

A photograph of a school hallway. In the foreground, a shiny, reflective floor captures the light from a large glass door at the end of the hallway. Above the door, a red "EXIT" sign is visible. The door is open, leading to a bright outdoor area. To the right, a swimming pool is visible, with a wooden deck and a white canopy structure above it. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

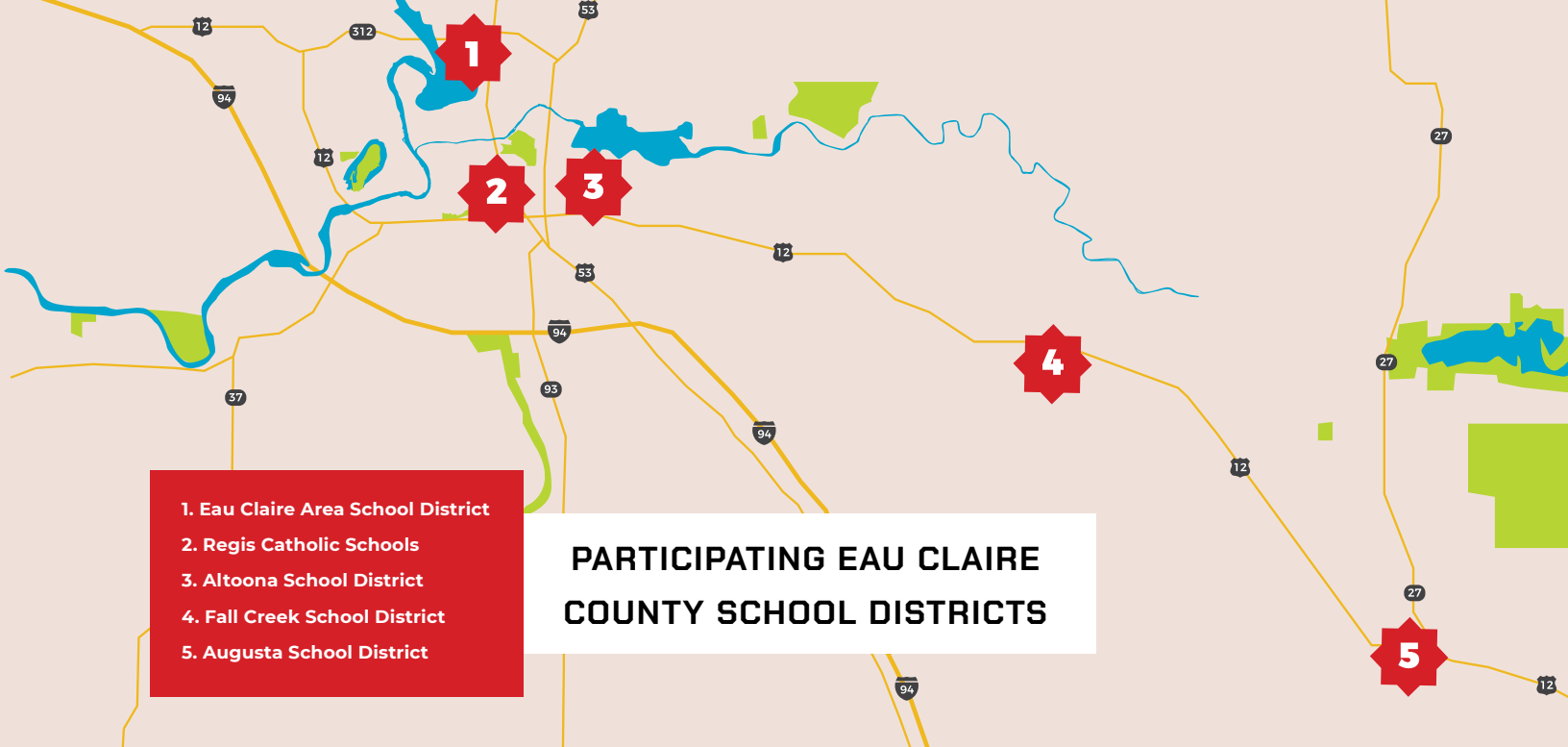
**EXIT**

# **YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY**

EAU CLAIRE COUNTY - 2017

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## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The 2017 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) highlights areas where county students are doing well, as well as areas for concern related to youth health and wellness.

As is true for youth across Wisconsin and the United States, there have been continued declines in Eau Claire County in many areas of risk for youth, including use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs. The exception to these declines is in use of **e-cigarettes or vaping**, which has increased dramatically and has far surpassed cigarettes as the most commonly used tobacco product among Eau Claire County youth. In Eau Claire County, 23.4% of high school students reported using an electronic vapor product which is about 2 times that for all Wisconsin high school students (11.6%).

**Mental health** is another key concern for youth highlighted by the YRBS results, with almost half of all high school youth reporting

experiencing anxiety (48%) and almost 1 in 3 reporting risk for depression (29%). Survey results show that especially for high school students, lack of sleep and spending many hours online and in front of screens are issues of concern for youth in Eau Claire County.

Positive trends identified in the 2017 survey results include the high level of protective factors reported by youth. Having **protective factors** in place helps adolescents cope and increases their ability to avoid risky behavior, such as substance abuse. Over 70% of both middle and high school youth report they have a trusted adult they can talk to at school, and report high levels of school belonging and participation in extracurricular activities.

# WHAT IS THE YRBS?

## BACKGROUND

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is a national survey developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 2017, all four public school districts and one private school in Eau Claire County completed the YRBS in coordination with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department.

The YRBS allows the county to compare to Wisconsin and the United States on a broad range of health behaviors that contribute to the leading causes of death, disability and social problems. YRBS topic areas include safety, mental health, alcohol, tobacco and other drug use, sexual health, and diet, nutrition and physical activity.

The YRBS is an online survey that students complete in the classroom. In Wisconsin, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provides technical assistance for survey implementation and hosts an online survey platform that school districts use to conduct the survey.

## METHODS

The YRBS is a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire. The Eau Claire County surveys included 84 questions for high school and 70 questions for middle school. Survey procedures protected the privacy of students by allowing anonymous and voluntary participation. Schools informed parents of the survey using a passive permission process, including informing them that their child's participation was voluntary.

All schools completed the survey within a two-week window from 11/6/2017 to 11/20/2017, using the DPI's online YRBS system. Schools scheduled

the survey into the school day to best meet the goal of having all students in the selected grades complete the survey.

Eau Claire County health department staff analyzed the data using Stata/SE software. For all questions, students with missing responses (e.g. skipped a question) were removed from the analysis for that question.

## READING THE REPORT

This report provides county level survey results from participating schools in Eau Claire County including Altoona, Augusta, Eau Claire, Fall Creek, and Regis middle and high school students in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades.

### HIGH SCHOOL RESULTS

This report includes comparisons for each item to high school results at the state and national level, but for Eau Claire County, high school numbers include only 10th and 12th graders compared to representation from all grades in the comparison surveys. In some cases, a national comparison is not available due to differences in survey questions included.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL RESULTS

The CDC does not have an official national middle school data set for comparison, so county middle school results are included, but not compared to state or national numbers. Also, because middle school survey questions and high school survey questions differ in many cases, direct comparisons are not always possible between middle and high school students for the county. Where they are available, middle school results are included in the topic area in yellow by high school results in this report.

# SURVEY RESULTS

1276 high school students participated in the YRBS in 2017. This represents an estimated 57% response rate for high school students in grades 10 and 12 (range 38%-85%) at the 5 participating schools

1824 middle school students participated in the YRBS in 2017. This represents an estimated 85% response rate for middle school students in grades 6 and 8 (range 75%-96%) at the 5 participating schools.

# STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

## HIGH SCHOOL

### GENDER

Female .....51.3%  
Male .....48.7%

### GRADE LEVEL

9th Grade ..... 0.2%  
10th Grade ..... 57.6%  
11th Grade ..... 2.3%  
12th Grade ..... 39.9%

### RACE/ ETHNICITY

American Indian ..... 0.9%  
Asian ..... 7.3%  
African American ..... 2.4%  
Hispanic, Latino ..... 5.5%  
Native Hawaiian/  
Pacific Islander ..... 0.8%  
White ..... 83.8%  
More than one race ..... 4.9%

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### GENDER

Female ..... 50.8%  
Male ..... 49.2%

### GRADE LEVEL

6th Grade ..... 47.7%  
7th Grade ..... 0.0%  
8th Grade ..... 52.1%

### RACE/ ETHNICITY

American Indian .....1.7%  
Asian ..... 7.0%  
African American ..... 3.6%  
Hispanic, Latino ..... 6.8%  
Native Hawaiian/  
Pacific Islander ..... 0.6%  
White ..... 82.2%  
More than one race ..... 4.9%



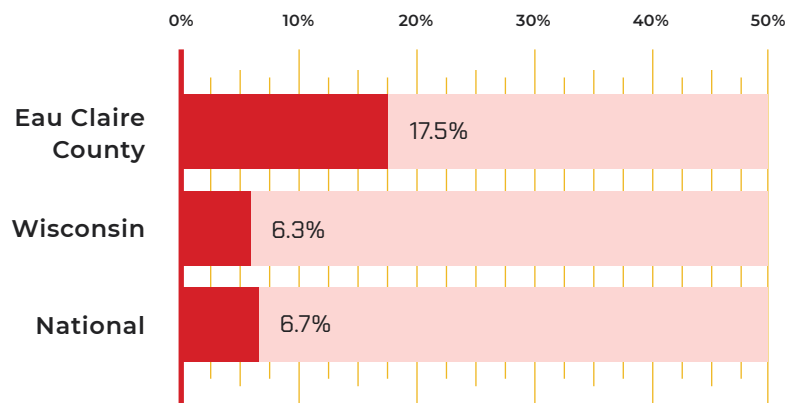
# PERSONAL SAFETY

## SCHOOL SAFETY

Compared to youth across Wisconsin and the nation, a higher percent of Eau Claire County students reported that they didn't go to school because they felt unsafe and more reported being threatened or injured with a weapon on school property. Students may feel more anxious about their safety at school against a backdrop of both national attention on school shootings and threats locally to the safety of schools. However, students in the county report fewer physical fights and more often feel safe from physical harm compared with students statewide.

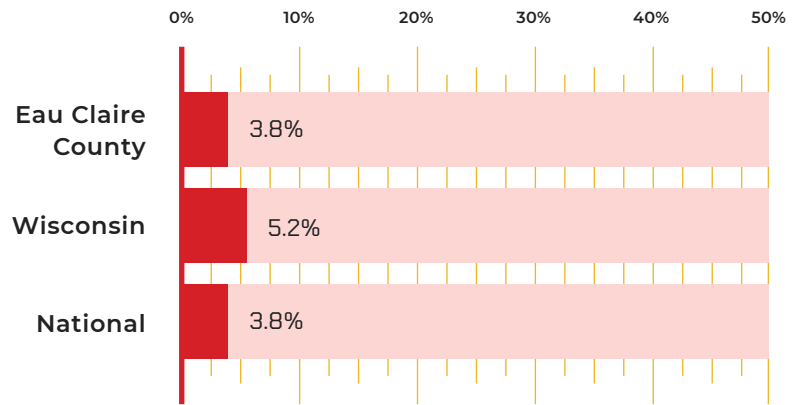
during the past 30 days...

**% did not go to school one or more days because they felt unsafe**



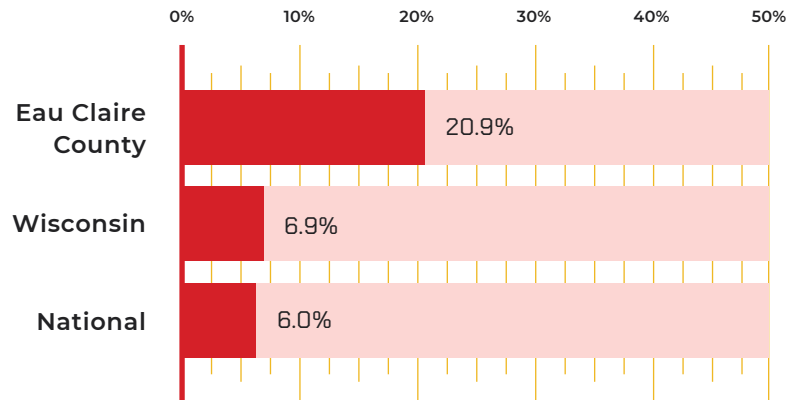
during the past 30 days...

