targeted health promotion strategies in schools and communities to improve the health and wellbeing of ACT children.

Key Findings

- **Participation:** between 2019 and 2025, a total of 14,578 students participated in the Y7HS of whom 50% (7,329) were male, 48% (7,071) were female and 1% (178) identified as another gender.
 - **Nutrition:**
 - Fruit intake remained high and stable, with around 80% of students meeting the recommended 2 serves daily. On average, students consumed 3 serves of fruit each day.
 - Vegetable intake was low and stable, with around 20% of students meeting the 5 serves daily guideline. On average, students ate 3 serves of vegetables each day.
 - Weekly discretionary food and snack intake was widespread and stable for over 95% of students between 2019–2025. Fast food consumption rose significantly from 67% (2019) to 73% (2025).
 - Weekly discretionary drink consumption by students increased significantly from 80% (2019) to 92% (2025), with notable rises across all drink types:
 - Fruit juice and fruit drinks: 49% → 66%
 - Flavoured milk: 34% → 40%
 - Iced tea*: 19% → 25%
 - Soft drinks and cordials: 53% → 63%
 - Diet soft drinks and cordials: 23% → 32%
 - Energy drinks: 9% → 22%
 - Sports drinks and vitamin waters: 22% → 33%
- (*Iced tea as a discretionary drinks category was added to the Year 7 Health Survey from 2020)*
- Daily breakfast consumption declined significantly from 61% (2020) to 53% (2025).
- **Family mealtime behaviours:** There was a significant decrease in the level of students' participation in family mealtime activities between 2020 and 2025, including food preparation, setting the table and clean-up (88% to 84%), as well as eating dinner at the table with most of the family (90% to 87%). Eating dinner while watching TV

remained stable (54% and 58%), while device use during mealtimes increased significantly from 31% (2020) to 41% (2025).

- **Physical activity:** The proportion of students meeting the 60 minute daily physical activity guideline increased significantly from 21% (2019) to 31% (2025), with males consistently more active than females over the reporting period.
- **Sedentary behaviour:** Participation in recreational reading and writing, and car travel, remained largely stable between 2020 and 2025. The exceptions were weekend car travel, with the proportion of students travelling no more than 2 hours each day decreasing significantly from 92% to 86% in 2022 and increasing from 84% to 88% in 2025. Recreational reading and writing for 2 or less hours each day also remained stable, apart from a significant change on weekdays in 2024 (79% to 83% of students) and on weekends in 2021 (82% to 78%). Males were more likely than females to limit recreational reading and writing to 2 hours or less each day in most years.
- **Screen time:** In contrast, recreational screen time showed greater variability in the proportion of students who kept their screen time to no more than the recommended maximum 2 hours per day, with significant declines reported for weekdays in 2021 (46% to 39%) and increases in 2023 through to 2025 (40%, 47% and 52%, respectively). Similar increases also occurred on weekends (28%, 33% and 38% in 2023, 2024 and 2025, respectively). Males were generally more likely than females to exceed the recommended maximum of 2 hours of recreational screen time per day.
- **Sleep:** Compliance with the 9-to-11-hour sleep guideline declined significantly from 44% (2019) to 36% (2025), with males more likely to meet recommendations than females in most years. Between 2020 and 2025, all sleep habits except for going to bed at the same time on most days changed significantly:
 - Waking up at the same time in the morning on most days: 45% → 39%.
 - Falling asleep using electronic devices on most days: 6% → 8%
 - Waking up during the night to use a device on most days: 3% → 5%
- **Self-rated health:** Self-rated health (“good” and “fair/poor”) remained stable between 2020 and 2025, with around half of students rating their health as “very good/excellent” in all years. Males were more likely to report “very good/excellent” for their self-rated health, while females were more likely to report “good” or “fair/poor” over the reporting period.

Year 7 Health Survey

The Year 7 Health Survey (Y7HS) is an annual online health and wellbeing survey of ACT Year 7 students. The survey is implemented in Term 3 of each school year and collects information on nutrition, mealtime behaviours, physical activity, active travel, sedentary behaviour, sleep and emotional wellbeing.

Students in ACT public schools complete this survey in the classroom as part of the ACT Education Directorate's annual School Satisfaction and Climate Survey. For students in non-government schools, a link to the survey is provided via a parent letter, and they can complete the survey within or outside the classroom with their parents' consent. Students who do not wish to participate in the survey can choose to opt-out.

The Year 7 Health Survey has been approved by the ACT Health Human Research Ethics Committee, the ACT Government Education Directorate and Catholic Education (Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn). The ACT Association of Independent Schools has also given in principle support for the Year 7 Health Survey.

The 2025 survey

In 2025, the ACT Education Directorate reported a total of 6,319 Year 7 students enrolled in the ACT, with 3,271 in public schools and 3,048 in non-government schools¹. Students who were enrolled in Year 7 in the ACT at the time of the survey and literate in English were eligible to participate in the Y7HS. The 2025 survey was made available to 5,488 students from consenting ACT schools.

Data collection for the 2025 Y7HS took place between 15 August and 12 September 2025, with a total of 2,882 students participating in the survey. The survey response rate for 2025 was 53%, which has increased markedly over the years, climbing from 34% in 2020 to 53% in 2025.

Notes

Methods

It should be noted that the findings of the Year 7 Health Survey are not directly comparable to the findings of other health surveys, such as the ACT Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey. This is due to differences in the population being sampled, and in the questions asked.

In this report, we use non-overlapping 95% confidence intervals as a measure of the statistical significance of the difference between two estimates. The impact of this conservative method means that estimates that were marginally significantly different may have been classified as not statistically significant.

“Persons” includes male, female, other and respondents who did not answer the question on gender and may not always equal the sum of the total number of male and female students.

Estimates throughout the report, excluding in tables and figures, are rounded to the nearest whole number for improved readability.

Only estimates with a relative standard error (RSE) of less than or equal to 25% are considered sufficiently reliable for most analytical purposes. Estimates with a RSE greater than 25% and less than or equal to 50% are less reliable and should be used with caution.

Estimates with a RSE greater than 50% or based on a numerator less than 10 are suppressed and represented by missing data points.

Limitations

Findings of this report should be interpreted with caution due to several limitations. While the survey is conducted annually using a largely consistent core questionnaire, some survey questions and response options have changed over time, limiting direct comparability across all years. The survey is designed as a voluntary census, with students and schools able to opt out, which may introduce non-response bias and affect representativeness. In addition, all measures are self-reported and subject to recall and social desirability bias. As a result, estimates may not fully reflect the experiences or behaviours of all Year 7 students in the ACT.

Survey findings

Sample demographics

Gender

Between 2019 and 2025, a total of 14,578 students participated in the Y7HS of whom 50% (7,329) were male, 48% (7,071) were female and 1% (178) identified as another gender.

Equal proportions of males and females participated in the 2019 Y7HS, while more males than females participated in 2020, 2023, 2024 and 2025. In 2021 and 2022, more females took part in the survey compared to males. Over half of the respondents (51%) from the 2025 Y7HS were male, while 48% were female, and 1% identified as 'other' (**Table 1**).

Table 1: Gender of ACT Year 7 students, 2019–2025

Year	Males (%)	Females (%)	Other (%)
2019	48.9	48.8	2.3
2020	54.5	45.2	0.3
2021	44.8	51.6	3.6
2022	48.3	50.5	1.2
2023	51.2	47.9	0.9
2024	50.9	48.2	0.9
2025	51.3	48.2	0.4

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Subsequently, exploration of survey responses by gender has been limited to male and female respondents as the sample size for 'Other' or non-respondents for gender was too small to allow meaningful analyses. All categories of gender are included in the persons estimates.

Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander participants

The proportion of participants who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander has varied slightly since 2019 (**Table 2**).

Table 2: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 2019–2025

Year	Per cent (%)
2019	4.1
2020	2.6
2021	2.1
2022	2.9
2023	2.6
2024	2.8
2025	3.8

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

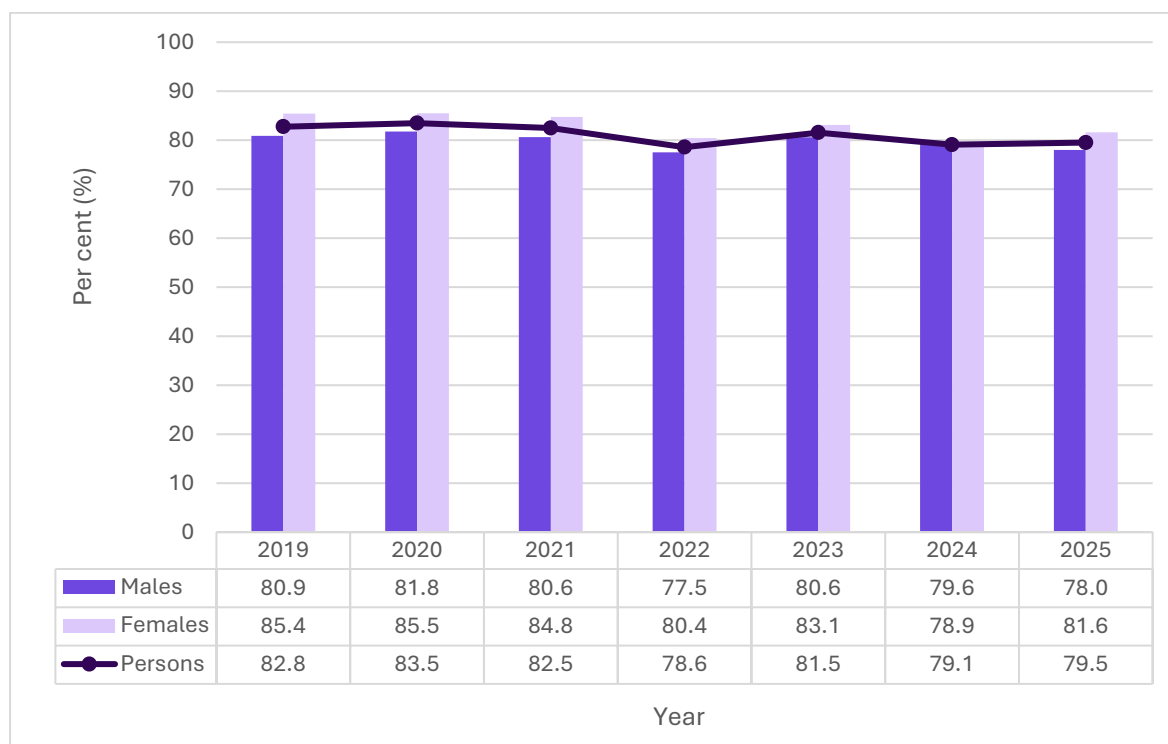
Nutrition

A balanced diet filled with fruit, vegetables, grains, meat, meat-alternatives, dairy and dairy-alternatives plays a crucial role in the growth and development of children. Poor nutrition directly impacts the maturing brain, including emotional regulation, the ability to process social cues, and alters responses to reward². Furthermore, inflammation associated with obesity during adolescence is linked to an increased risk of chronic inflammatory diseases, including asthma³.

