

Making the Connection: Other Health Behaviors and Conditions and Academic Grades

Data from the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show that students with higher grades are less likely than their peers with lower grades to suffer from certain health conditions, like asthma. Students with higher grades are also more likely to receive certain types of care, like dental care. It is important to remember that these associations do not prove causation. The information presented here is intended to help school health professionals, school officials, and other decision makers better understand the associations between grades and these behaviors and conditions. Greater understanding will help in developing and reinforcing policies, practices, and programs that help students achieve their maximum potential and lower their risk for poor health outcomes.

Key findings

Compared to students with lower grades, **students with higher grades are**

more likely to:

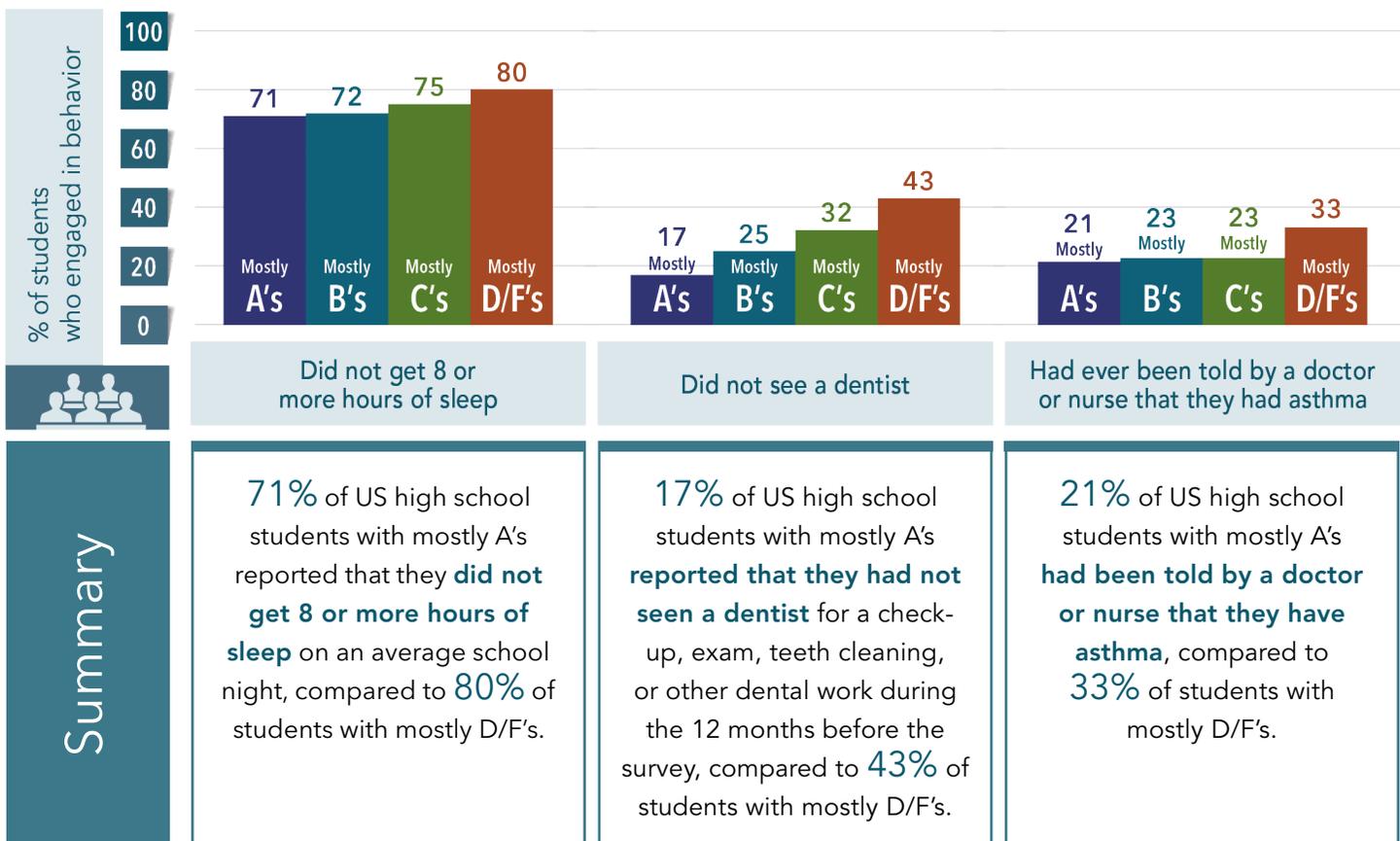
- Get 8 or more hours of sleep on an average school night.
- See a dentist.

less likely to:

- Be diagnosed with asthma by a doctor or nurse.

FIGURE 1

Other Health-Related Behaviors and Conditions, by type of academic grades earned
- United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2015



*Figure 1 illustrate the percentage of students who engaged in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned in school (mostly A's, B's, C's, D's/F's) (row proportions). The percentage of students who did not engage in each risk behavior are not shown. However, the percentages of students who did and did not engage in each risk behavior, by type of grades mostly earned in school, sum to 100%. Logistic regression analyses (not shown) controlling for sex, race/ethnicity, and grade in school confirmed a significant association between health behaviors/conditions and academic grades. You can also view data from other [2015 YRBS health behavior variables](#).

Conclusions

These results from the YRBS provide evidence of a significant association between academic grades and some health behaviors and conditions. Further research is warranted to determine whether higher grades in school lead to these health behaviors and conditions, if these health behaviors and conditions lead to higher grades, or some other factors lead to these health behaviors and conditions.

There is a close relationship between health and education. By working together, education and health agencies, parents, and communities can ensure that students are healthy and ready to learn in school.

About the Data

The National YRBS monitors priority health-risk behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability, and social problems among youth and adults in the United States. It is conducted every 2 years during the spring and provides data representative of 9th through 12th grade students in public and private schools throughout the nation. In 2015, students completing the YRBS were asked, "During the past 12 months, how would you describe your grades in school?" and given seven response options (Mostly A's, Mostly B's, Mostly C's, Mostly D's, Mostly F's, None of these grades, Not sure). In 2015, 32% of students received mostly A's, 38% received mostly B's, 20% received mostly C's, 6% received mostly D's or F's, and 4% reported receiving none of these grades or not sure.

For more information, visit the [CDC's Healthy Schools website](#), or call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).



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