## % carried a weapon one or more days on school property



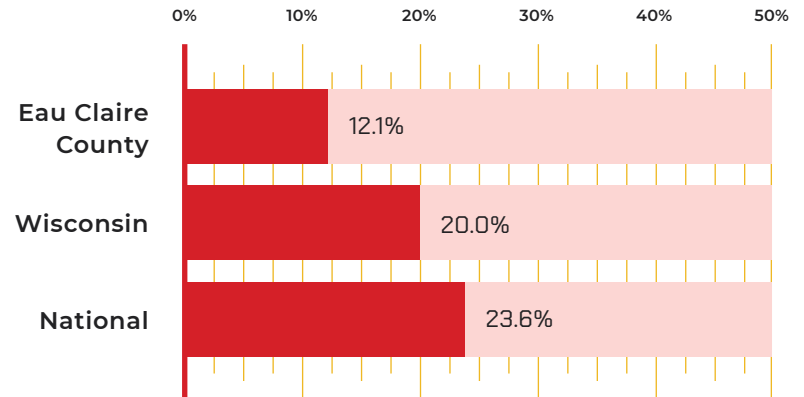
in the past 12 months...

## % threatened or injured one or more times with a weapon on school property



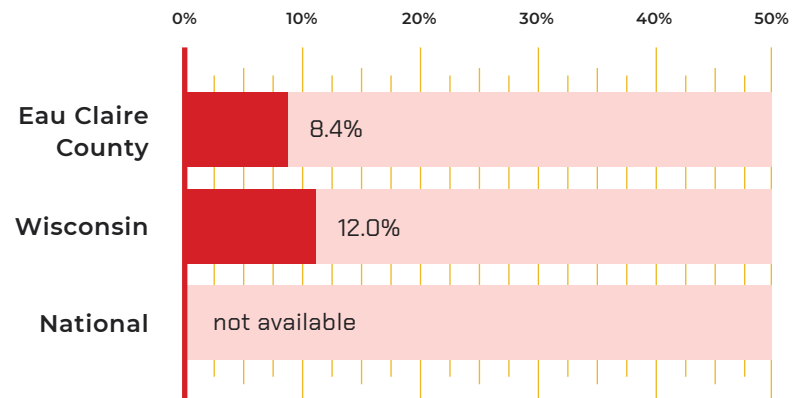
in the past 12 months...

## % in a physical fight one or more times



in the past 12 months...

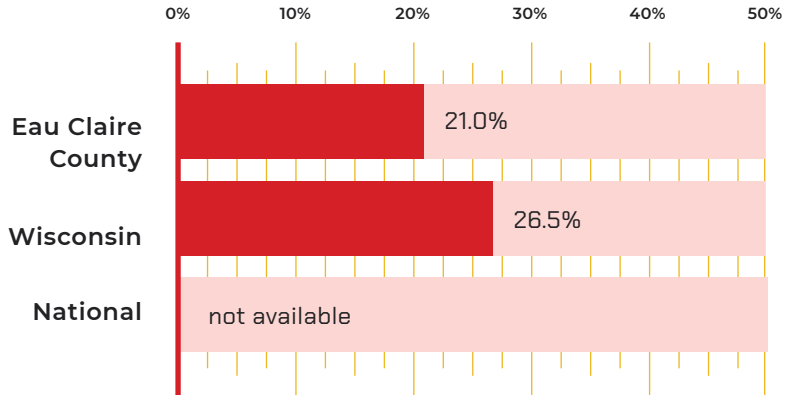
## % never or rarely feel safe from physical harm at school



## BULLYING

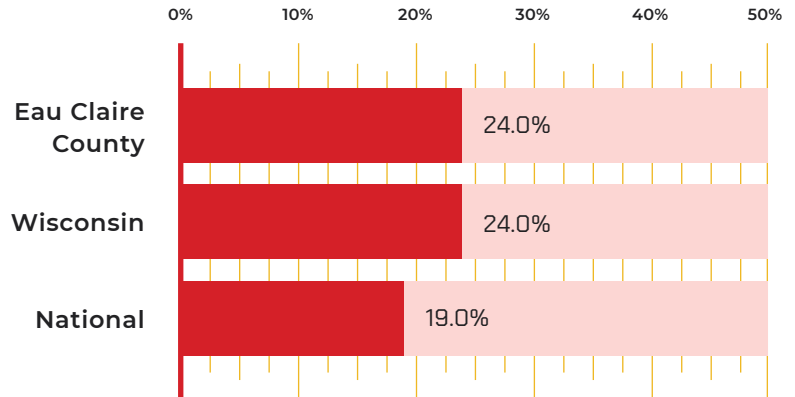
About 1 out of 4 Eau Claire County high school students reported they have been bullied in the past 12 months and 1 out of 5 students report that they have been bullied electronically. And only 1 in 5 students disagree that bullying is a problem at school, highlighting the need for bullying to remain an area focus for county schools.

### % disagree or strongly disagree that harassment and bullying is a problem at school



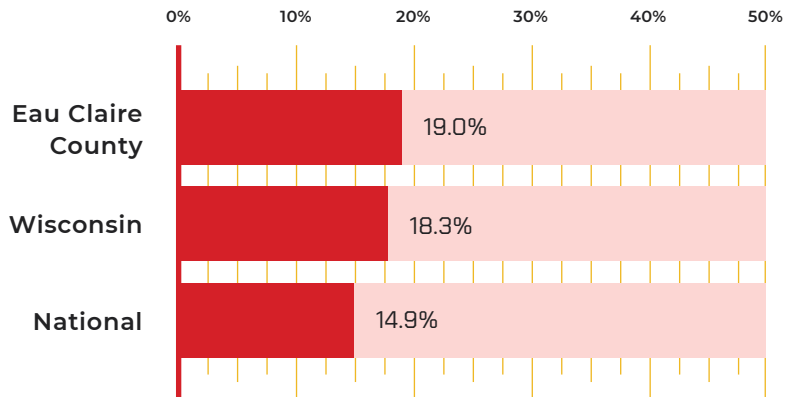
in the past 12 months...

### % bullied on school property



in the past 12 months...

### % electronically bullied



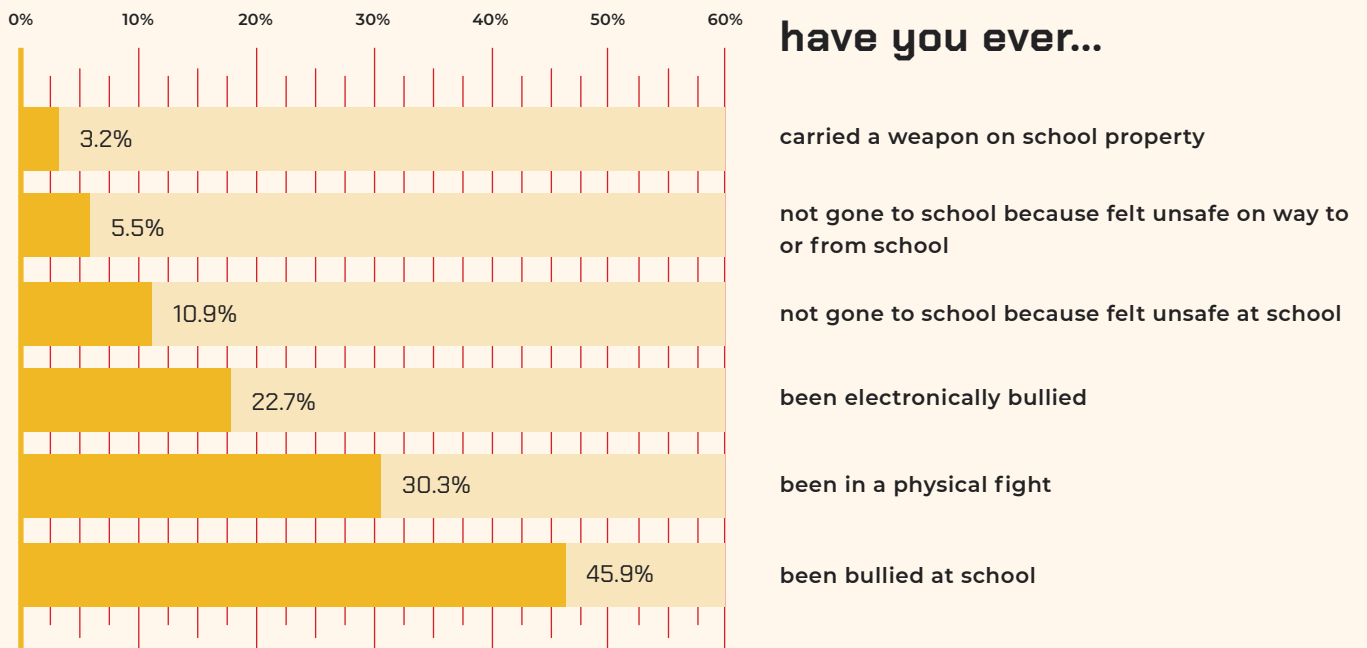


## \* Focus on... School Safety

When students feel unsafe at school, it can negatively affect their health and well-being as well as their academic performance. **What can we do to help youth feel safe?** Some ways to improve school safety include creating a positive school climate, strengthening mental health services, supporting evidence-based family and community violence prevention programs, and addressing bullying and harassment.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: SAFETY & BULLYING

Overall, a majority of Middle School students report feeling safe at school. Like high school students, middle school students in Eau Claire County report bullying at school and online. Overall, 45% of middle school students agree that bullying is a problem at school and 39% are not sure, leaving 16% who disagree that it's a problem.



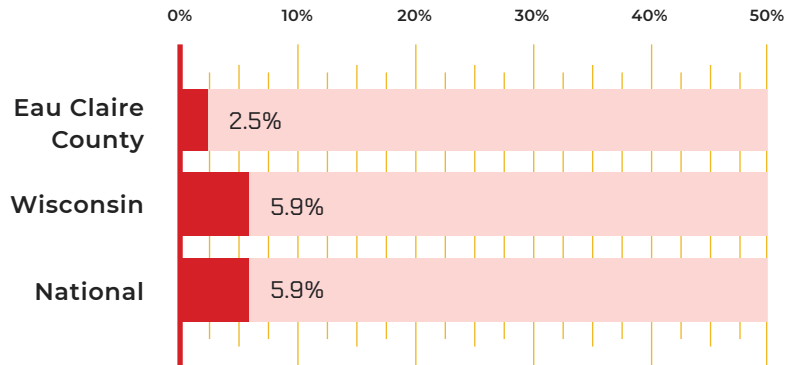
\* middle school results in table not directly comparable to high school results due to different time frame of questions.

## TRAFFIC SAFETY

High school students in Eau Claire County report that they wear their seatbelts most of the time, and slightly fewer students in the county report texting or emailing while driving compared to students across the state.

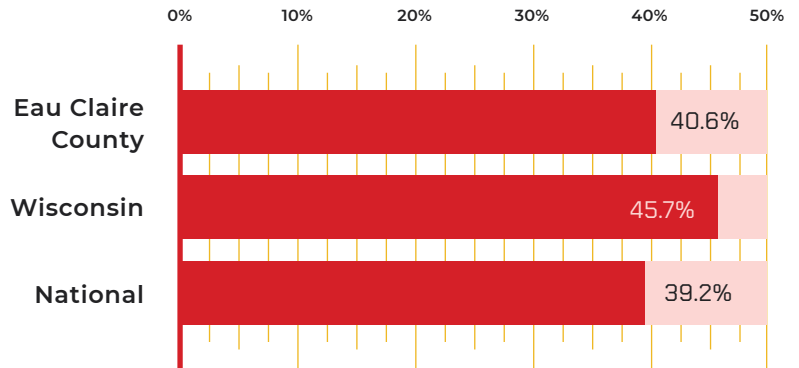
during the past 30 days...