Fruit

The Australian Dietary Guidelines⁴ recommend that children aged 11 to 13 years consume 2 or more serves of fruit each day. Year 7 students participating in the Y7HS were asked to report the number of fruit serves they usually eat each day. Consumption of 2 or more serves of fruit per day remained stable between 2019 (83%) and 2025 (80%). Females were more likely to consume the recommended serves of fruit compared to males in most years; however, the differences between the genders were not significant (**Figure 1**). Between 2019 and 2025, Year 7 students ate an average of 3 serves of fruit each day, exceeding the intake recommended in the dietary guidelines.

Figure 1: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate 2 or more serves of fruit daily, 2019–2025



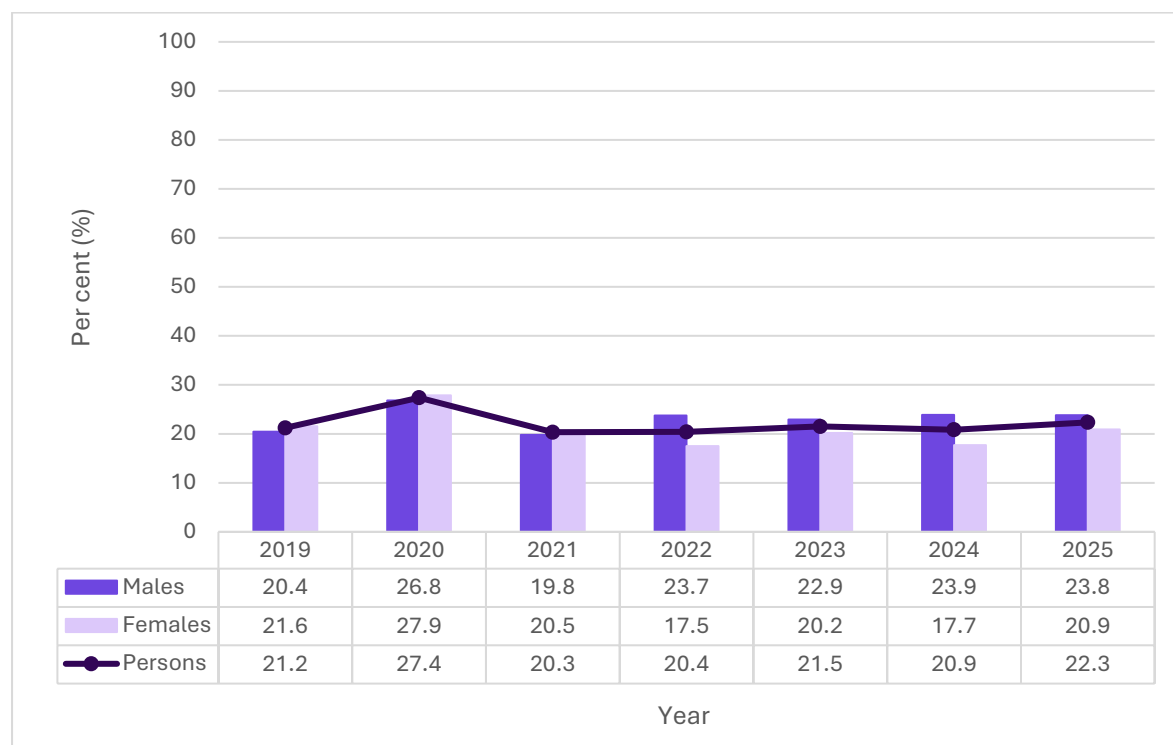
Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Vegetables

The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)⁴ recommend that children aged 11 to 13 years consume 5 or more serves of vegetables each day. Year 7 students participating in the Y7HS were asked to report the number of serves of vegetables they usually eat each day.

In 2025, 1 in 5 Year 7 students (22%) reported that they usually consume 5 or more serves of vegetables daily. The proportion of students who consumed 5 or more serves of vegetables daily remained stable between 2019 and 2025, excluding in 2020 when the intake rose significantly to 27.4% and dropped in the following year. Females were slightly more likely to meet the guideline compared to males between 2019 and 2021, however this difference was not significant. In contrast, males were significantly more likely to consume 5 or more serves of vegetables each day compared to females in 2022 and 2024 (**Figure 2**). On average, students ate 3 serves of vegetables daily between 2019 and 2025 and for each year during this period.

Figure 2: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate 5 or more serves of vegetables daily, 2019–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

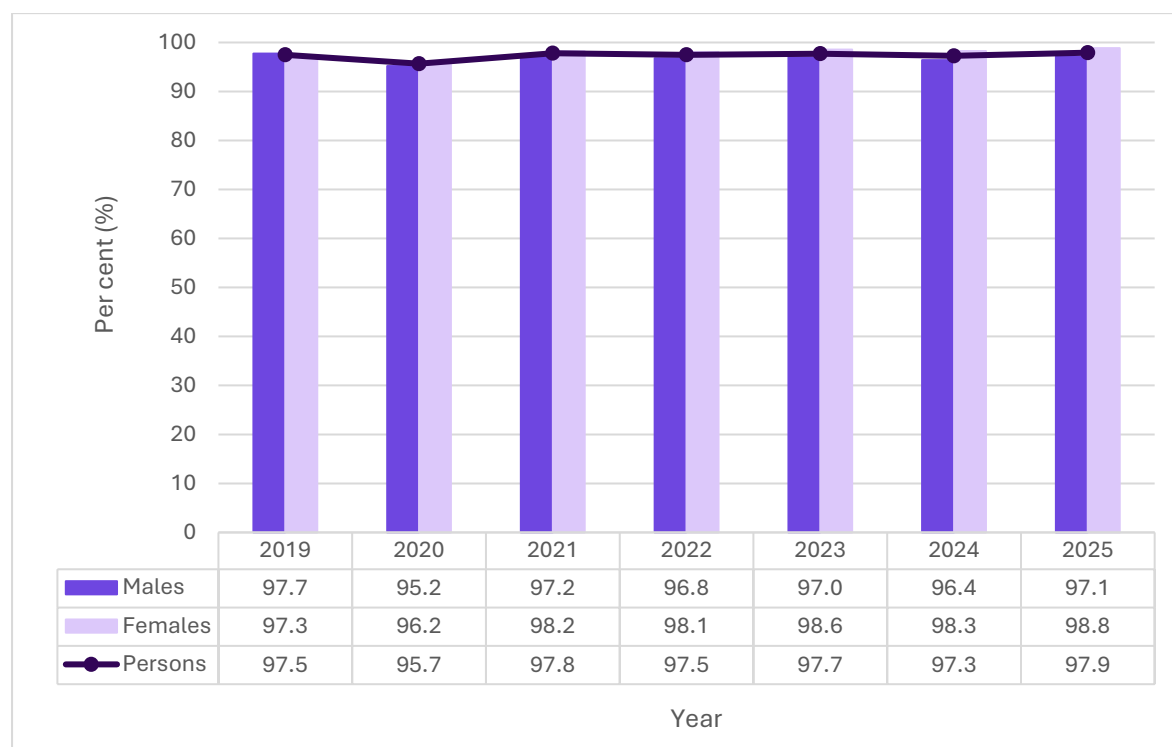
Discretionary food

Discretionary foods are high in saturated fat, sugar and/or salt and have limited nutritional value. Examples of discretionary foods include biscuits, cakes, confectionary, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps, and other savoury snacks. The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)⁴ recommend that children aged 11 to 13 years limit their intake of discretionary foods, as they are associated with an increased risk of obesity and chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and some cancers. Year 7 students participating in the Y7HS were asked to report how often they consumed discretionary foods such as fast food and other snacks in the past week.



Between 2019 and 2025, almost all Year 7 students (98%) participating in the Y7HS reported that they consumed discretionary foods one or more times in the past week. Females were significantly more likely to consume discretionary foods one or more times in the past week compared to males in 2024 and 2025 (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed any discretionary food one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025



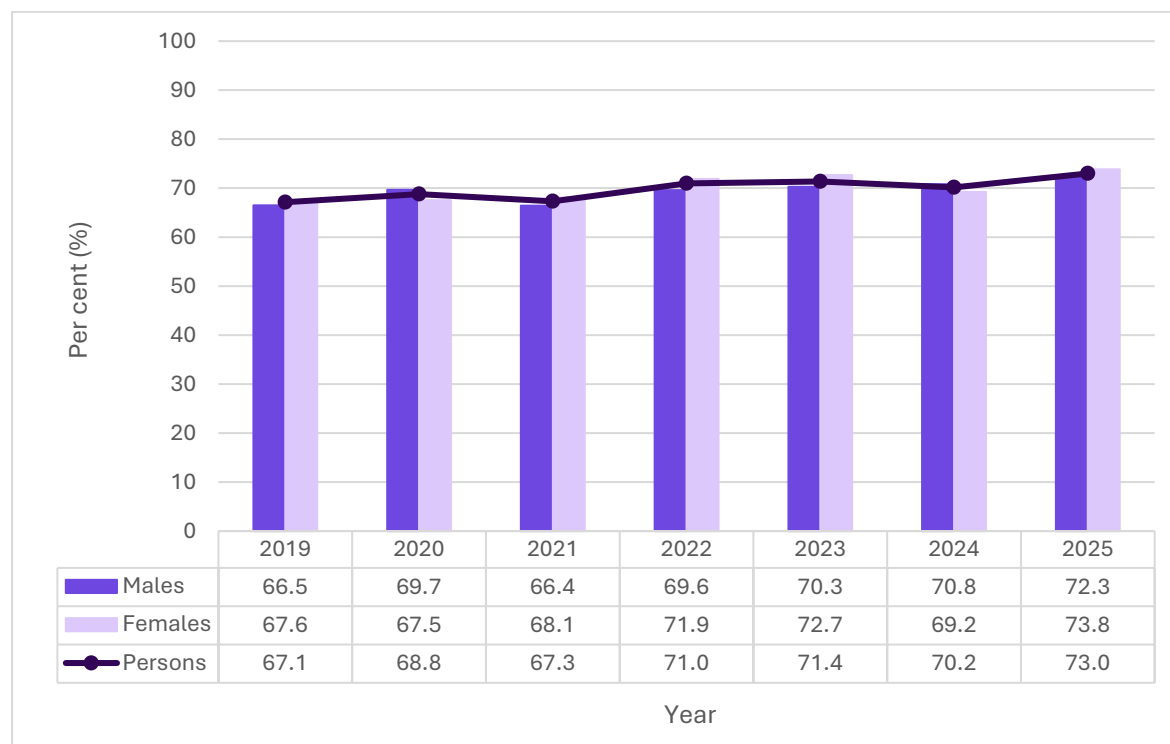
Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Note: Discretionary food comprised of fast food and snacks.

