

INTRODUCTION

Student Health 2005: Gauging the Health of Peel's Youth is one of an ongoing series of health status reports published by the Region of Peel Health department to describe the health of the Region's population.

In February 2002, Peel Health released a report entitled *Child Health Report – 2002*. *Child Health Report 2002* was a comprehensive report containing a variety of health statistics for Peel children and youth aged zero to 19 years. This report revealed data gaps in areas such as: bullying; physical activity; obesity; substance abuse (including alcohol and illicit substances); mental health; injury; dental health; and sexual health.

In order to learn more about key health issues faced by youth aged 12 to 19 years, Peel Health collaborated with the Peel District School Board and the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board to plan and conduct a School Health Assessment Survey with students in Peel. This report describes results from this survey which collected data during the spring and fall of 2004 from a sample of over 7,000 children in grades 7 to 12. The results of this survey will be used to support and plan programs that protect and improve the health of Peel's children.

The ***Student Health 2005: Gauging the Health of Peel's Youth*** report covers information on the following topics:

- Eating habits
- Body weight and physical activity
- Tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and drug use
- Bullying and safety
- Mental health and self esteem
- Sexual health
- Dental health
- Injuries
- Sun safety

Comparison data from other surveys in Ontario and for Canada are described when appropriate.

It should be noted that the data contained in this report are not generalizable to all Grade 7 to 12 students in the Region of Peel, as the survey was administered to a sample of students in only two participating school boards (i.e. students in private schools were excluded). In addition, findings for students in the two

participating boards should be interpreted with caution, as data could not be adjusted for other factors such as non-response, sex, and sampling method.

Throughout this report, the use of the terms “Peel Students” and “students in Peel”, where survey results are reported, refers to survey respondents.

For more information about the methodology underlying this survey, please refer to the Data Sources, Methods and Limitations section on page 197.