**% rarely or never wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else**



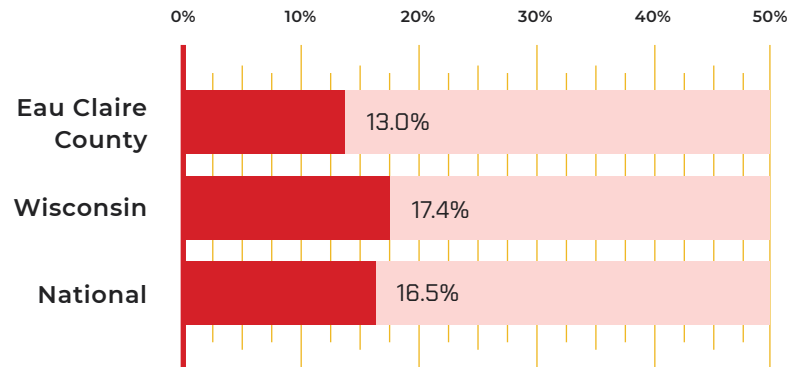
during the past 30 days...

**% texted or emailed 1 or more times while driving a car (of those who drove)**



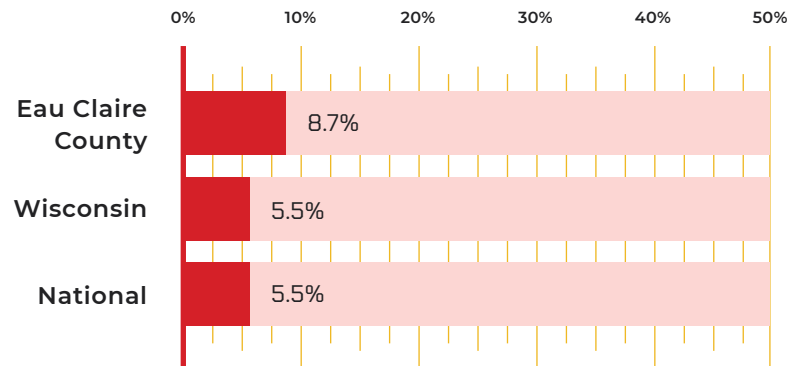
during the past 30 days...

**% rode with someone 1 or more times who had been drinking alcohol**

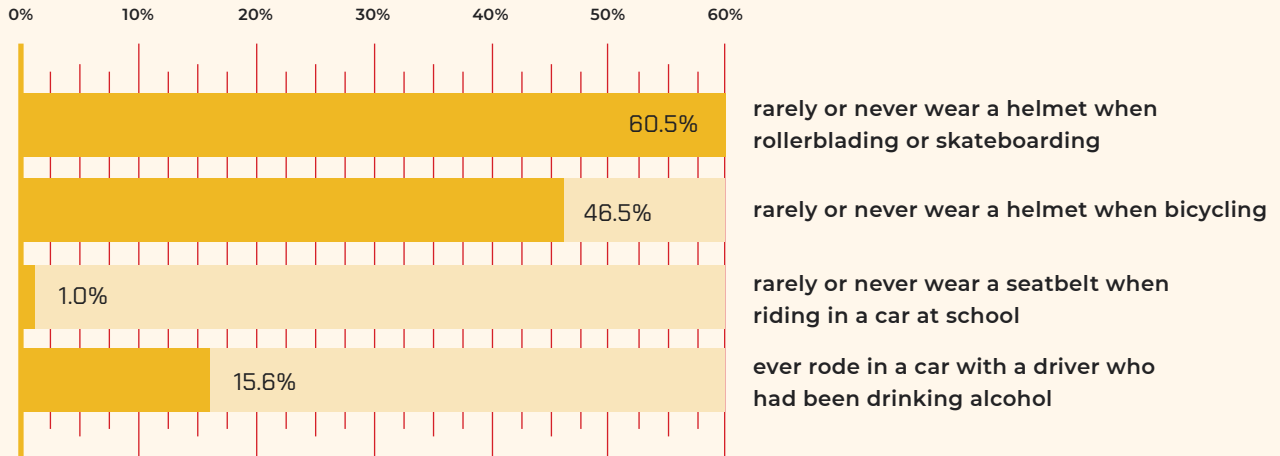


during the past 30 days...

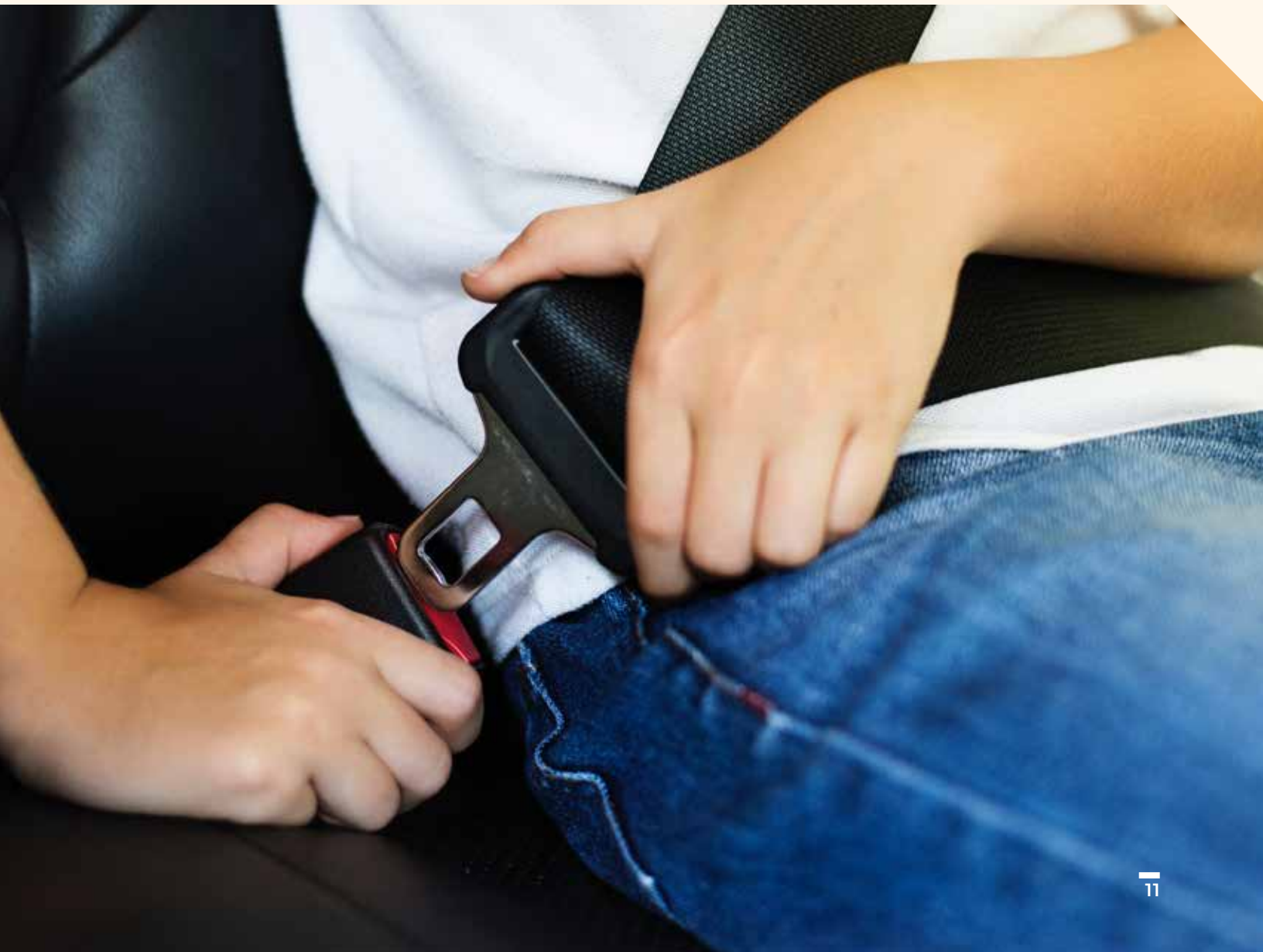
**% drove 1 or more times when they had been drinking alcohol**



## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: TRAFFIC SAFETY



*\* middle school results in table not directly comparable to high school results due to different time frame of questions.*



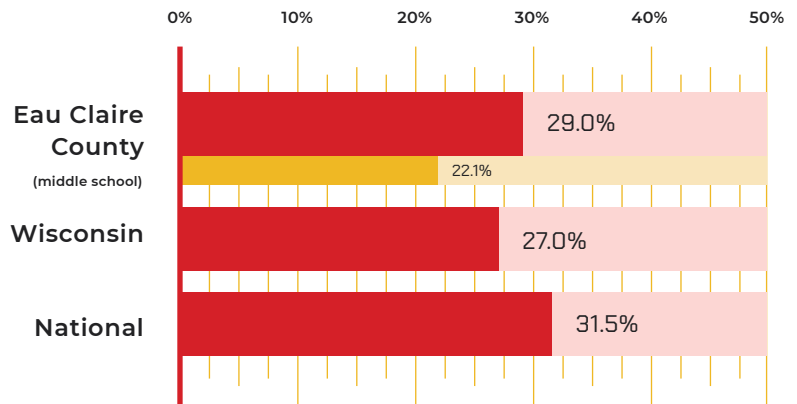
# MENTAL HEALTH



The YRBS included two questions about mental health; one measuring risk for depression, and the other asking students about anxiety. This is the first time that a question about anxiety was included locally and statewide. Almost 1 in 3 high school students reported risk for depression, and almost half indicated they have felt very anxious in the past year.

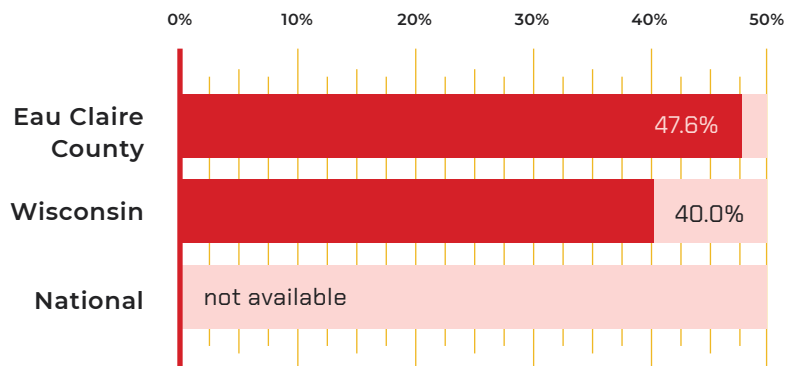
during the past 12 months...

**% felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities**



during the past 30 days...