Fast food

The proportion of respondents who consumed fast food one or more times in the past week increased significantly from 67% in 2019 to 73% in 2025. Females were slightly more likely to consume fast food one or more times per week compared to males in most years; however, the differences between the genders were not significant (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed fast food one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025

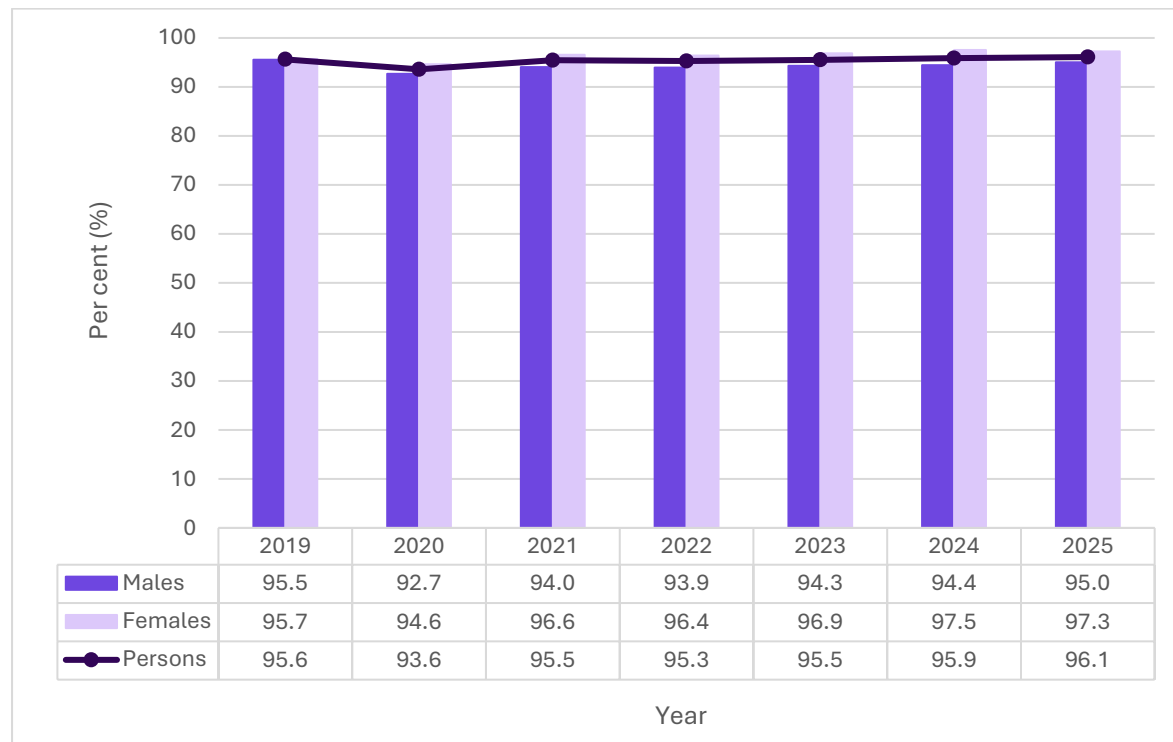


Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Discretionary snacks

Almost all ACT Year 7 students (94%) consumed discretionary snacks one or more times in the week prior to the survey between 2019 and 2025. Overall, the proportion of students who consumed discretionary snacks remained stable over the same period. Females were significantly more likely to consume discretionary snacks one or more times in the past week compared to males in 2024 and 2025 (**Figure 5**).

Figure 5: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed discretionary snacks one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025



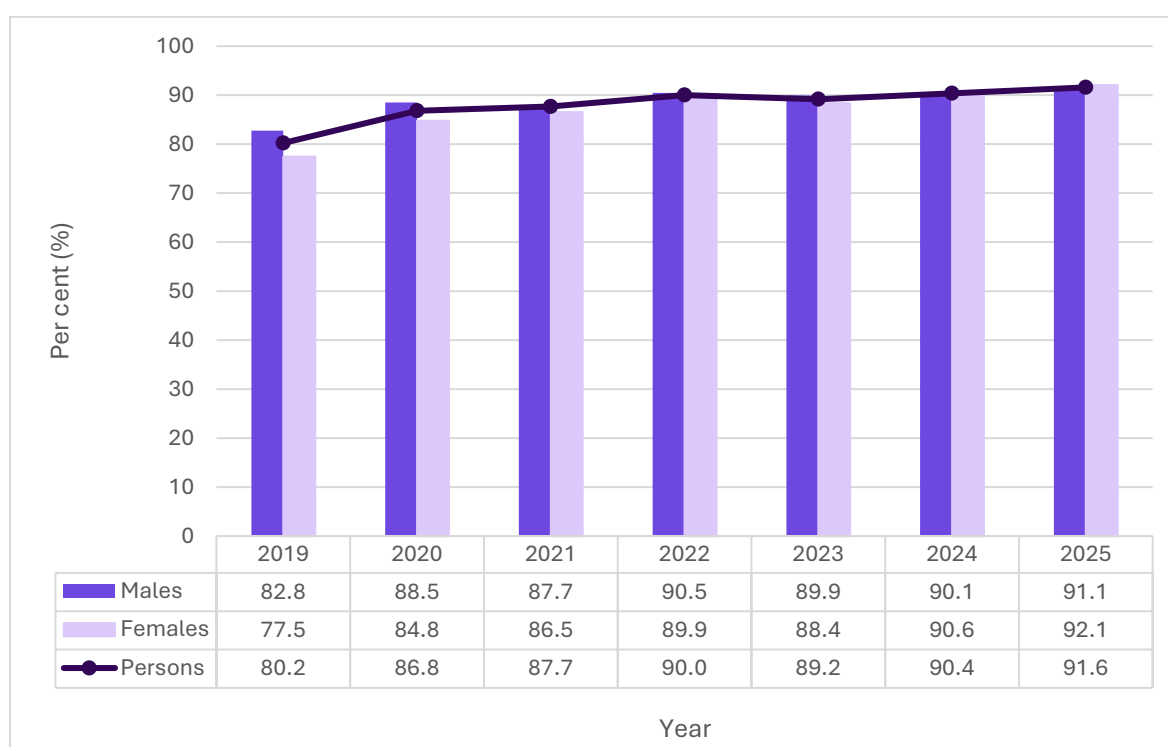
Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Discretionary drinks

Discretionary drinks are beverages that are high in energy, sugar, fat, salt and have little nutritional value. The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)⁴ recommend water and milk as the fluids of choice for children and advise limiting the intake of discretionary drinks. Year 7 students were asked to report how often they had consumed a range of discretionary drinks such as fruit juice and fruit drinks, flavoured milk, iced tea, soft drinks or cordials, diet or artificially sweetened soft drinks or cordials, energy drinks, and sports drinks and vitamin waters in the week prior to the survey.

The proportion of respondents who consumed any discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week increased significantly from 80% in 2019 to 92% in 2025. Males were slightly more likely to consume discretionary drinks than females in most years however, the differences between the genders were not significant (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed any discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

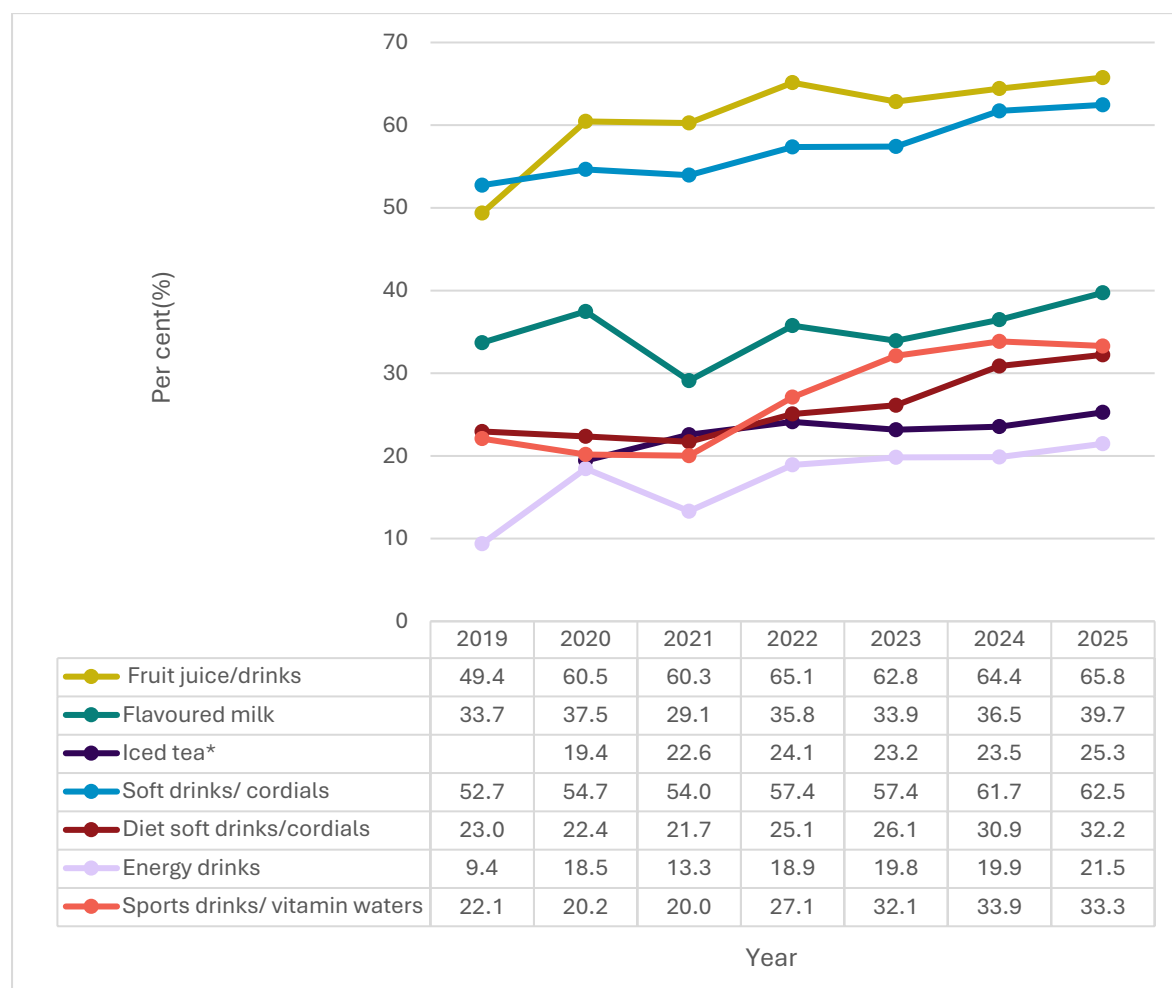
Note: *Iced tea as a discretionary drinks category was added to the Year 7 Health Survey from 2020. The number of any discretionary drink types consumed increased from 6 to 7 from 2020 onwards.

Between 2019 and 2025:

- **Fruit juice and fruit drinks** consumption increased significantly from 49% in 2019 to 66% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Males were slightly more likely to consume fruit juice than females in most years; however, the differences between the genders were not significant (**Table 3**).
- **Flavoured milk** consumption increased significantly from 34% in 2019 to 40% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Males were significantly more likely to consume flavoured milk than females in 2020, 2023 and 2024 (**Table 3**).
- **Iced tea** consumption increased significantly from 19% in 2020 to 25% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Females were significantly more likely to drink iced tea than males between 2022 and 2025 (**Table 3**).
- **Soft drinks and cordials** consumption increased significantly from 53% in 2019 to 63% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Males were significantly more likely to consume soft drinks and cordials than females in all years except for 2025 (**Table 3**).
- **Diet soft drinks and cordials** consumption also increased significantly from 23% in 2019 to 32% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Males were more likely to consume diet soft drinks and cordials compared to females, with a significant difference in 2022 (**Table 3**).
- **Energy drinks** consumption rose significantly from 9% in 2019 to 22% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Males were significantly more likely to consume energy drinks compared to females in 2020 and 2023 (**Table 3**).
- **Sports drinks and vitamin water** consumption increased significantly from 22% in 2019 to 33% in 2025 (**Figure 7**). Males were significantly more likely to consume sports drinks and vitamin water compared to females from 2020 onwards (**Table 3**).

