



Youth Health Report 2015

Summary of findings relating to
15-24 year olds in the
Healthy Ireland Survey 2015



Introduction to Healthy Ireland Survey

Healthy Ireland is the National Framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland. It is a response to the many risks that threaten Ireland's future health and wellbeing, as well as its economic recovery.

Healthy Ireland's vision is where everyone can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility.

It describes four high-level goals:

- Increase the proportion of people who are healthy at all stages of life
- Reduce health inequalities
- Protect the public from threats to health and wellbeing
- Create an environment where every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland

An important feature of Healthy Ireland is a focus on research and evidence to ensure goals, programmes and policy and programming decisions are based on robust evidence, best practice approaches, and integrated with service delivery to maximise impact.

The Healthy Ireland Survey is an annual interviewer administered face-to-face survey commissioned by the Department of Health. The objectives of this survey are to:

- Provide and report on current and credible data, to enhance the monitoring and assessment of the various policy initiatives under the Framework
- Support and enhance Ireland's ability to meet many of its international reporting obligations
- Feed into the Outcomes Framework and overall Research, Data and Innovation Plan for Healthy Ireland and it will be important in assessing, monitoring and realising the benefits of the overall health reform strategy
- Allow targeted monitoring where necessary, with an outcomes-focussed approach, lending enhanced responsiveness and agility from a policymaking perspective
- Support the Department of Health in ongoing engagement and awareness-raising activities, in the various policy areas and support better understanding of policy priorities

In June 2014 the Department of Health commissioned Ipsos MRBI to undertake this survey. Following a detailed survey design process, fieldwork for the initial wave of this survey got underway in November 2014 and was completed in August 2015. A report of the first wave of the survey was published in October 2015.

For more information on the methodology of the Healthy Ireland Survey visit health.gov.ie

SpunOut.ie & Healthy Ireland

SpunOut.ie is Ireland's youth information website created by young people, for young people. Our goal is to empower our readers aged 16 - 25 with the information they need to live active, happy and healthy lives.

SpunOut.ie is funded by the Health Service Executive to provide health information to young people to inform healthier choices and behaviours as part of the Healthy Ireland framework. The site runs a number of annual campaigns targeted at young people (e.g. sexual health promotion, healthy eating and physical activity promotion) and also identifies targeted campaigns to address specific demands from readers for more information on a topic (e.g. improving sleep quality, supporting friends with mental health difficulties).

How SpunOut.ie will respond to the Healthy Ireland Survey

Overall, the findings relating to young people in the Healthy Ireland Survey are broadly in line with what young people tell us is their experience and reflect the behaviour of readers on our site. Young people are increasingly health conscious and are largely positive about their general health status. Smoking prevalence is reducing but still high and young people are starting to realise the harmful effects of occasional or 'social' smoking.

Our experience is that young people are beginning to reject the notion that alcohol is necessary to socialise with friends and have fun and we are seeing more and more young people seek out alternatives to alcohol related activities. Young people drink more per sitting than any other age group and this is one of the findings SpunOut.ie hopes to respond to through our partnership with the Hello Sunday Morning movement in 2016 and beyond.

Students are more likely to be highly physically active than those in employment or those who are unemployed and men are more likely to be active than women. These findings will allow us to target our physical activity promotions at the groups who may be less likely to be highly physically active. Similarly, in relation to diet we now know to focus on making it easier for young people to cook from scratch with fresh ingredients and help find ways to fit their 5-a-day into their diet.

Mental health is another priority area of work for SpunOut.ie and we'll be using the findings related to positive and negative mental health to target campaigns in this area. Similarly, a number of the findings in relation to sexual health highlight the need to promote condom usage, particularly to men who have sex with men, and to the whole population.

The rich data from the Healthy Ireland Survey are critical to being able to better respond to the information needs of young people in Ireland today. Our aim in collating these data in the Youth Report 2015 (and in subsequent years) will be to provide a high level snapshot of the issues and challenges facing young people in maintaining positive health and wellbeing. This summary report will be a quick reference guide for those working with young people or those interested in youth health, and should be used in conjunction with the overall findings for full contextual understanding.

SpunOut.ie will use these data to evidence the expansion of our information library of 1,800 factsheets and articles and ensure the resources we provide to our 80,000 monthly readers are relevant to their day-to-day lived experiences.