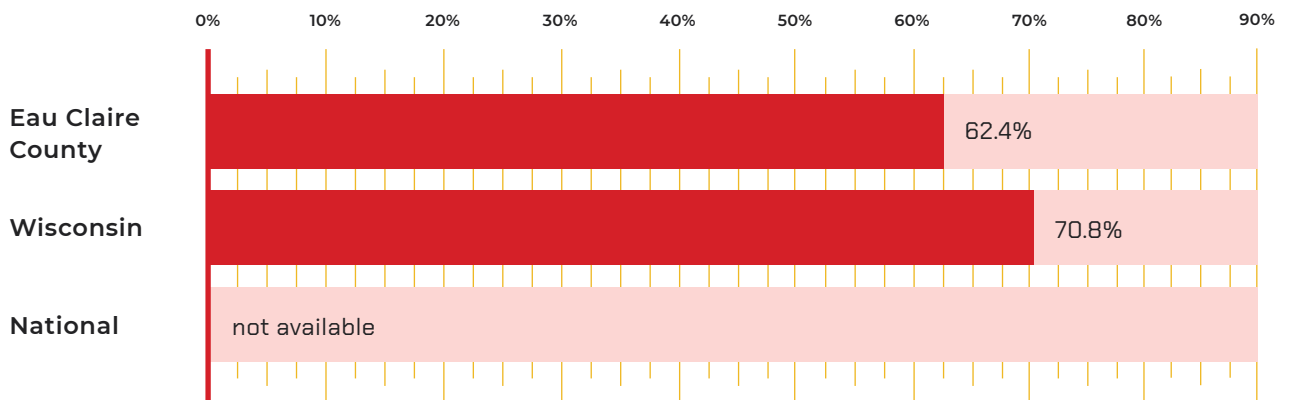
**% had significant problems with feeling very anxious, nervous, tense, scared, or like something bad was going to happen**



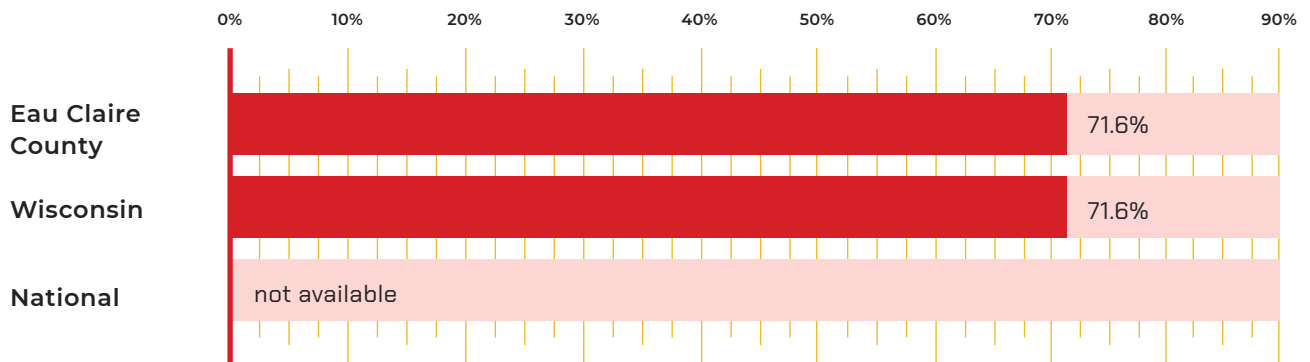
# PROTECTIVE FACTORS

When students have protective factors in place, they are more resilient, less likely to engage in risky behaviors, and more likely to succeed academically. Important protective factors include meaningful participation and having support at home, in school, and in the community. Results show that a majority of Eau Claire County students report having protective factors in place, but this remains an important area to focus on when considering the health and success of young people.

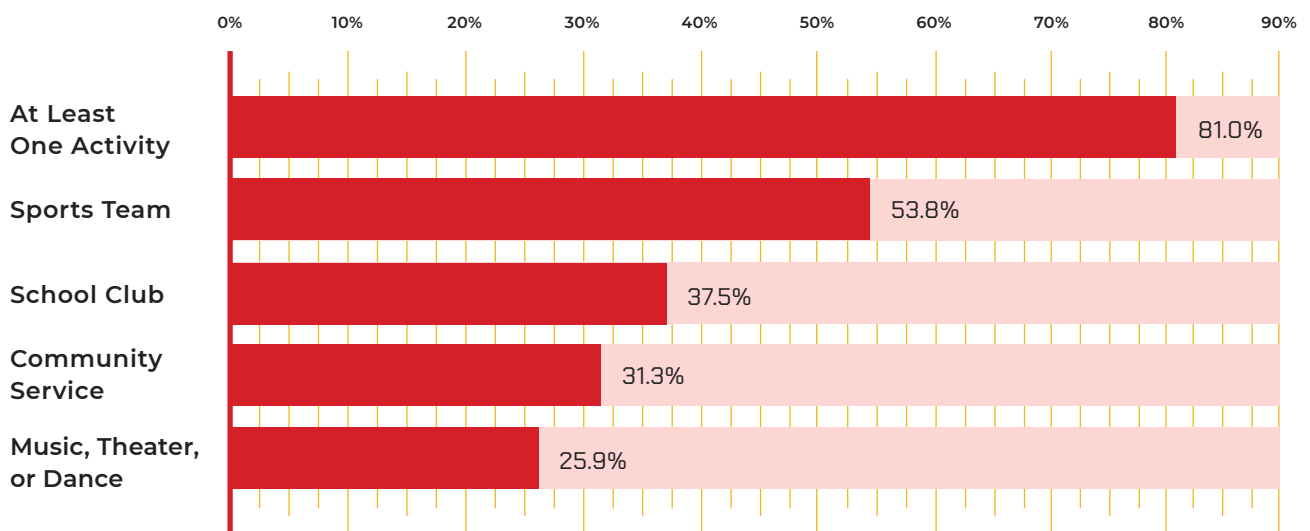
## % agree or strongly agree that they belong at school



## % with at least one teacher or other adult at school can talk to



## extracurricular activity participation



### MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Most Eau Claire County middle school students report having important protective factors in their lives, reporting that teachers care and that they feel they belong at school. More middle school students (81%) reported that they feel like they belong at school compared to high school students (62%), and those reporting having at least one teacher or other adult in school they can talk to if they have a problem is the same for both middle and high school students.

**94.4%** Family gives help/ support when need it

**83.1%** Teachers care, give a lot of encouragement

**73.1%** Have at least one teacher/ adult at school to talk to

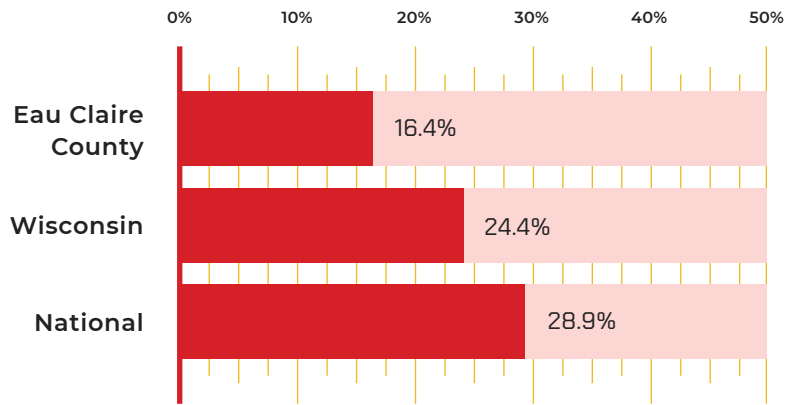
**81.5%** Feel like you belong at your school

# TOBACCO

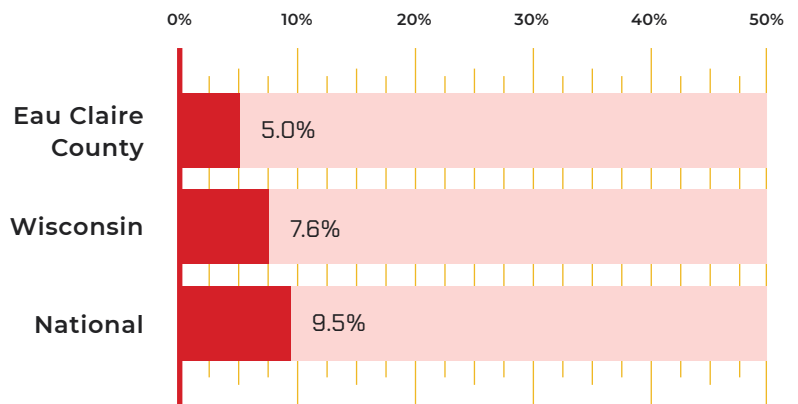


Across Wisconsin, including in Eau Claire County, youth tobacco use has declined since the early 1990s including for cigarettes, smokeless tobacco (chew), and cigars. Fewer Eau Claire County students report use of these products than at the state level. The exception is for vaping, where a higher proportion of students report vaping compared to statewide (23% vs. 11%). Also, there has been an almost 2-fold increase in e-cigarette use among youth in the county since 2015.

## % ever tried smoking cigarettes

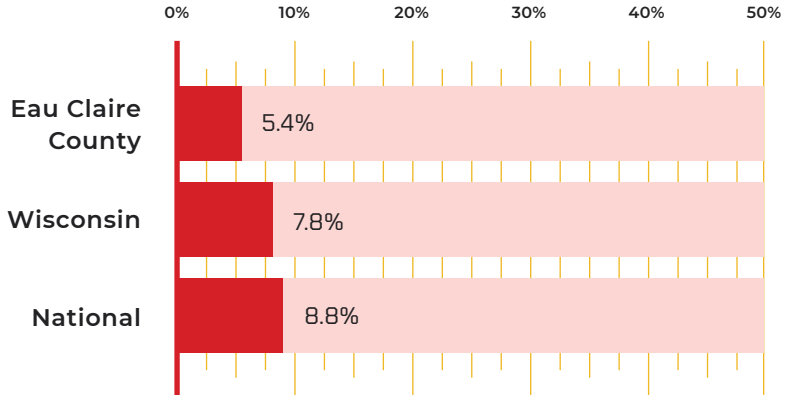


## % first tried smoking cigarettes before the age of 13



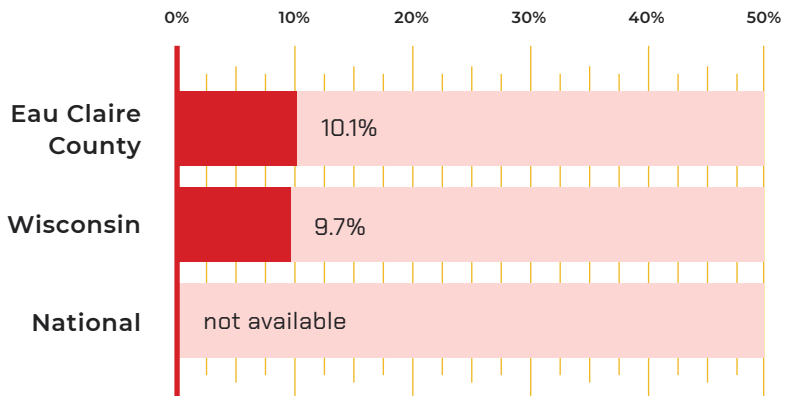
during the past 30 days...

## % smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion



during the past 30 days...

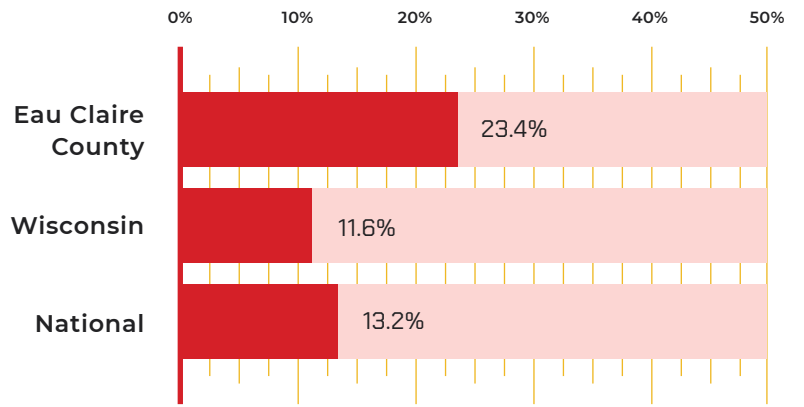
## of the students who smoked, % smoked more than 10 cigarettes per day





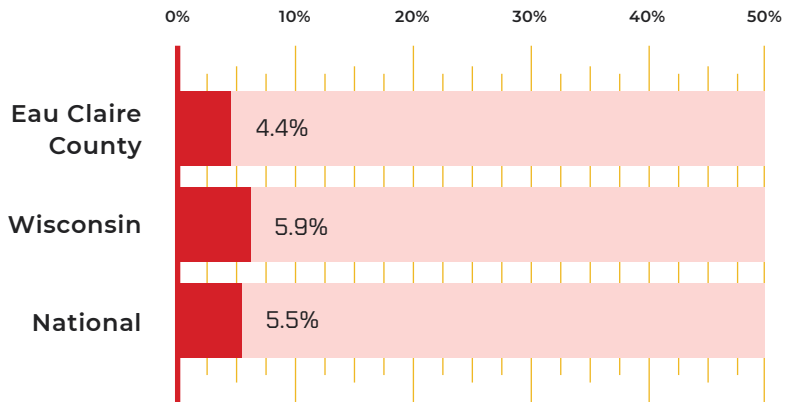
during the past 30 days...