Over the same reporting period, there was a 129% increase in consumption of energy drinks, a 51% increase in consumption of sports drinks and vitamin waters, a 40% increase in consumption of diet soft drinks and cordials, a 33% increase in consumption of fruit juices, a 30% increase in consumption of iced tea, a 19% increase in consumption of soft drinks and cordials and an 18% increase in consumption of flavoured milk.

Figure 7: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week, 2019–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Note: *Iced tea as a discretionary drinks category was added to the Year 7 Health Survey from 2020.

Table 3: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who consumed discretionary drinks one or more times in the past week by gender, 2019–2025

Types of discretionary drinks	Gender	Year						
		2019 (%)	2020 (%)	2021 (%)	2022 (%)	2023 (%)	2024 (%)	2025 (%)
Fruit juice and fruit drinks	Males	50.4	62.2	59.8	66.0	64.0	65.4	64.6
	Females	48.3	58.4	59.8	64.7	61.5	63.4	66.9
Flavoured milk	Males	33.8	40.7	30.4	38.6	36.9	39.0	41.2
	Females	32.9	33.8	26.3	33.4	30.3	33.7	38.4
Iced tea*	Males		18.2	18.5	21.4	19.7	21.1	22.8
	Females		21.0	23.8	27.3	26.1	25.7	27.9
Soft drinks and cordials	Males	58.0	60.8	58.3	62.1	61.4	64.3 [^]	64.5
	Females	47.4	47.3	49.4	52.6	53.2	59.1 [^]	60.3
Diet soft drinks and cordials	Males	23.0	24.3	23.5	28.2	28.4	31.4	33.0
	Females	22.1	19.9	19.7	22.1	23.3	30.0	31.3
Energy drinks	Males	10.3	21.1	14.6	21.0	22.5	21.0	22.4
	Females	7.1	15.0	11.3	16.8	16.9	18.4	20.5
Sports drinks and vitamin waters	Males	24.2	25.8	23.7	32.1	37.7	39.8	38.7
	Females	19.0	13.4	16.8	22.4	26.4	27.9	28.0

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Note:

*Iced tea as a discretionary drinks category was added to the Year 7 Health Survey from 2020.

[^]Confidence intervals overlap due to rounding, original values to second decimal were considered to detect significant differences between the estimates.

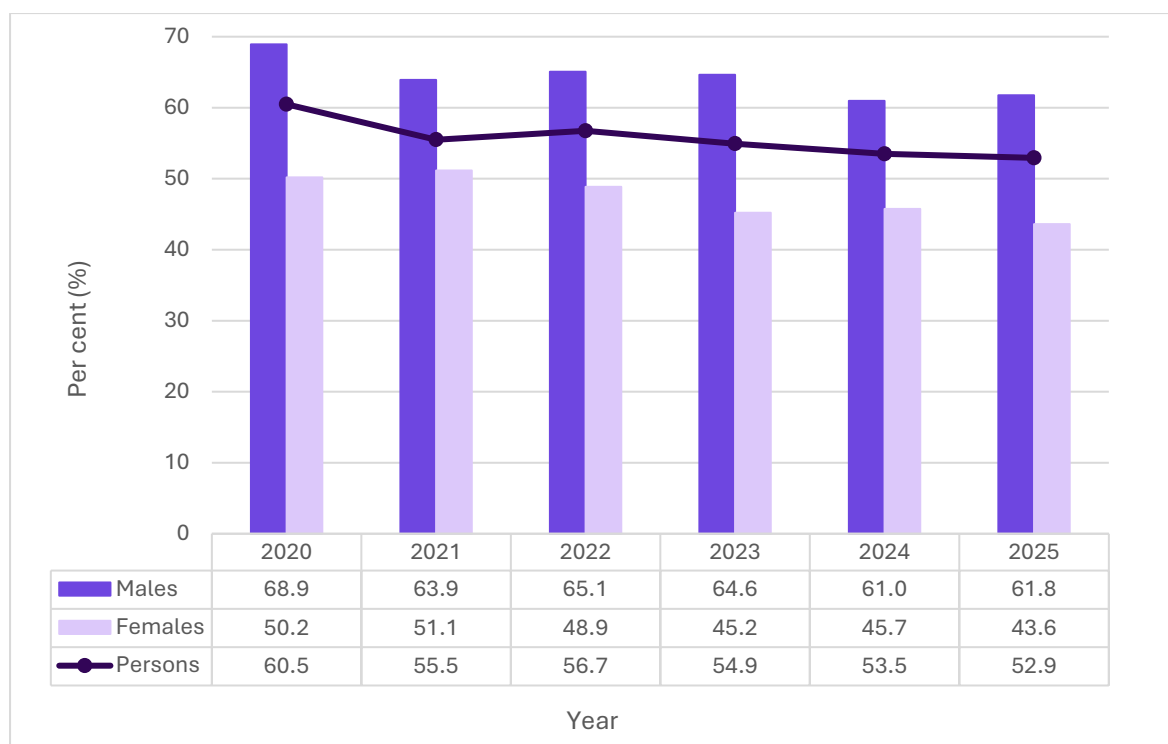
Breakfast

Regular breakfast consumption is linked to positive outcomes for learning, behaviour, cognitive development and school performance in children⁵. Year 7 students were asked how often they would usually have breakfast in a week, selecting from the response options of: never or rarely, one to 2 times a week, 3 to 4 times a week, 5 to 6 times a week, or every day.



Over half of the respondents (53%) to the Y7HS reported that they consumed breakfast every day. The proportion of respondents who consumed breakfast daily decreased significantly from 61% in 2020 to 53% in 2025. Males were significantly more likely to consume breakfast daily compared to females between 2020 and 2025 (**Figure 8**).

Figure 8: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who ate breakfast daily, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Mealtime behaviours

Frequent family mealtimes are linked to improved nutrient intake, family connectedness, academic success, greater consumption of healthy foods and a lower risk of overweight and obesity in children and adolescents⁶. Year 7 students were asked about their usual mealtime behaviours including whether they helped with preparing dinner, setting the table and clean up, ate at the table with most of the family, ate dinner while watching television, and whether they ate dinner while using an electronic device (such as a mobile phone or tablet).

Help with dinner preparation, setting the table and clean up

In 2025, 84% of respondents to the Y7HS reported that they usually helped with dinner preparation and clean up one or more times per week. The proportions of respondents who helped with dinner preparation and clean up one or more times each week decreased significantly from 88% in 2020 to 84% in 2025 (**Figure 9**).

Figure 9: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually helped with dinner preparation, setting the table and clean up one or more times in a week, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Over 83% of respondents to the Y7HS reported that they helped with dinner preparation and clean up one or more times per week. Females were significantly more likely to help with dinner preparation, setting the table and clean up compared to males in all years except for 2023 and 2025 (**Table 4**).

Table 4: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually helped with dinner preparation, setting the table and clean up one or more times in a week, 2020–2025

Year	Persons (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
2020	87.7	84.7	91.8
2021	86.3	82.8	88.9
2022	86.1	83.2	89.2
2023	87.0	86.0	87.9
2024	85.6	83.3	88.4
2025	83.7	84.2	83.6

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Eating dinner at the table with most of the family



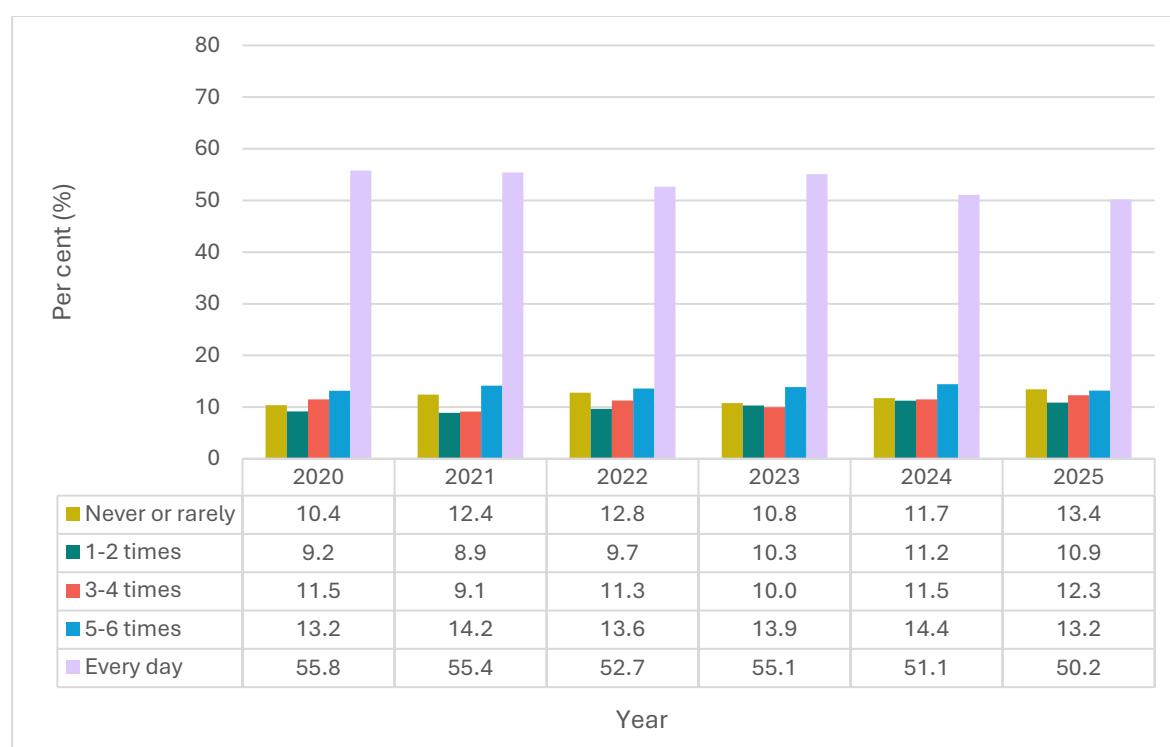
Most respondents to the Y7HS (more than 86%) reported that they usually ate dinner with most of their family one or more times each week. The proportion of students who ate dinner with family one or more times weekly has decreased significantly from 90% in 2020 to 87% in 2025. There were no significant differences between the genders (**Table 5** and **Figure 10**).