Summary of Findings in the 15 - 24 age group

Background

- The Healthy Ireland Survey is an interviewer-administered survey with interviews conducted on a face-to-face basis with individuals aged 15+
- The initial wave of this survey involved 7,539 interviews: 747 people between 15 and 24 participated (399 males and 348 females)
- Fieldwork was conducted between November 2014 and August 2015
- This survey uses a multi-stage probability sampling process and achieved a response rate of 61%

General Health



Six in every ten young people (61%) aged between 15 and 24 have had a consultation with their GP in the last 12 months

- Overall young people aged between 15 and 24 are largely positive about the general health status or their health with 92% reporting good or very good health (compared to an average of 85%).
- 1 in 4 (27%) young people aged 15 - 24 reported having a health condition in the past 12 months such as high blood pressure, allergy, asthma, depression, diabetes

Smoking



One in five (19%) of young people smoke, 4% less than national average

- Occasional smoking is high amongst young people aged between 15 and 24 at 6%, above the national average of 4%
- In the past year, 45% of young people who smoke have attempted to quit
- Cigarette consumption peaks amongst 25-34 year olds and declines with age

Alcohol

- In the past year, 68% of young people aged 15 - 24 have drunk alcohol. With the exception of those over 65, young people are the only group where alcohol consumption falls below 3 in 4 people (national average 76%)
- Four in ten (39%) of young people aged 15 - 24 drink weekly compared to 63% of 55 - 64 year olds and 59% of over 65s.
- Young people who drink (75% of men and 38% of women aged 15-24) were more likely to report consuming six or more standard drinks on a typical drinking occasion than the population

average (57% for men and 21% for women)

- Almost 4 in 10 (39%) drinkers binge drink on a typical drinking occasion with over a fifth (24%) doing so at least once a week
- Lower levels of drinking in more deprived areas and lower social classes, but higher levels of binge drinking
- 15% of those drinking at harmful levels felt in the past 12 months that their drinking harmed their health, and 22% felt they should cut down on their drinking

Physical Activity



Young men aged between 15 and 24 are highly active (56%) compared to around a third of women the same age (34%)

Students are more likely to be highly active (47%), compared with those working (39%) and those who are unemployed (28%)

- Almost half of young people (46%) self-reported as highly active compared to a population average of around a third (32%)
- Those aged 15 - 24 spend the highest average time sitting (6.3 hours) compared with all other age groups (average is 5.3 hours)
- Young women aged between 15 and 24 spend longer sitting per day (6.7 hours) than any other group

Diet and Nutrition



A third (33%) of 15 - 24 year olds reported they were likely to cook from scratch, using fresh, raw ingredients compared to a whole population average of 53%

1 in 5 young people aged 15- 24 (22%) is consuming five or more portions of fruit and vegetables daily. Young women are more likely to get their 5 a day (26%) compared to young men (18%). The whole population average is 1 in 4 (26%)

- Younger people are less likely to eat breakfast with 4 in 10 people aged between 15 and 24 skipping the first meal of the day (compared to a 27% population average)
- Men aged 15 - 24 most likely to drink sugar sweetened drinks (29%) compared to population average of 15%
- Three in every four 15 - 24 year olds eat snack foods daily (2 portions or more) compared to 3 in 5 in the whole population

Weight Management



Young women aged 15 - 24 are more likely (10%) to be obese compared to their male counterparts (4%)

Almost as many young men are trying to lose weight (13%) as those trying to gain weight (15%)

- Less young people are overweight or obese compared to the entire population average (60%) with 31% of young men aged 15 - 24 and 27% of women of the same age overweight or obese
- Women aged 15 - 24 are more likely to be underweight (9%) when compared to an average of women of all ages (3%)
- One in every four young women aged 15 - 24 are trying to lose weight
- Almost half (47%) of 15 - 24 year olds trying to lose weight are doing so by consuming fewer sugar sweetened foods/drinks

Social Connectedness

- Participation in a social club or group is highest among men aged 15-24 at 72% compared to 47% of the total population
- Young people are more likely to report problems in their neighbourhoods like littering (38%) compared to those over 65 (26%)

Mental Wellbeing



Highest level of positive mental health is recorded among young men aged 15 - 24

A 'Probable Mental Health Problem' (PMHP) is detected more frequently among women (13%) than men (6%), and is most prominent among young women aged 15-24 (16%) compared to young men (5%)

- Higher levels of positive mental health are recorded among men and women aged 15 - 24 with an Energy and Vitality Index (EVI) mean score of 76.8% for young men and 70.3% for young women compared to a whole population average of 70.0%
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Sexual Health



Major differences exist across age groups in condom usage on the last occasion of sex with two-thirds (66%) of 17-24 year olds using them compared to 5% of those aged over 65 and a whole population average of 24%

Men aged 17-24 were most likely to have used a condom on the last occasion of sex (69%)

- Those aged 17-24 were the group least likely to have previously had intercourse (69%) compared with the total population (92%)
- Men aged 17-24 were more likely to have had intercourse (74%) than women of the same age (63%)
- 54% of men who most recently had sex with another man did not use a condom
- 93% of people aged 17 - 24 used at least one form of contraception on the last occasion of sex, with 7% using no contraception at all
- Usage of the contraceptive pill is highest amongst the 17-24 and 25-34 age groups (35% and 34% respectively)
- Those aged 17-24 (51%) are less likely than other groups to have been in a relationship with their most recent sexual partner, with men in this age group less likely than women to have been in a relationship (42% and 62% respectively)
- 12% of men aged 17-24 indicate that they had only just met the person when they last had sexual intercourse, with a further 19% indicating that they had recently met this person

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