## % used an electronic vapor product on at least one occasion



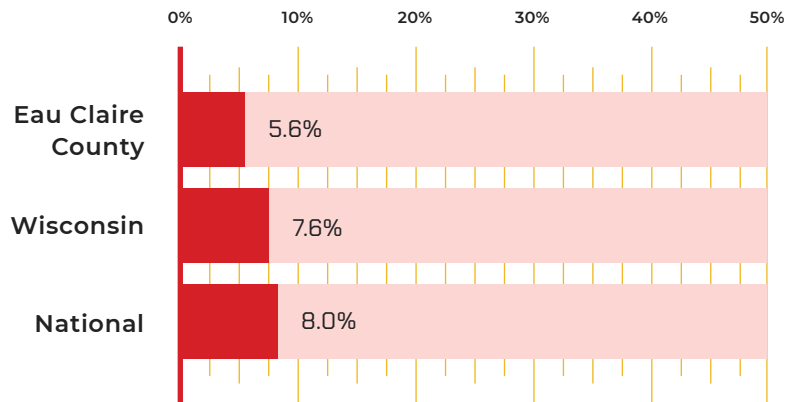
during the past 30 days...

## % used smokeless tobacco (chew, etc) on at least one occasion



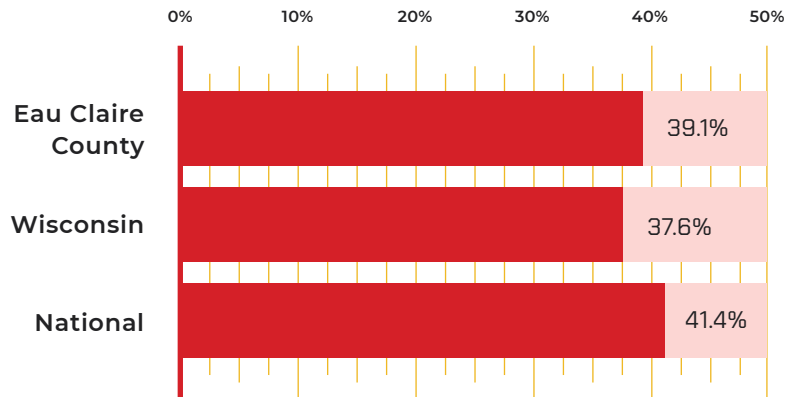
during the past 30 days...

## % smoked cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars on at least one occasion



in the past 12 months...

## of the students who smoked, % tried to quit





## Focus on... Vaping

*E-cigarette use among youth has dramatically increased over the past several years nationally, and in Eau Claire County. Five times as many Eau Claire County high school students reported vaping than smoking cigarettes in 2017.*

*E-cigarettes are battery-powered devices that allow users to inhale or “vape” into their lungs aerosolized liquid that contains nicotine, and many vaping devices also can be used to vaporize marijuana. These devices often look like pens, USB flash drives and other everyday items.*

*E-cigarettes are considered tobacco products because most of them contain nicotine, which comes from tobacco. The e-liquid in vaping cartridges contains nicotine mixed with a base (usually propylene glycol) and may also include flavorings, colorings and other chemicals. No matter how it's delivered, nicotine is harmful for youth and young adults, and users risk their respiratory systems to potentially harmful chemicals in e-cigarettes.*

*E-cigarettes are unregulated tobacco products. Nearly 500 brands and 7,700 flavors of*

*e-cigarettes are on the market and none of them have been evaluated by the FDA. Studies have found toxic chemicals, including an ingredient used in antifreeze and formaldehyde in e-cigarettes. Because the FDA doesn't regulate these products, there aren't requirements around ingredient disclosure, warning labels or youth access restrictions.*

*With no regulation in place and aggressive industry tactics such as cartoon characters and candy flavors including bubble gum, fruit loops, chocolate and strawberry, it's no surprise studies show a dramatic increase in young people using e-cigarettes.*

*Informing youth about the potential health risks of vaping is an important first step to begin to change the trend of increased e-cigarette use by Eau Claire County youth.*

*Retrieved from:*

*[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/e-cigarettes/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/e-cigarettes/)*

*<https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/>*

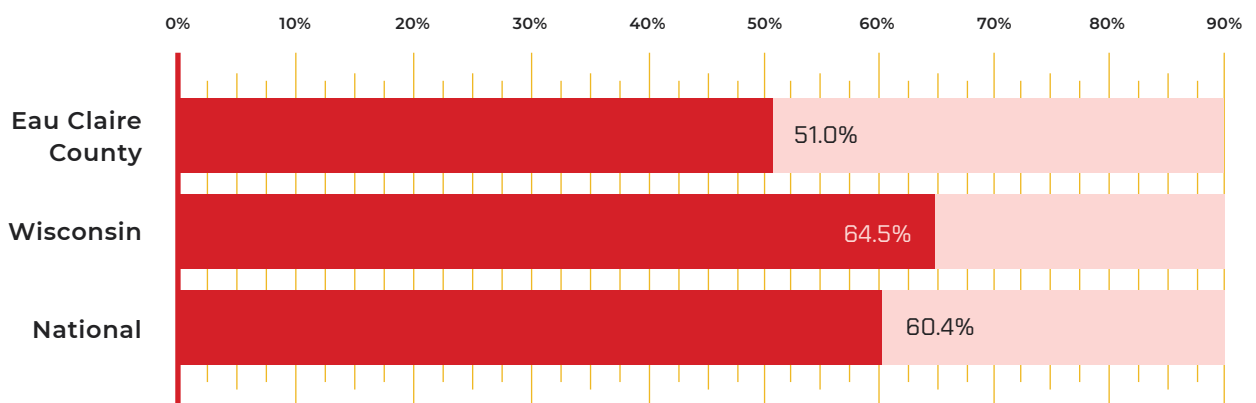
*<https://tobwis.org/>*

# ALCOHOL, MARIJUANA, & PRESCRIPTION DRUG USE

Like tobacco, alcohol use among Eau Claire County students has decreased over time, however, alcohol remains the most commonly used substance among youth in the county. One in 5 high school students report drinking alcohol during the past month and 1 in 10 report that binge drinking in the past month. Although the perception is that marijuana use has increased, results from earlier Pride surveys and the 2017 YRBS indicate that student use has decreased or remained steady from year to year. 14% of Eau Claire County high school students reported past 30-day use of marijuana in 2017. Prescription drug use is low and at similar levels to previous years.

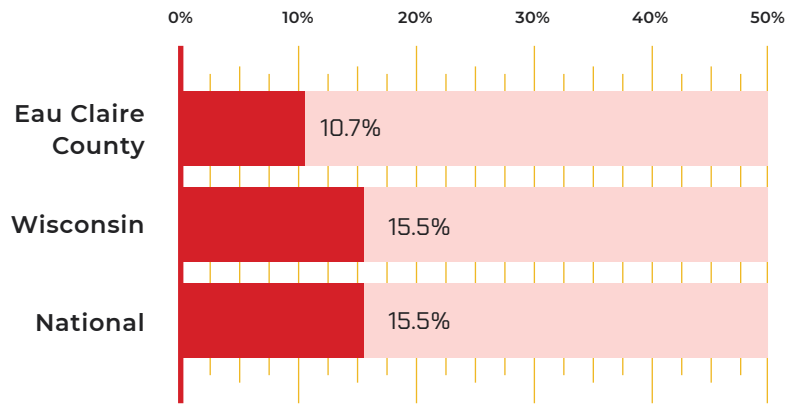
## ALCOHOL

### % ever have had at least one drink of alcohol



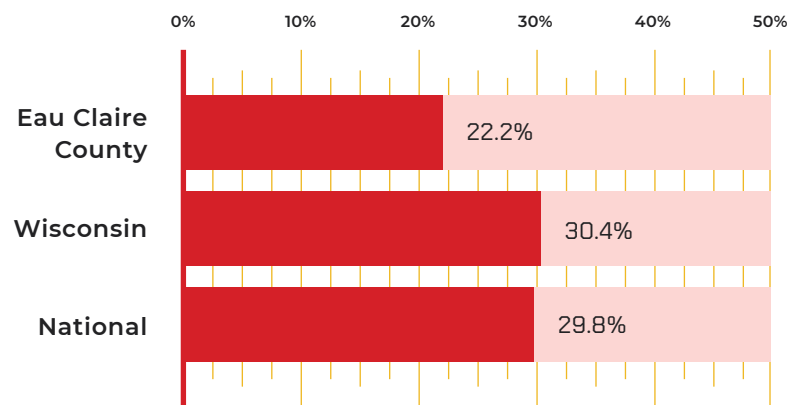
## ALCOHOL CONT...

**% had their first drink of alcohol before 13 years**



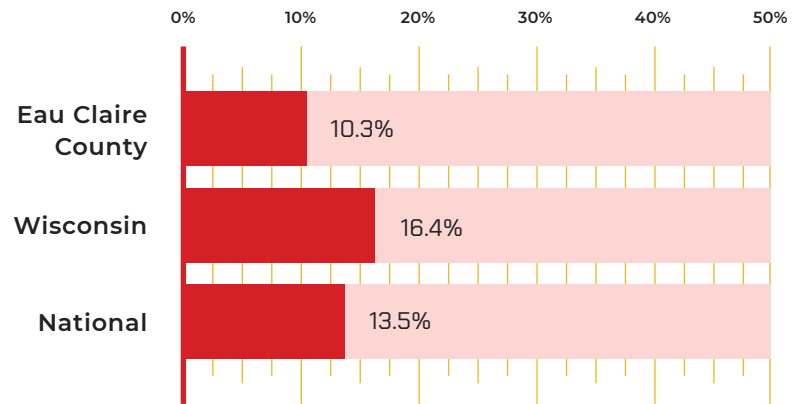
during the past 30 days...

**% drank alcohol on at least one occasion**



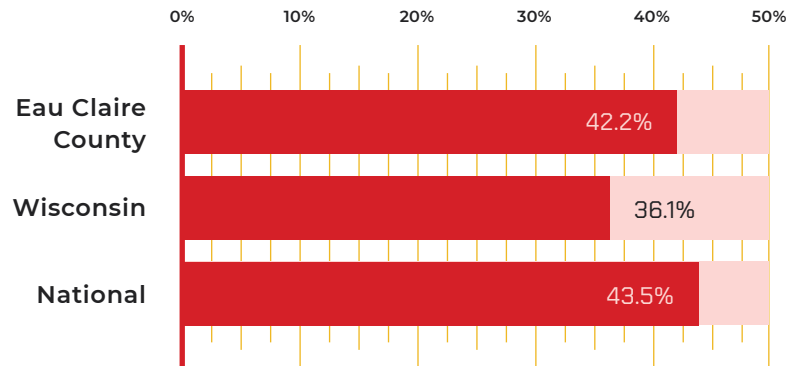
during the past 30 days...

**% binge drank on at least on at least one occasion**



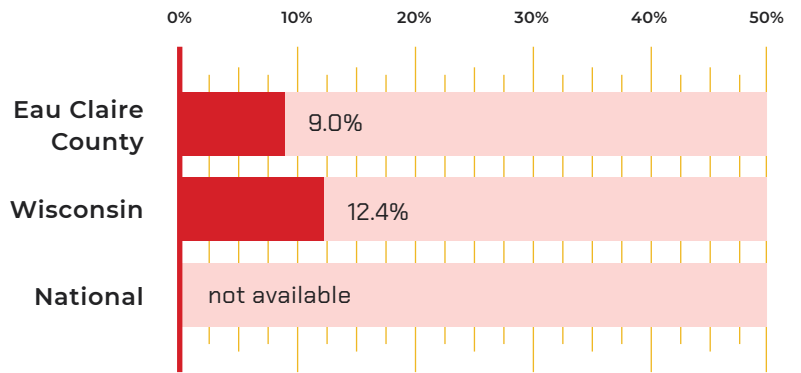
among students who drank alcohol...