Table 5: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner with most of their family one or more times in a week, 2020–2025

Year	Persons (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
2020	89.6	88.8	90.7
2021	87.6	87.6	88.2
2022	87.2	87.2	87.7
2023	89.2	88.9	89.7
2024	88.3	89.6	87.4
2025	86.6	87.8	85.7

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Figure 10: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner with most of their family one or more times in a week, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Eating dinner while watching TV

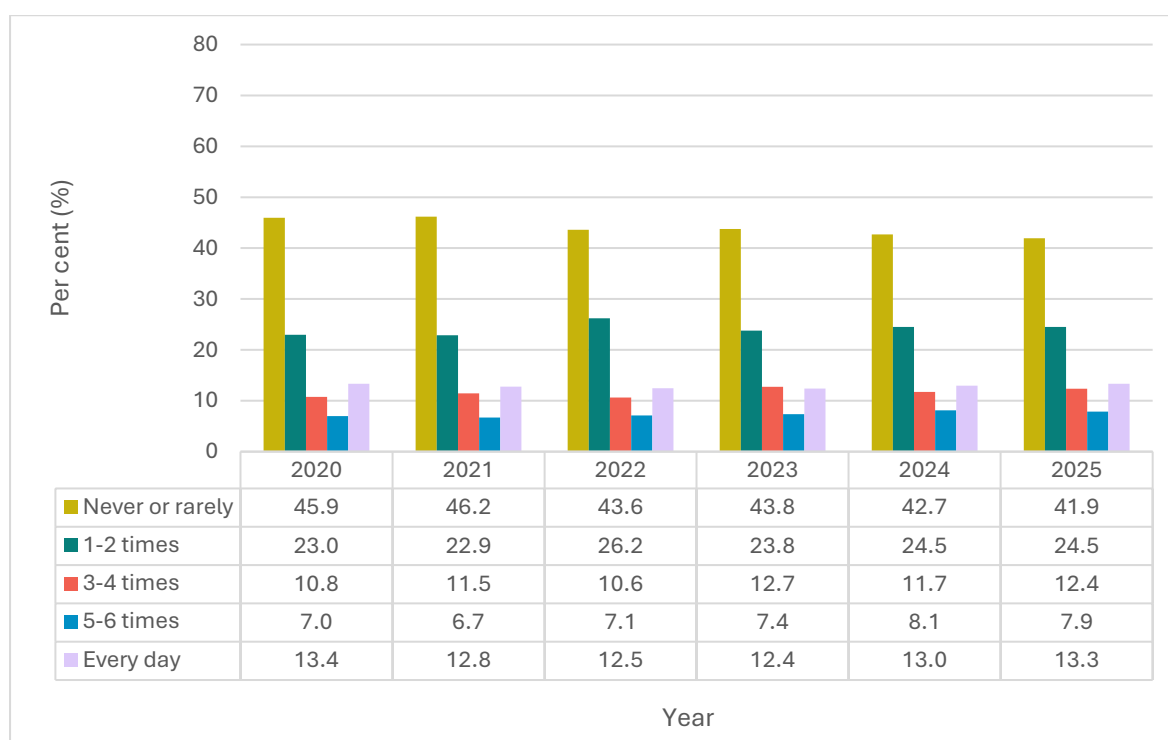
Over half of ACT Year 7 students usually ate dinner while watching TV one or more times a week. The proportion of students who ate dinner while watching TV one or more times weekly has remained stable overall between 2020 (54%) and 2025 (58%). Males were slightly more likely to watch TV while eating dinner compared to females however, the differences between the genders were not significant (**Table 6** and **Figure 11**).

Table 6: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while watching TV one or more times in a week, 2020–2025

Year	Persons (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
2020	54.1	54.7	53.2
2021	53.8	54.8	52.2
2022	56.4	56.7	55.9
2023	56.3	57.1	55.6
2024	57.3	59.3	55.2
2025	58.1	58.6	57.6

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Figure 11: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while watching TV one or more times in a week, 2020–2025

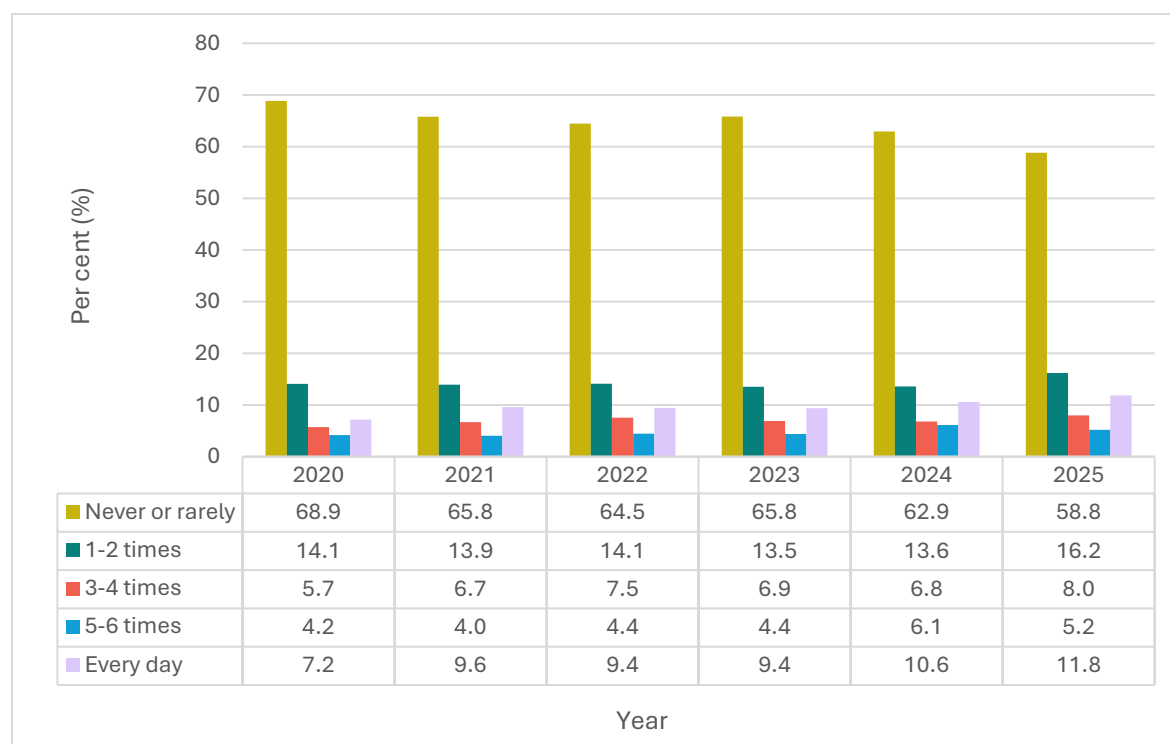


Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Eating dinner while using an electronic device

The proportion of students who used an electronic device while eating dinner one or more times per week increased significantly from 31% in 2020 to 41% in 2025. While the use of an electronic device during dinner has increased for both genders during this period, the differences in proportions between the genders were not significant (**Figure 12** and **Table 7**).

Figure 12: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while using an electronic device one or more times in a week, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Table 7: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who usually ate dinner while using an electronic device one or more times in a week, 2020–2025

Year	Persons (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
2020	31.1	32.0	29.9
2021	34.2	35.4	32.3
2022	35.5	35.6	35.5
2023	34.2	31.9	36.4
2024	37.1	36.9	37.2
2025	41.2	40.3	42.4

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

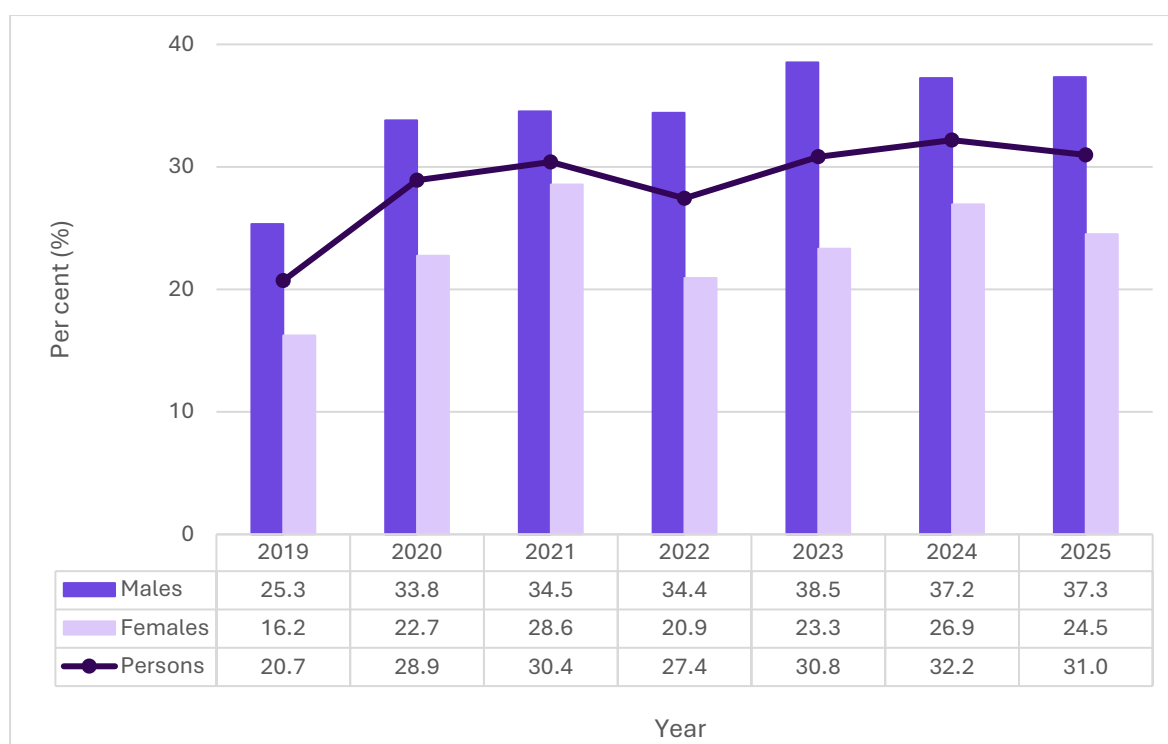
Physical activity

Regular physical activity is associated with improved physical fitness, bone health, cognitive outcomes, mental health and cardiometabolic health of children^{7,8}. The Australian 24-hour movement guidelines⁹ recommend that children and young people aged 5 to 17 years should aim for at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.

Year 7 students were asked to report the number of days that they were physically active for at least 60 minutes in the past week. Participation in active video games such as 'Just Dance' was also considered to be physical activity as these games move the body and increase the heart rate and breathing.

The proportion of Year 7 students who engaged in physical activity for 60 minutes or more daily increased significantly from 21% in 2019 to 31% in 2025. Males were significantly more likely to engage in physical activity for 60 minutes or more daily compared to females in all years, except for 2021 (**Figure 13**).

Figure 13: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who were physically active for 60 minutes or more daily in the past week, 2019–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

Sedentary behaviour

Increased sedentary behaviour is related to unfavourable body composition, decreased physical fitness, poor self-esteem and lower academic achievement. It is also linked to poor psychosocial behaviours and increased risk of cardiovascular diseases and other lifestyle diseases¹⁰.

The [Australian 24-hour movement guidelines](#)⁹ for children and young people (5 to 17 years) recommend that children and young people should limit their sedentary behaviour, including the amount of time spent sitting. The guidelines recommend that children should limit their recreational screen time (excluding activities for educational use) to no more than 2 hours per day.

