

Year 7 Health Survey Trends between 2019 and 2025

Insights brief

The Year 7 Health Survey (Y7HS) is an annual online survey that captures information on the health and wellbeing of Year 7 students in the ACT. Conducted in Term 3 each year, the survey collects data across a range of key areas including nutrition, mealtime behaviours, physical activity, active travel, sedentary behaviour, sleep and emotional wellbeing.

This short summary presents key findings from *The Year 7 Health Survey; a trend analysis from 2019 to 2025*, which examines key health and wellbeing indicators of ACT Year 7 students.

The full report can be accessed through this link (<https://www.act.gov.au/open/epidemiology-publications>).

Findings

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

Nutrition



- **Fruit intake remained high** and stable, with around 80% meeting the recommended 2 serves daily. On average, students consumed 3 serves of fruit each day.
- **Vegetable intake was low** and stable, with around one in five meeting the 5 serves guideline daily. On average, students consumed 3 serves of vegetables each day.



- **Weekly discretionary food and snack intake** was widespread and stable at **over 95%**. **Fast food consumption rose significantly from 67% (2019) to 73% (2025)**.
- **Weekly discretionary drink consumption 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



- **All family mealtime behaviours, except eating dinner while watching TV, changed significantly** between 2020 and 2025
 - Food preparation, setting the table and clean-up: 88% → 84%
 - Eating dinner with most of the family: 90% → 87%
 - Device use during mealtimes: 31% → 41%

Physical Activity



- **Students meeting the 60 minute daily physical activity guideline increased significantly** from 21% (2019) to 31% (2025), with males consistently more active than females.

Sedentary behaviour



- **Over 83% of ACT students travelled in a vehicle for up to 2 hours daily.** This proportion has remained stable on weekdays but changed significantly on weekends in 2022 and 2025.
- **Over 76% of students were engaged in reading and writing (excluding schoolwork) for up to 2 hours daily** which was broadly stable between 2020 and 2025, with significant fluctuations in 2024 (weekdays) and 2021 (weekends). **Males were more likely to engage in reading and writing up to 2 hours daily** compared to females in most years.
- **Recreational screen use for up to 2 hours daily increased overall** with fluctuating significantly on weekdays in 2021 and from 2023 to 2025; on weekends, from 2023. **Females were more likely to engage in recreational screen use up to 2 hours daily** compared to males **on weekends** between 2020 and 2022.

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** 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%.
 - **Fall 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” rating.

Implications

Key findings from *The Year 7 Health Survey; a trend analysis from 2019 to 2025* identify several areas for improvement in the preventive health practices of Year 7 students, with insights for public health planning and policy. Ongoing data collections such as the Year 7 Health Survey are essential for monitoring the health and wellbeing of young people and identifying emerging trends. Findings from the report will inform the monitoring of the health and wellbeing of the ACT's secondary students and continue to support development of evidence-based policies and programs.

Year 7 Health Survey statistics are updated and published on the HealthStats ACT - ACT Government website (<https://www.act.gov.au/directorates-and-agencies/act-health/data-statistics-and-surveys/healthstats-act>). While all efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of data presented in this report, any updates made to survey data following publication will be available on the HealthStats ACT website.