**% usually got the alcohol they drank by someone giving it to them**



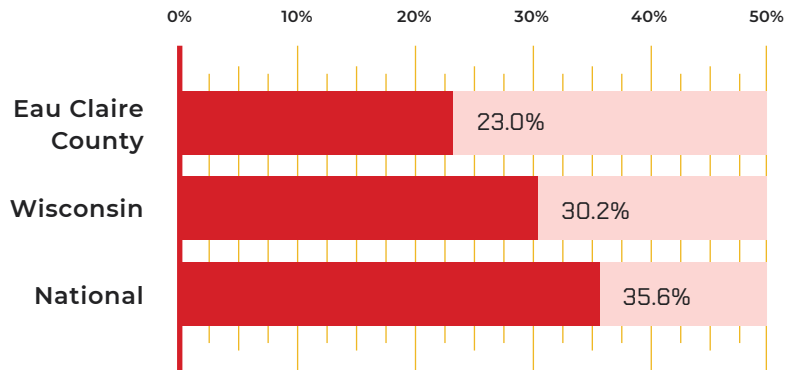
during the past 12 months...

## % attended school under the influence of alcohol or other illegal drugs

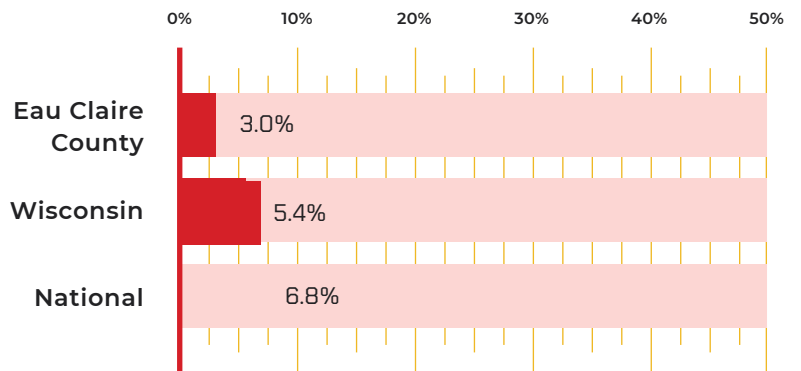


## MARIJUANA

### % ever used marijuana

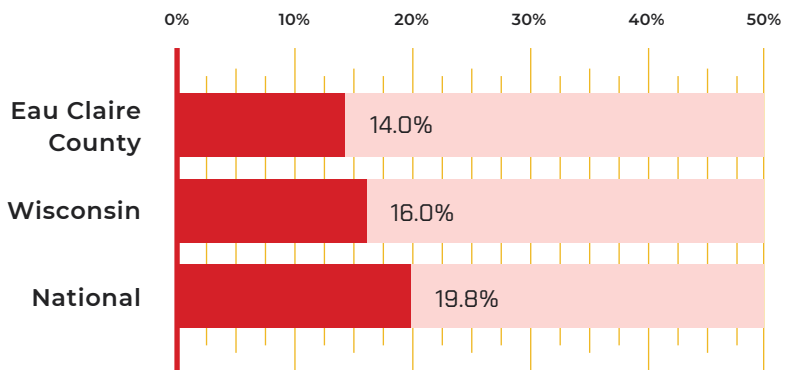


### % tried marijuana for the first time before age 13



in the past 30 days...

### % who used marijuana at least one occasion





## PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

**6.2%** took a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription in the past 30 days

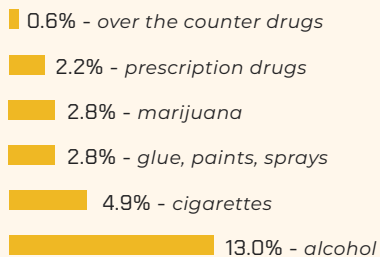
**2.4%** first took a prescription drug without a doctor's prescription before age 13

**4.7%** have ever taken an over-the-counter drug to get high

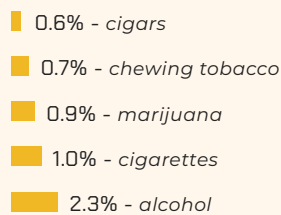
## MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS: ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND OTHER DRUG USE

*Middle school students report low levels of use of illegal substances, including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs. For many of these questions, direct comparison with high school numbers is not possible due to differences in how questions are asked. For 30 days use across substances, middle school students use was much lower than high school use.*

### ever used...



### in the past 30 days used...



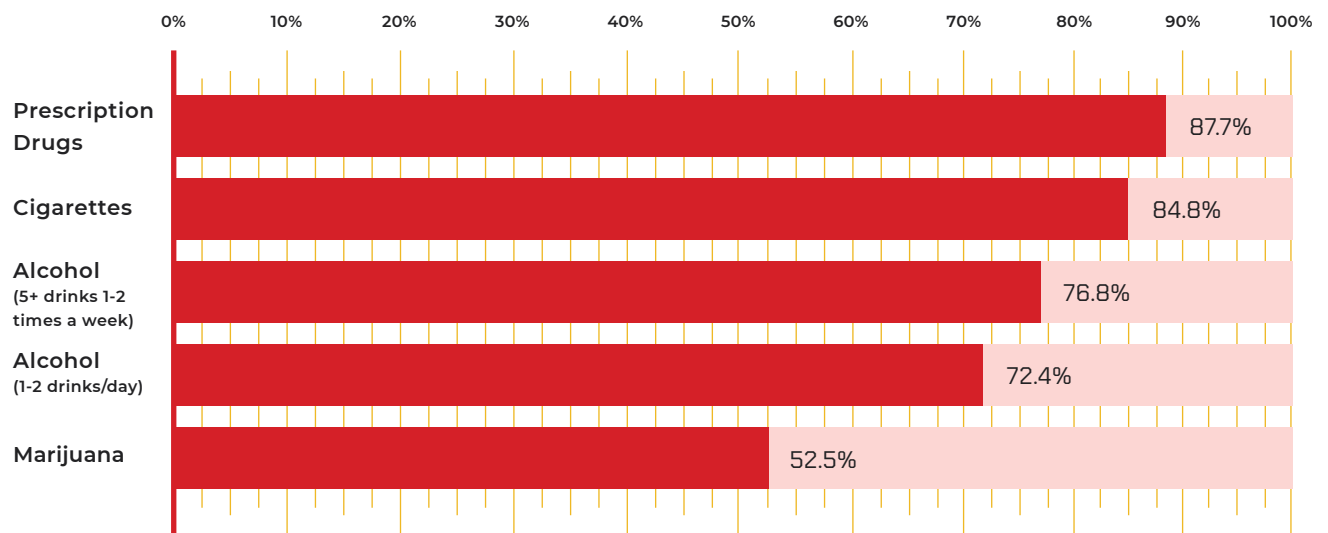
**1.9%** of Eau Claire County middle school students report that they have been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property in the past 12 months

## PERCEPTIONS OF RISK & PARENT AND PEER DISAPPROVAL OF SUBSTANCE USE

Teens who believe that using alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs is risky are less likely to use these substances. Similarly, if students believe that their parents and friends think substance use is wrong, they will be less likely to use tobacco, alcohol and other drugs.

In Eau Claire County, most high school students believe that substance use is risky, however, fewer students see marijuana use as risky compared to other substances. Additionally, fewer students believe parents and peers disapprove of alcohol and marijuana use compared to tobacco and prescription drug use.

### % who believe there is moderate or great risk to using...



### Focus on... Family & Friends

*The opinions of their parents and friends has an impact on youth alcohol and drug use.*

- *On the YRBS, the majority (over 85%) of high school students reported that their parents would disapprove of them using tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and prescription drugs.*
- *For all substances, students were less likely to report that their friends would disapprove compared to their parents.*
- *Only about half believed their friends would disapprove of marijuana use. This compares to between about 70-80% who believe their peers would disapprove if they used alcohol, tobacco, or prescription drugs.*

*Study after study shows that parents can make a big impact on their kids' choices about alcohol and drugs through open and honest conversation. For example, parents can start a conversation about alcohol by sharing alcohol facts, reasons not to drink, family rules and expectations, or how to avoid drinking in difficult situations.*

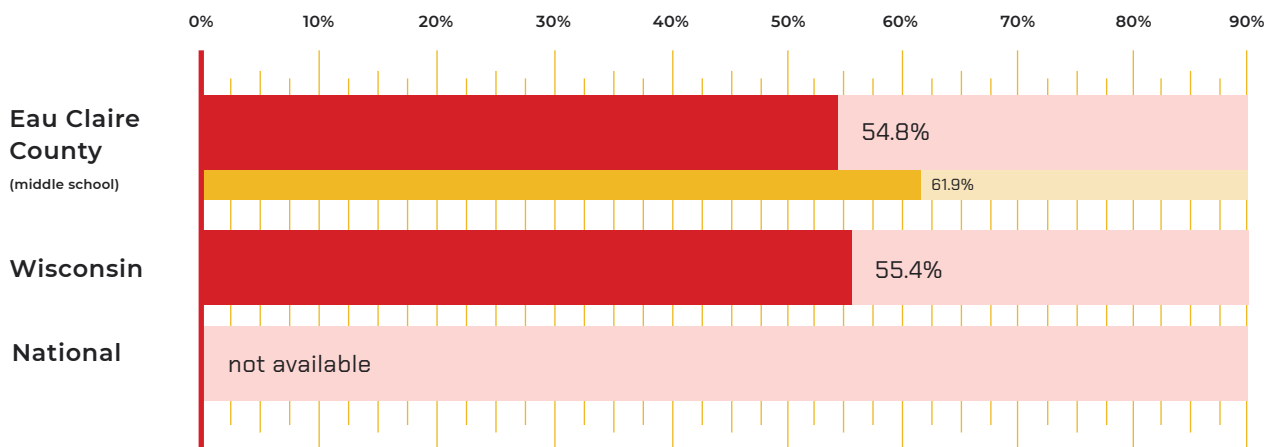
# PERSONAL HEALTH AND NUTRITION



## GENERAL HEALTH

55% of Eau Claire County high school students describe their health as excellent or very good. The state of Wisconsin reports a similar statewide decrease in this measure from previous years, which could be related to aspects of physical health such as decreased sleep and increased screen time, as well as high levels of depression and anxiety.