Year 7 students were asked to report the amount of time they typically spent sitting or lying down during activities such as vehicle travel, reading and writing (excluding schoolwork), and screen-based activities (e.g. watching videos, playing games, and using social media) on both weekdays (Monday to Friday) and weekend days (Saturday and Sunday).

For this report, responses regarding sedentary behaviours have been categorised as up to 2 hours and over 2 hours per day for both weekdays and weekend days.

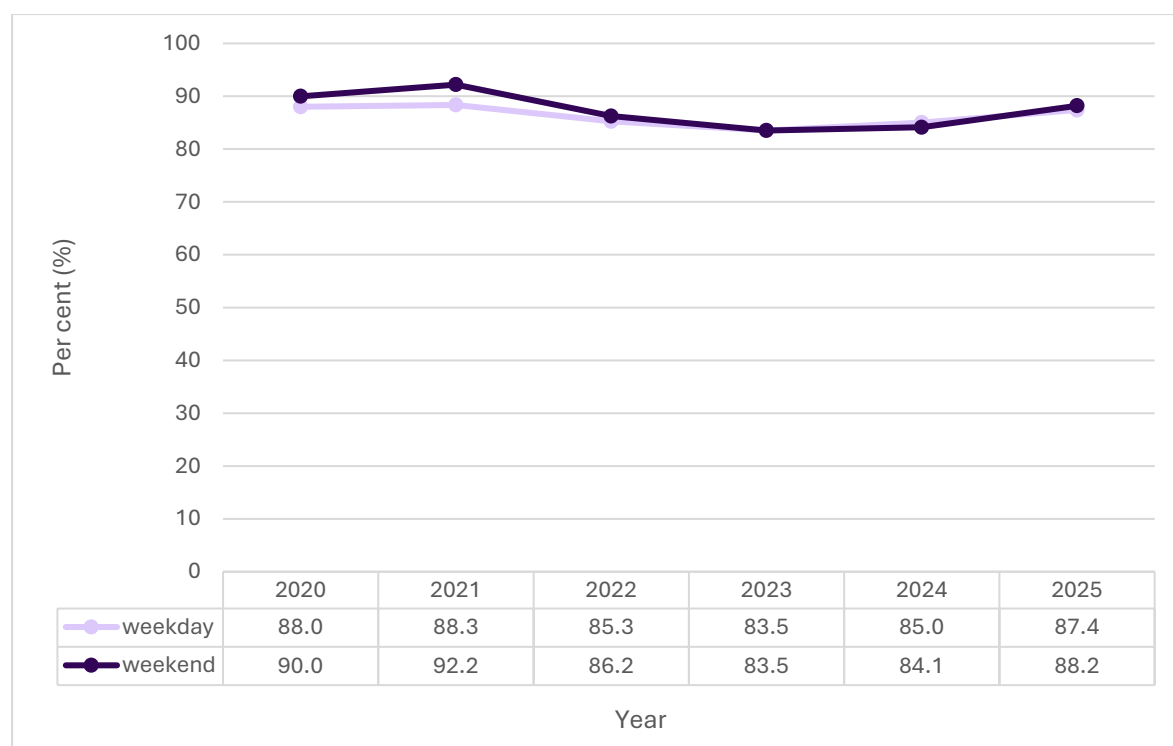


Travelling in a vehicle

Most ACT Year 7 students reported travelling in a vehicle for up to 2 hours per day during a typical week. Between 2020 and 2025, the proportion of students travelling up to 2 hours per day on weekdays remained relatively stable, while on weekends significant changes were observed in 2022 (decreased from 92% to 86%) and 2025 (increased from 84% to 88%) (**Figure 14**).

Females were significantly more likely than males to report travelling in a vehicle for up to 2 hours per day in 2020 over the week; however, no significant gender differences were observed in subsequent years (**Table 8**).

Figure 14: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who travelled in a vehicle for up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note:

* Question response options were changed in 2022.

Estimates for sedentary behaviours have been updated since the 2024 report.

Table 8: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who travelled in a vehicle up to 2 hours per day in a typical week by gender, 2020-2025

Year	Weekday Males (%)	Weekday Females (%)	Weekend Males (%)	Weekend Females (%)
2020	85.4	91.1	88.0	92.3
2021	86.8	89.3	91.8	92.8
2022	84.1	86.7	85.8	87.0
2023	82.5	84.6	84.2	83.1
2024	84.4	86.1	83.2	85.2
2025	85.8	89.2	86.9	89.6

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note:

* Question response options were changed in 2022.

^ Estimates for sedentary behaviours have been updated since the 2024 report.

Reading and writing

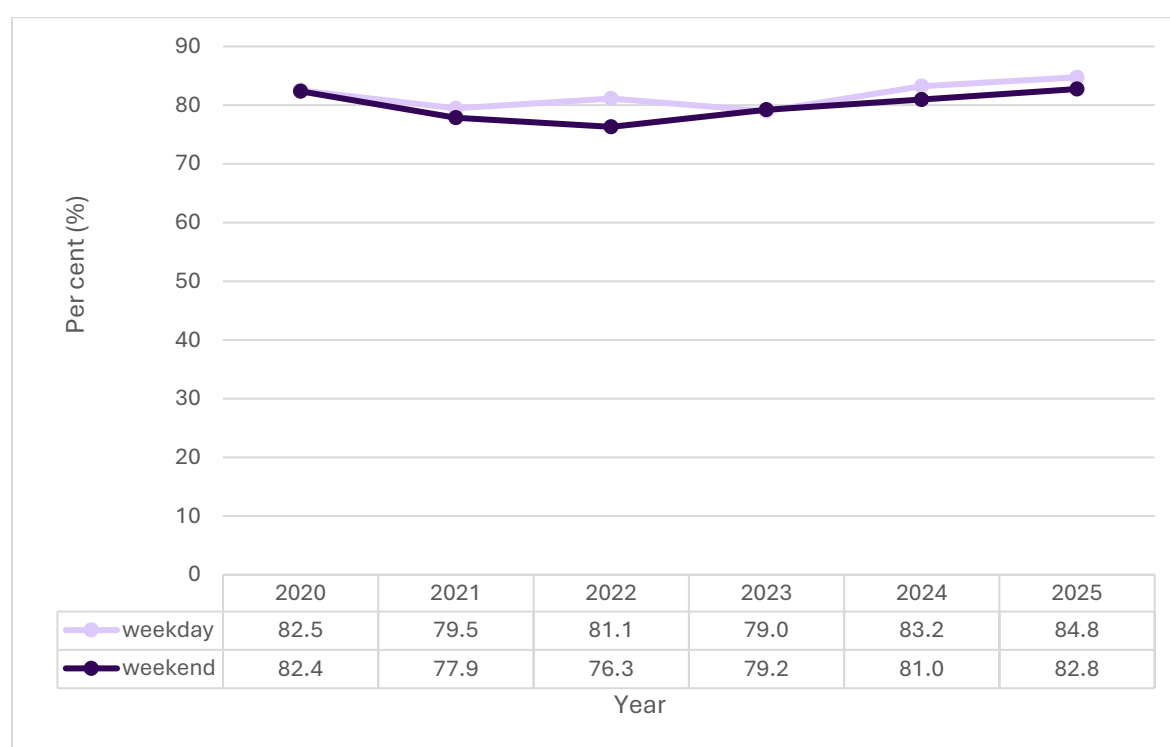
The proportion of Year 7 students who reported reading and writing (excluding schoolwork) for up to 2 hours per day during a typical week remained relatively stable between 2020 and 2025, apart from some significant fluctuations observed in 2024 on weekdays (increased from 79% to 83%) and in 2021 on weekends (decreased from 82% to 78%) (**Figure 15**).

On weekdays, males were significantly more likely than females to report reading and writing for up to 2 hours per day in 2021, 2022, and 2024. No significant gender differences were observed in the remaining years (**Table 9**).

On weekends, males were significantly more likely than females to report reading and writing for up to 2 hours per day across all years, except in 2025, when the gender differences were not statistically significant (**Table 9**).



Figure 15: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who read and write (excluding schoolwork) for up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, 2020-2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note:

* Question response options were changed in 2022.

Estimates for sedentary behaviours have been updated since the 2024 report.

Table 9: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who read and write up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, by gender, 2020-2025

Year	Weekday Males (%)	Weekday Females (%)	Weekend Males (%)	Weekend Females (%)
2020	84.4	80.5	85.2	78.9
2021	84.8	77.7	84.2	75.1
2022	84.4	78.5	80.0	73.3
2023	80.3	78.2	83.6	75.0
2024	85.7	80.7	84.7	77.2
2025	86.0	83.4	83.3	82.2

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note:

* Question response options were changed in 2022.

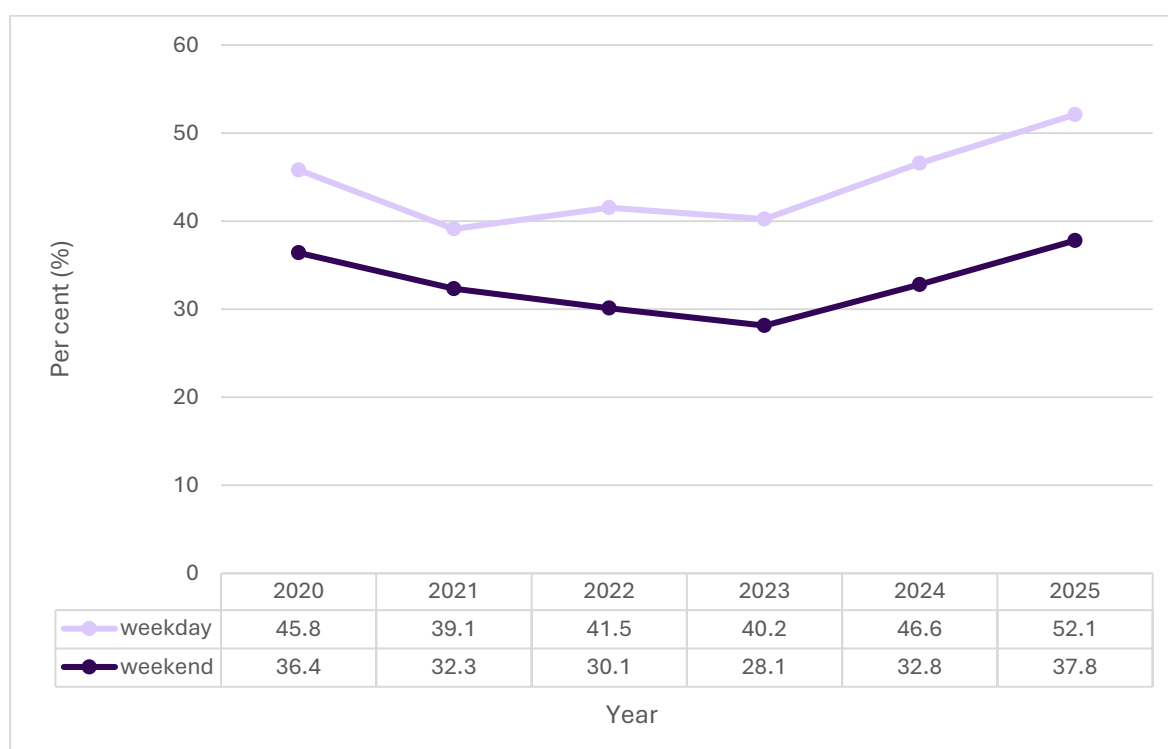
Estimates for sedentary behaviours have been updated since the 2024 report.

