

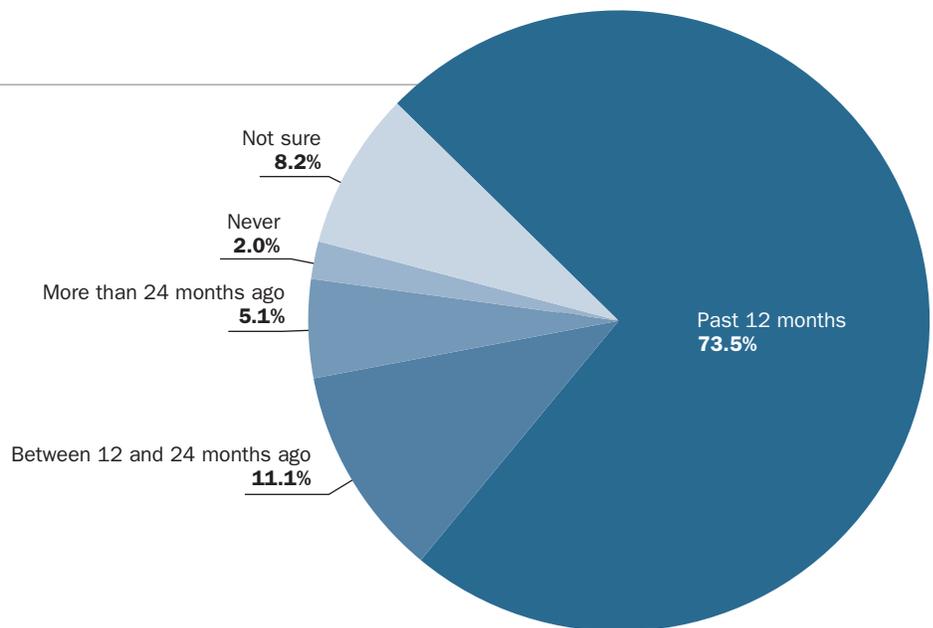
2015 NM-YRRS Results: Oral Health Among Youth

Good oral health is a critical component of a child's overall health and wellbeing. Without it, problems with speaking, eating, playing, and learning can develop and progress to pain, tooth decay, gum disease, and difficulty in school.¹ In addition to at-home preventive care, all children need access to essential preventive and acute care oral health resources to maintain good oral health.² The 2015 NM-YRRS high school survey included one question about access to oral health care: "When was the last time you saw a dentist for a check-up, exam, teeth cleaning, or other dental work?" In 2015, 73.5% of participating high school students had seen a dentist during the last 12 months. The NM rate was similar to the US rate (74.4%).

Dental visits were positively associated with parent education, a marker for socioeconomic status. Students whose parents had a college education (81.6%) were more likely to have seen a dentist in the past year than those whose parents had a high school education (74.7%) and those whose parents had less than a high school education (67.6%).

American Indian/Alaska Natives (67.5%), Asian/Pacific Islanders (65.3%), African Americans (69.7%), and Hispanics (73.3%) were less likely to have seen a dentist in the last year than White students (77.8%).

Access to oral health care
Grades 9–12 ■ NM ■ 2015



Students who had not seen a dentist in the past year were more likely than other students to engage in other risk behaviors that are associated with poor oral health. Those who had not seen the dentist in the past 12 months were:

- 1.3 times as likely to be current tobacco users (39.5% vs. 31.2%).
- 1.2 times as likely to be current drinkers (30.0% vs. 24.9%).
- 1.6 times as likely to drink three or more servings of soda daily (9.4% vs. 6.0%).

¹ US Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General. Oral health in America: A report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research; 2000, p. 33–59.

² US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2010). Oral health: Preventing cavities, gum disease, tooth loss, and oral cancers: At a glance 2010. Available from www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/AAG/doh.htm#aag

This newsletter was produced by the New Mexico Department of Health, the Public Education Department (NM PED), and the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center. The NM YRRS receives support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in cooperation with the NM PED through Grant number 1U87PS004195-01. For more information about the YRRS, including methodology, comprehensive state level reports, county level reports, and more, see www.youthrisk.org or nmhealth.org/go/youth. To have an email added, changed or removed from the mailing list, contact YRRS@youthrisk.org.