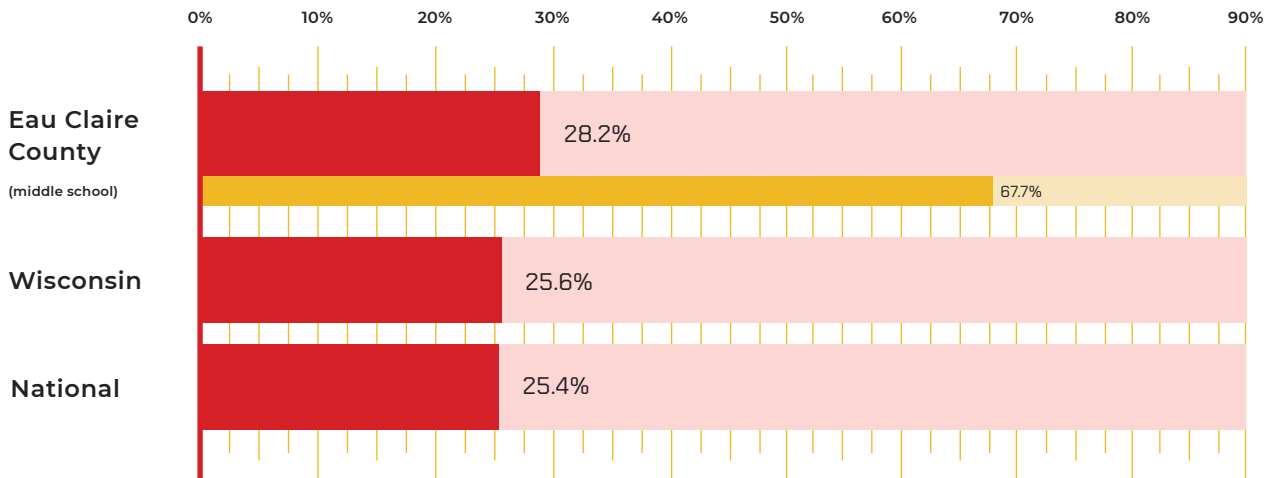
### % describe their health in general as excellent or very good





## SLEEP

### % get 8 or more hours sleep on average on a school night



### \* Focus on... Sleep

*In Eau Claire County, there is a big difference in the amount of sleep students report in middle school compared to high school. The majority of middle school students, 68%, report getting 8 or more hours of sleep, compared to just 28% of high school students.*

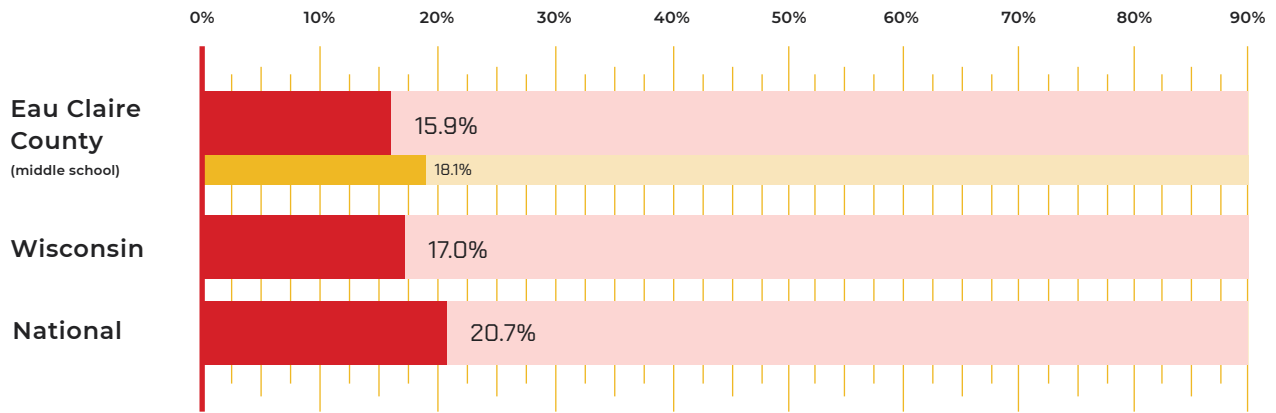
*Teens need at least 8 hours of sleep per night. Adolescents who don't get enough sleep are more likely to be overweight, not get enough physical activity, suffer from depressive symptoms, engage in unhealthy behaviors like drinking alcohol or using*

*drugs, and perform poorly in school. Some school districts have moved to later start times due to findings from studies that show this practice benefits students' health.*

*At home, parents can help their children practice good sleep habits, even into the adolescent years. For example, a consistent bedtime and rise time, including on weekends, is recommended for everyone, including children, adolescents, and adults.*

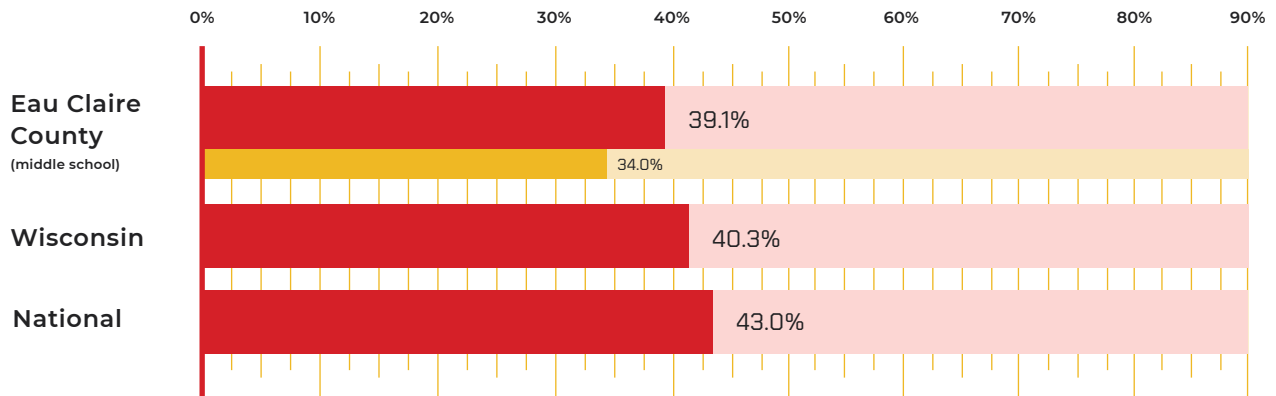
## SCREEN TIME AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### % watched 3 or more hours of TV per day



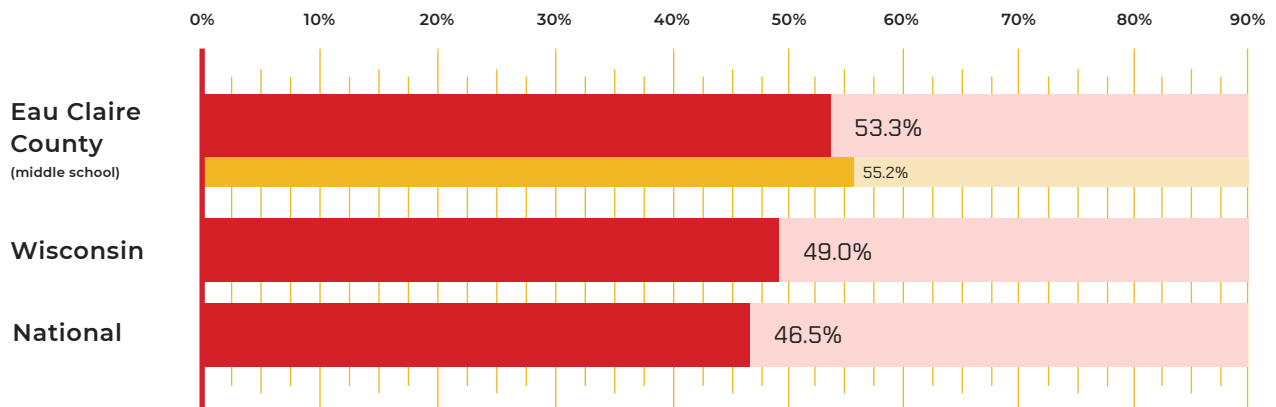
not including time spent on screens for school work...

### % played video or computer games or used a computer, smartphone, etc. for 3 or more hours per day



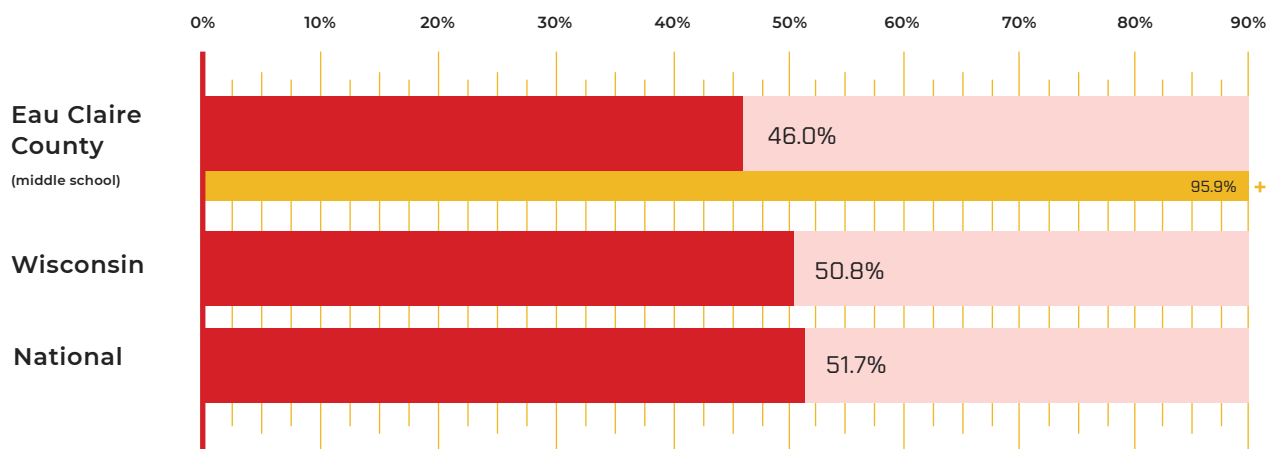
in the past 7 days...

### % physically active 60 min/day 5+ days





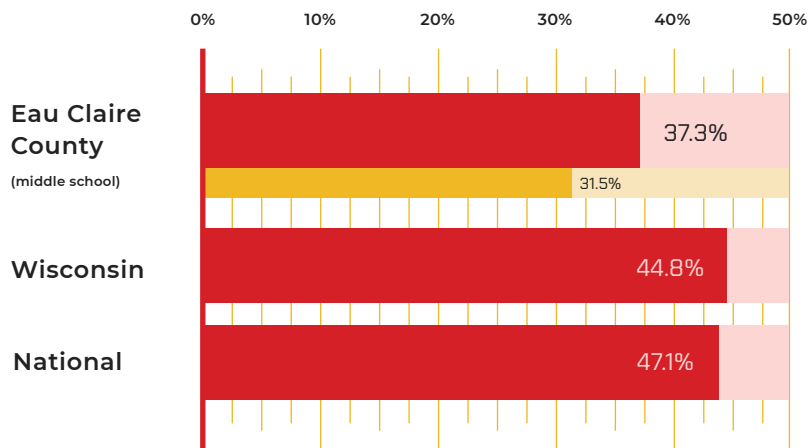
## % attend physical education classes on 1 or more days in an average week at school