Recreational screen time

The proportion of ACT Year 7 students who engaged in recreational screen time for up to 2 hours per day on weekdays decreased significantly in 2021 and increased from 2023 to 2025, with over half of participants meeting the Australian screen time guidelines by 2025. On weekends, the proportion remained relatively stable between 2020 and 2022, before fluctuating significantly thereafter (**Figure 16**).

There were no significant differences between males and females in recreational screen use of up to 2 hours per day on weekdays across all survey years. On weekends, however, females were significantly more likely than males to engage in recreational screen use of up to 2 hours per day between 2020 and 2022. No significant gender differences were observed in the remaining years (**Table 10**).

Figure 16: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who engaged in screen-based activities in their free time for 2 hours or less per day in a typical week, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note:

* Question response options were changed in 2022.

Estimates for sedentary behaviours have been updated since the 2024 report.

Table 10: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who engage in recreational screen use up to 2 hours per day in a typical week, by gender, 2020-2025

Year	Weekday Males (%)	Weekday Females (%)	Weekend Males (%)	Weekend Females (%)
2020	43.4	48.8	32.9	40.6
2021	36.7	42.4	25.9	38.6
2022	40.5	43.1	27.2	33.6
2023	41.6	38.9	29.0	27.1
2024	45.2	48.2	30.7	35.4
2025	51.6	52.9	37.6	38.3

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note:

* Question response options were changed in 2022.

Estimates for sedentary behaviours have been updated since the 2024 report.

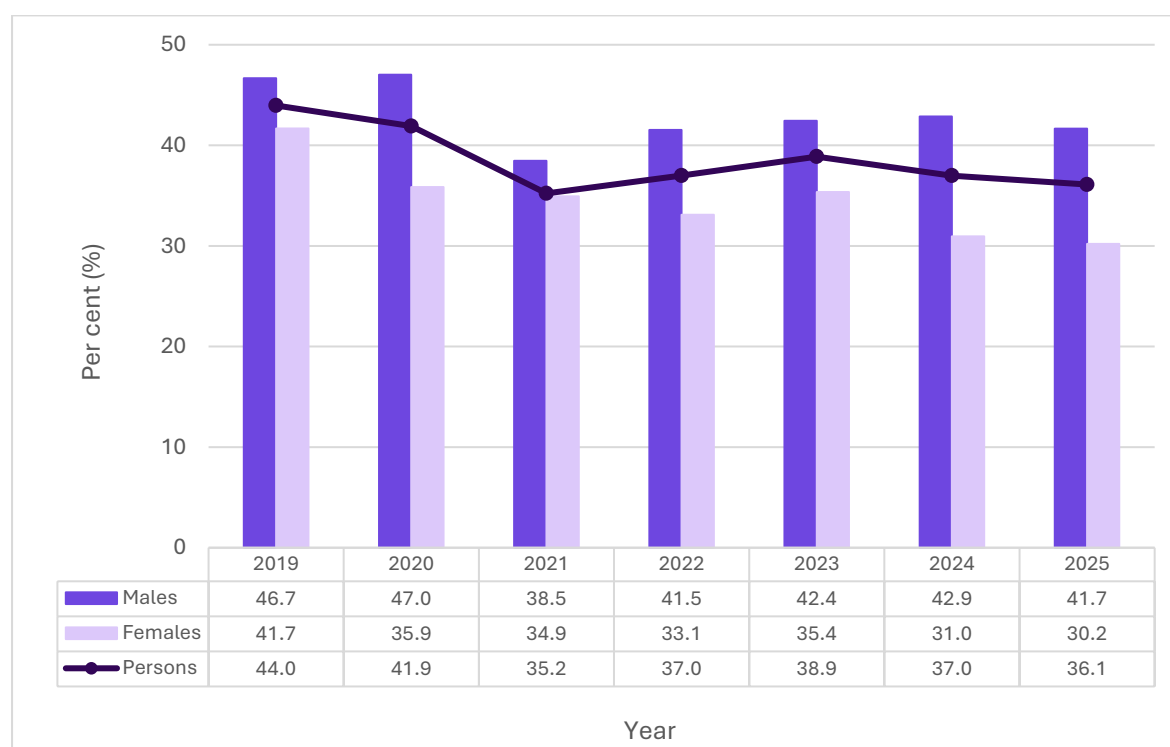


Sleep

Good quality sleep promotes growth, learning, cognitive development, and immunity and reduces the risk of heart disease and obesity¹¹. The Australian 24-hour movement guidelines⁹ for children and young people (5 to 17 years) recommend that children and young people aged 5 to 13 years should have 9 to 11 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. Year 7 students were asked to report how many hours of sleep they have on a typical night.

The proportion of students who met the sleep guideline of 9 to 11 hours of sleep daily has decreased significantly from 44% in 2019 to 36% in 2025. Males were significantly more likely to meet the daily sleep guideline compared to females in all years except for 2019 and 2021 (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who met the daily sleep guideline of 9–11 hours, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2019–2025.

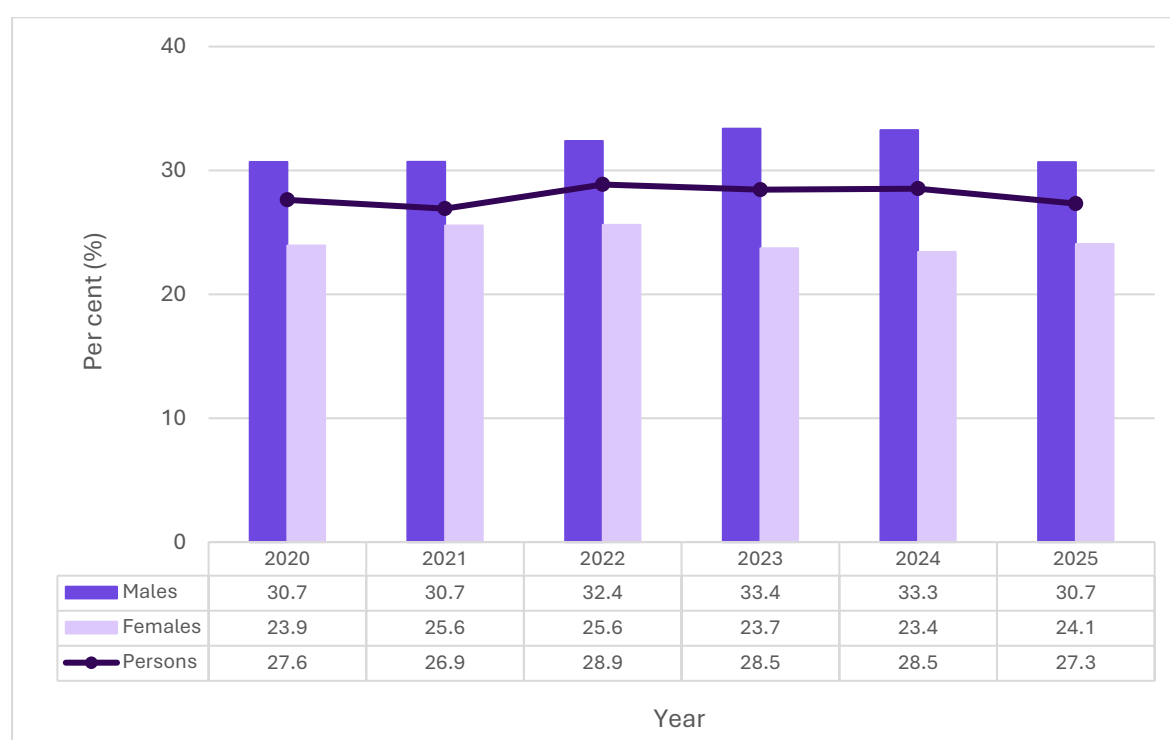
Sleep behaviours

Year 7 students who participated in the Y7HS were asked to report how often they went to sleep at the same time, woke up at the same time, fell asleep using electronic devices and woke up at night to use electronic devices in the week prior to the survey. The results for sleep behaviours reported at a frequency of 6 or more days a week are described as “most days” in this section.

Going to sleep at the same time each night

The proportion of students who went to sleep at the same time on most days of the week remained stable between 2020 (28%) and 2025 (27%). Males were significantly more likely to go to sleep at the same time on most days compared to females in all years, except for 2021 (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who went to sleep at the same time at night on most days, 2020–2025



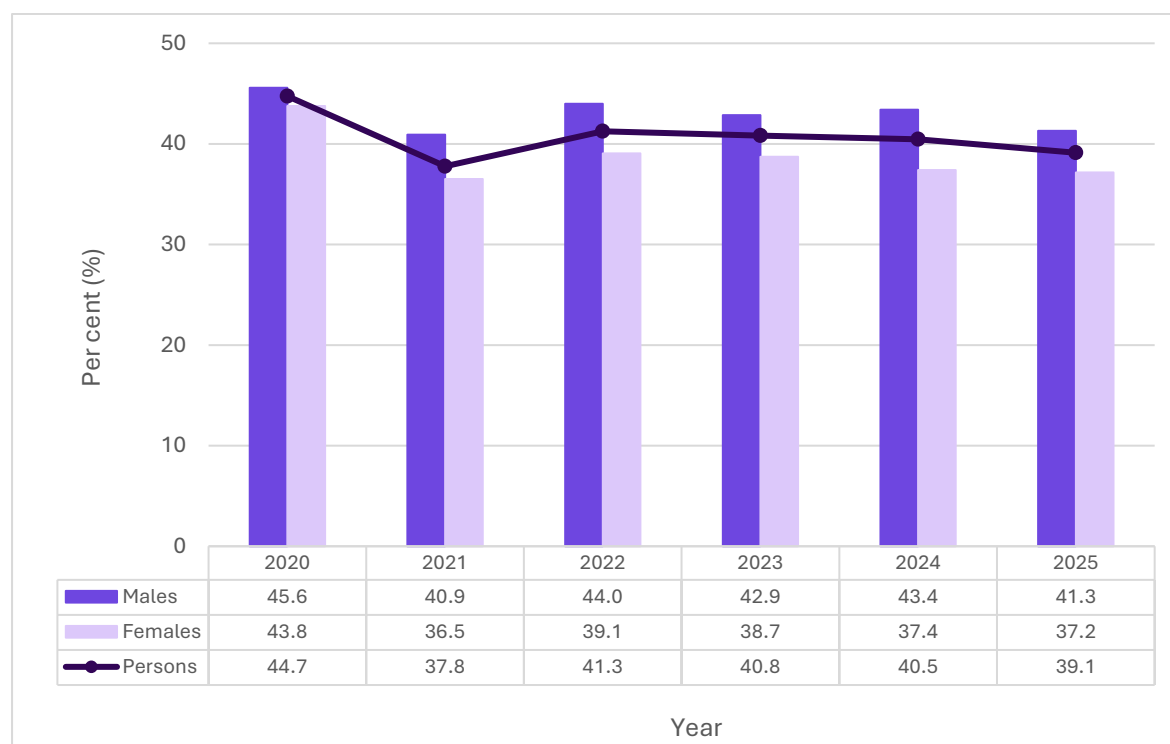
Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note: ‘Most days’ refers to a frequency of 6 or more days per week.