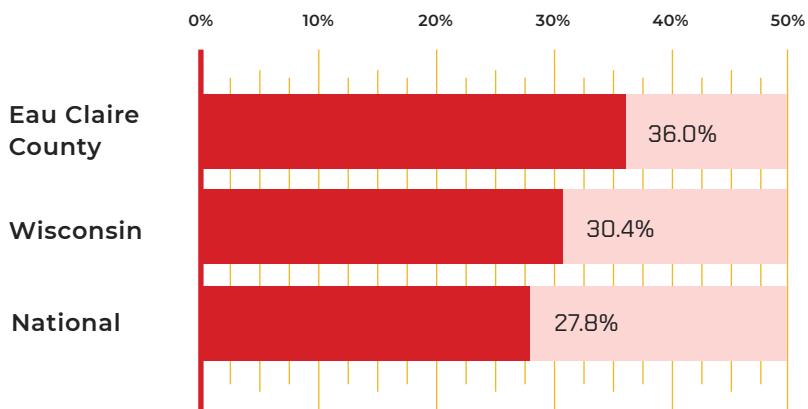


## EATING HABITS AND WEIGHT CONTROL

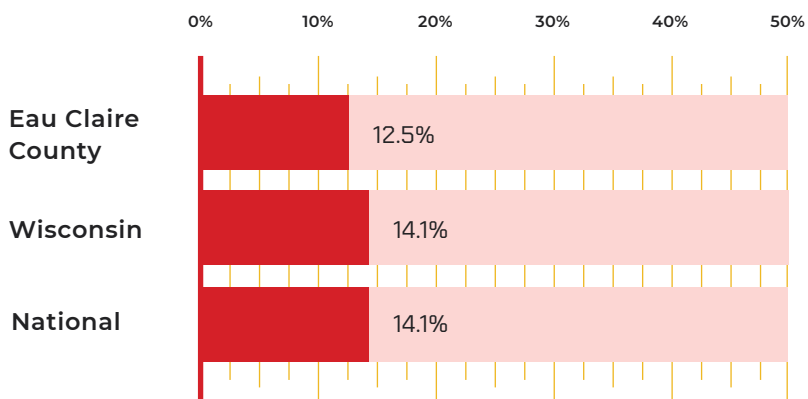
**% trying to lose weight**



**% did not drink soda in the past 7 days**



**% did not eat breakfast on any of the past 7 days**



**MIDDLE SCHOOL: EATING HABITS**

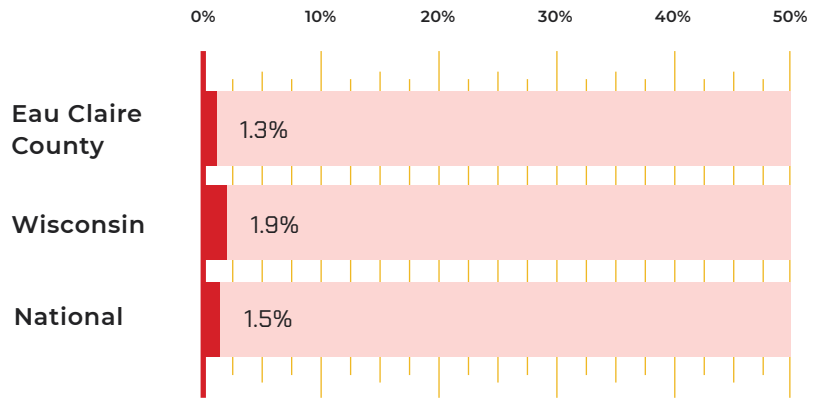
**74.7%** Ate breakfast today

**28.8%** Drank soda yesterday

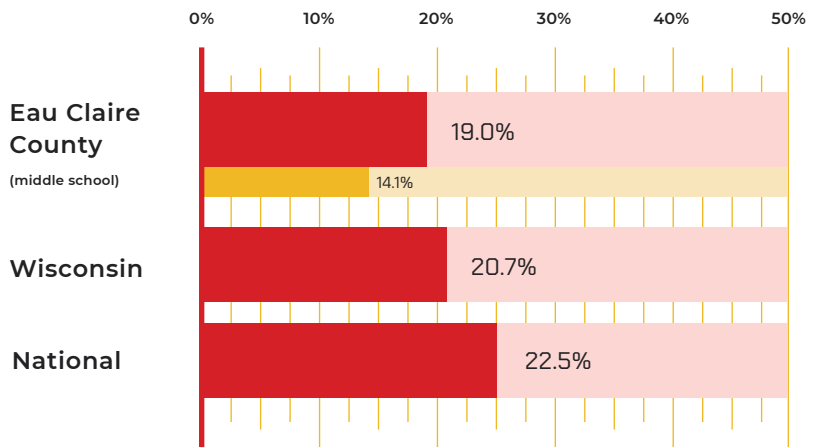
**65.6%** drank other sugar sweetened beverage in past week

**OTHER HEALTH ISSUES**

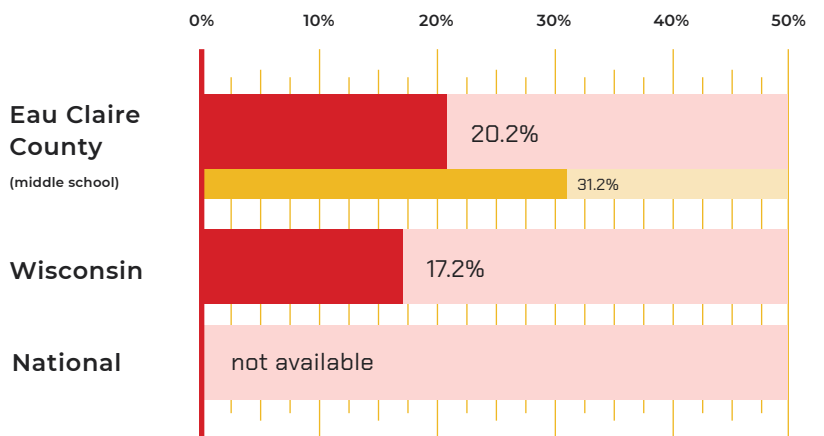
**% never saw a dentist**



**% been told by a doctor or nurse they have asthma**



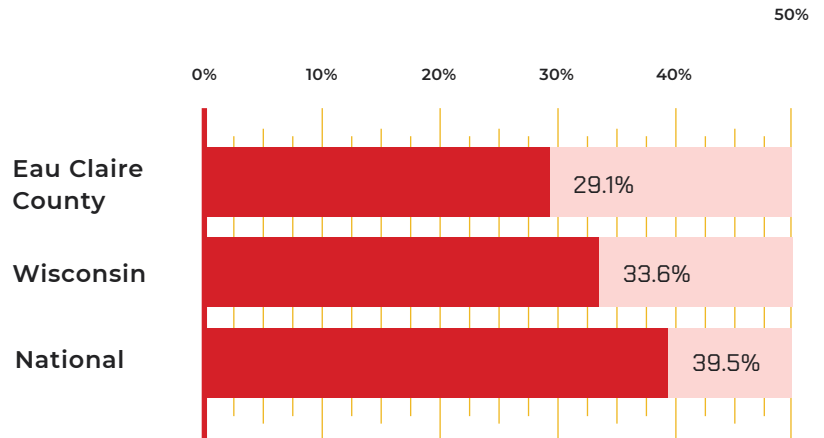
**% use sunscreen most of the time or always**



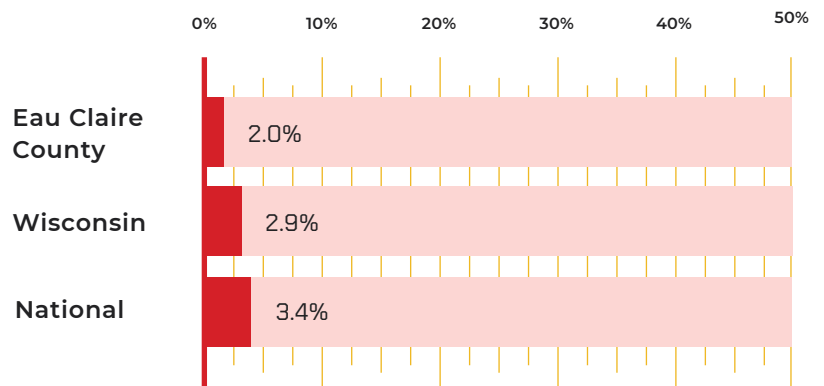


# SEXUAL HEALTH

**% ever had sexual intercourse**

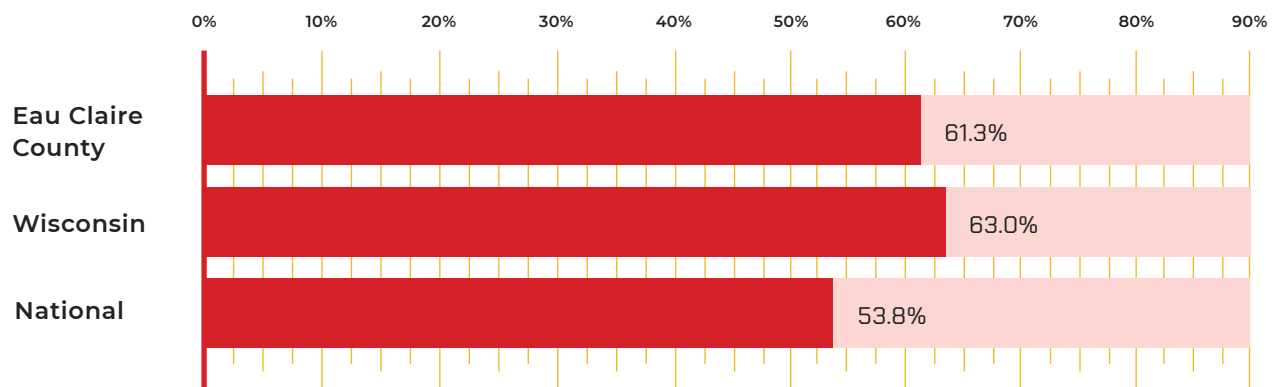


**% had sexual intercourse for the first time before age 13 years**



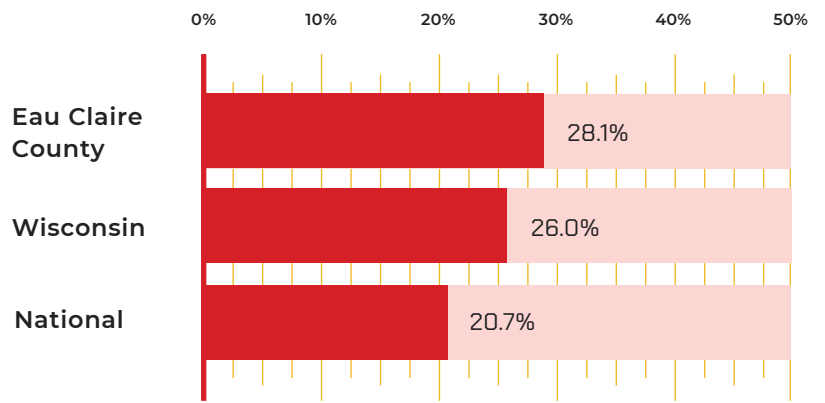
if sexually active...

**% used a condom during last sexual intercourse**



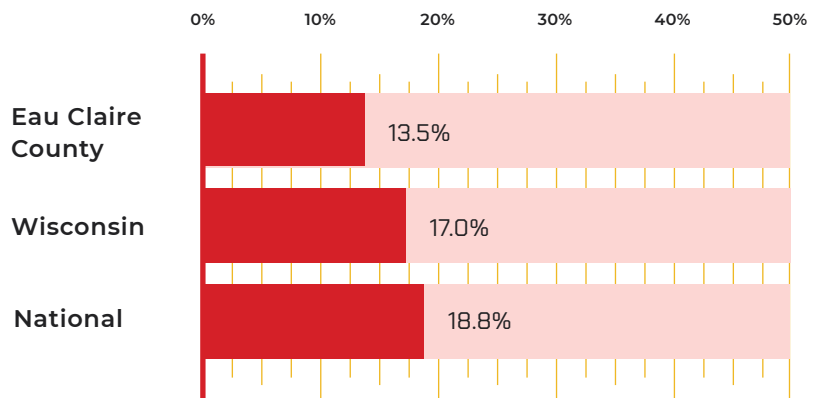
if sexually active...

## % used birth control pills before last sexual intercourse



if sexually active...

## % used alcohol or drugs before last sexual intercourse



## Focus on... Healthy Relationships

To encourage healthy dating behavior for teens, here are 5 signs of a healthy teen relationship to share with young people:

- **They give each other space to hang out with friends and family.** It's a good sign when teens are balancing all of the relationships in their lives, as well continuing to pursue hobbies and activities outside of their romantic partnership.
- **It's OK to disagree.** If one partner isn't feeling comfortable speaking their mind or seems afraid to disagree with their girlfriend/boyfriend, it could be a red flag.
- **Physical boundaries are respected.** Constant and affirmative consent is key, including not pressuring someone to drink alcohol or do

drugs in an effort to engage in sexual activity.

- **They are in control.** Teens should feel able to wear clothing they choose, go where they want to go, and do what they like to do – without fear of a partner being upset or trying to control them.
- **They exhibit healthy texting behavior.** As long as the texts aren't excessive or interrupting daily life, it's not necessarily what we call "textual harassment." If texts become abusive or if someone is pressuring for them to send private photos, it might be time to talk digital boundaries.

[from futureswithoutviolence.org](http://futureswithoutviolence.org)

This report was prepared by the Eau Claire City-County Health Department in partnership with Eau Claire County schools, with support from the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention and Eau Claire Healthy Communities.

To request additional copies, email [echhealth@co.eau-claire.wi.us](mailto:echhealth@co.eau-claire.wi.us)