Waking up at the same time in the morning

The proportion of students who woke up at the same time in the morning on most days decreased significantly from 45% in 2020 to 39% in 2025. Males were significantly more likely to wake up at the same time in the morning on most days compared to females in 2024 (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who woke up at the same time in the morning on most days, 2020–2025



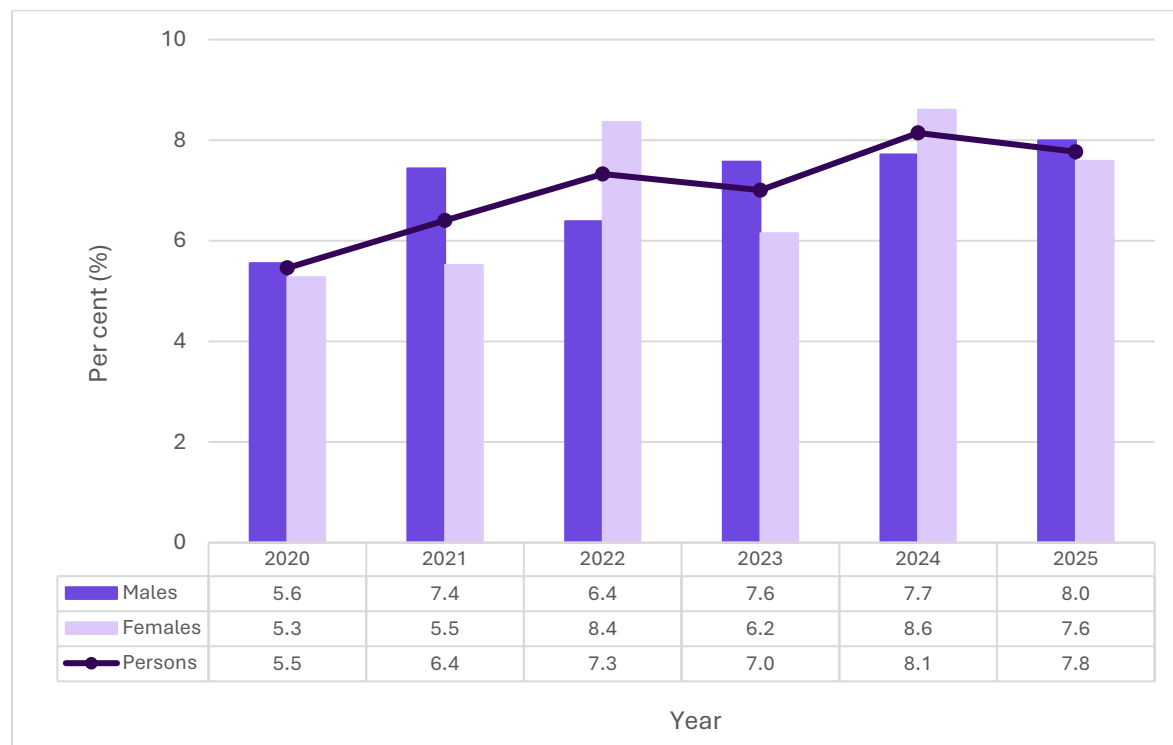
Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note: 'Most days' refers to a frequency of 6 or more days per week.

Falling asleep using an electronic device

The proportion of students who fell asleep using an electronic device on most days increased significantly from 6% in 2020 to 8% in 2025. There were no significant differences between the genders for those who fell asleep using an electronic device on most days during the reporting period (**Figure 20**).

Figure 20: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who fell asleep using an electronic device on most days, 2020–2025



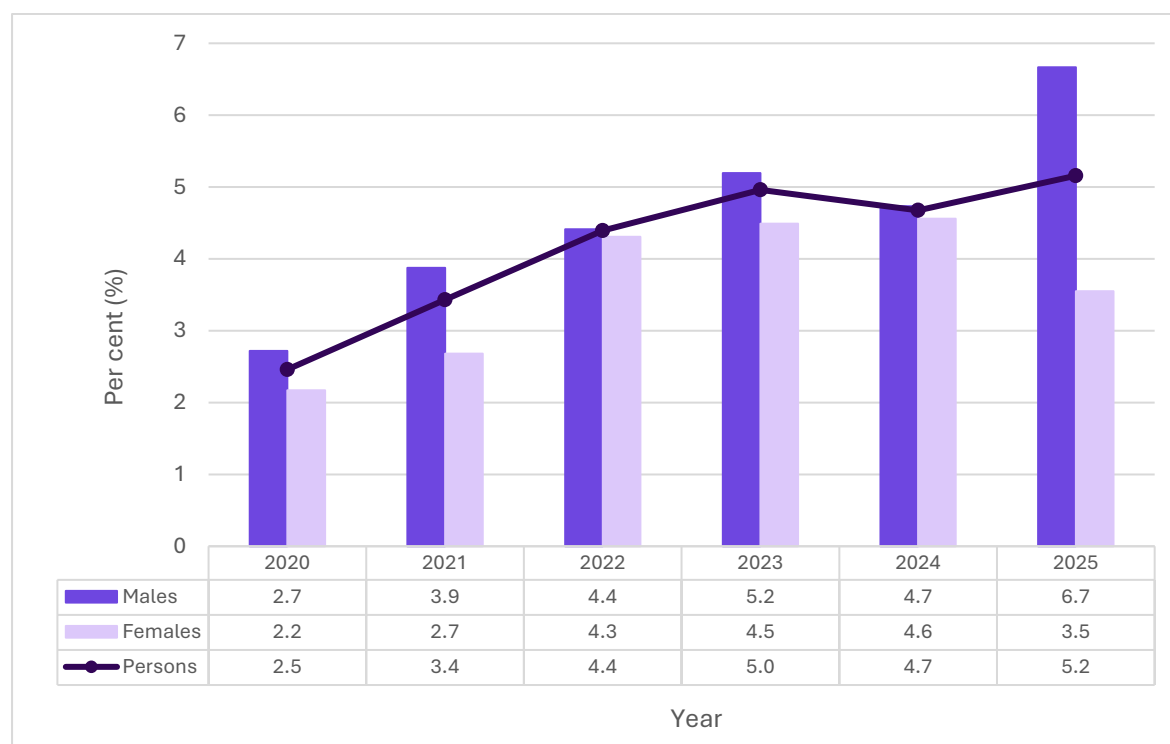
Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note: 'Most days' refers to a frequency of 6 or more days per week.

Waking up during the night to use an electronic device

The proportion of students who woke up during the night to use an electronic device on most days increased significantly from 3% in 2020 to 5% in 2025. Males were significantly more likely to wake up at night to use an electronic device on most days compared to females in 2025 (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who woke up during the night to use an electronic device on most days, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Note: 'Most days' refers to a frequency of 6 or more days per week.

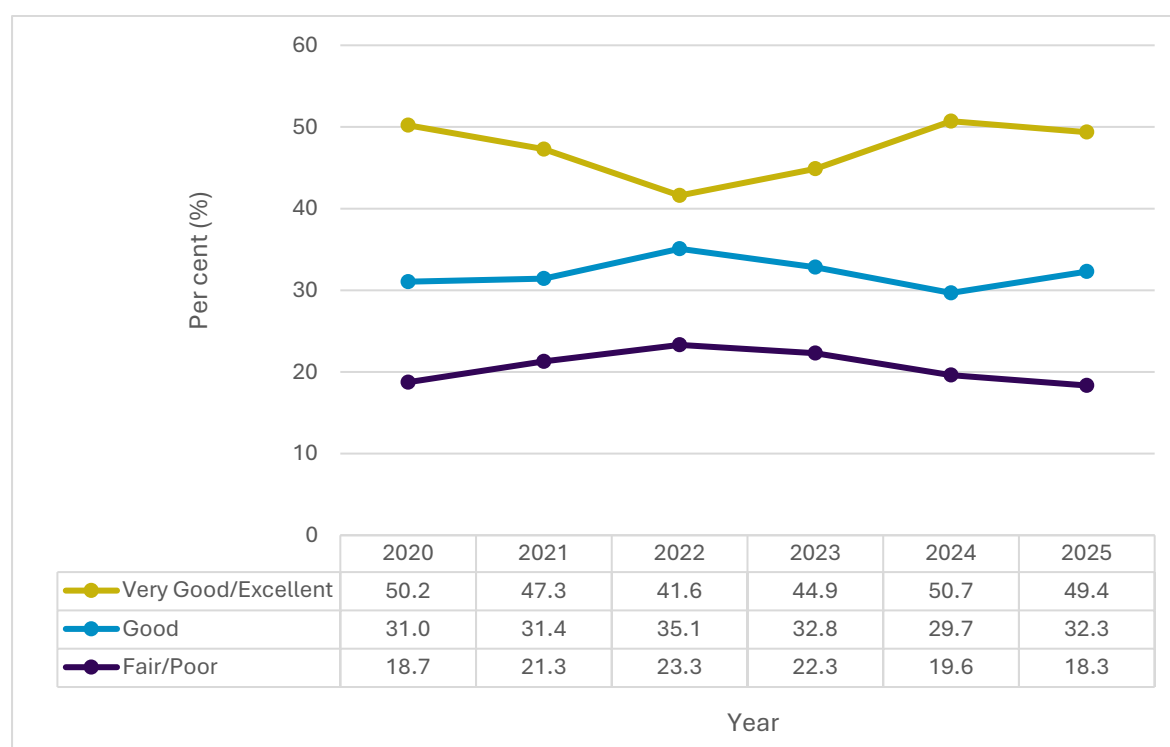
Self-rated health

Self-rated health captures an individual's view of their own health and wellbeing at a point in time. Year 7 students were asked to rate their health in the past month using the response options of poor, fair, good, very good or excellent. For this report, responses have been categorised into poor/fair, good and very good/excellent.



The proportion of students who rated their health as “very good/excellent” fluctuated between 2020 (50%) and 2025 (49%). The proportion of students who rated their health as “good”, as well as “fair/poor” has remained stable between 2020 and 2025 (**Figure 22**).

Figure 22: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who self-rated their health as very good/excellent, good and fair/poor in the past month, 2020–2025



Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

Males were significantly more likely to self-rate their health as “very good/excellent” compared to females in all years, except for 2020. In contrast, females were significantly more likely than males to self-rate their health as “good” in 2022 and 2024 and as “fair/poor” in all years, apart from 2021 (**Table 11**).

Table 11: Proportion of ACT Year 7 students who self-rated their health as very good/excellent, good and fair/poor in the past month by gender, 2020–2025

Year	Very good/ Excellent		Good		Fair/Poor	
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
2020	52.7	47.4	31.1	30.7	16.2	21.9
2021	52.5	44.5	30.1	34.4	17.5	21.0
2022	48.7	35.5	31.6	38.4	19.7	26.1
2023	51.3	38.3	33.0	33.1	15.7	28.6
2024	57.6	43.3	27.3	32.5	15.1	24.2
2025	54.6	43.8	31.5	33.2	13.9	23.0

Source: Year 7 Health Survey 2020–2025.

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