



**Ipsos Reid**



## **BC Children's Hospital Foundation Research on Child Health**

**- Final Report (Quantitative Research) -**



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## **Background, Objectives and Methodology**

# Background, Objectives, Methodology

- ◆ The BC Children's Hospital Foundation (BCCHF) and Child Health BC sought to gain an understanding of BC children's attitudes and perspectives on health care.
- ◆ The Foundation commissioned Ipsos Reid to conduct qualitative and quantitative research with BC children 10 to 16 years of age.
  - Qualitative Research:
    - 4 workshops (Vancouver, Victoria, Prince George, Kelowna).
    - April 14-15, April 21-22, 2007.
    - Gain understanding of children's perceptions of own health.
    - Use qualitative findings to prepare quantitative questionnaire.
  - Quantitative Research
    - Online survey of 673 BC Children ages 10-16
    - May 22<sup>nd</sup> – June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007
    - Drawn from households in BC on Ipsos' I-Say online panel
    - Obtained parental consent for children to participate
    - Margin of error:  $\pm$  3.8 percentage points, at 95% confidence interval.
- ◆ Following is a report of the quantitative research.

# Sample

	FINAL UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE		FINAL WEIGHTED SAMPLE	
	#	%	#	%
<b>Age</b>				
10-12	314	46.7%	290	43.1%
13-14	184	27.3%	187	27.8%
15-16	175	26.0%	196	29.1%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	347	51.6%	353	52.5%
Female	326	48.4%	320	47.5%



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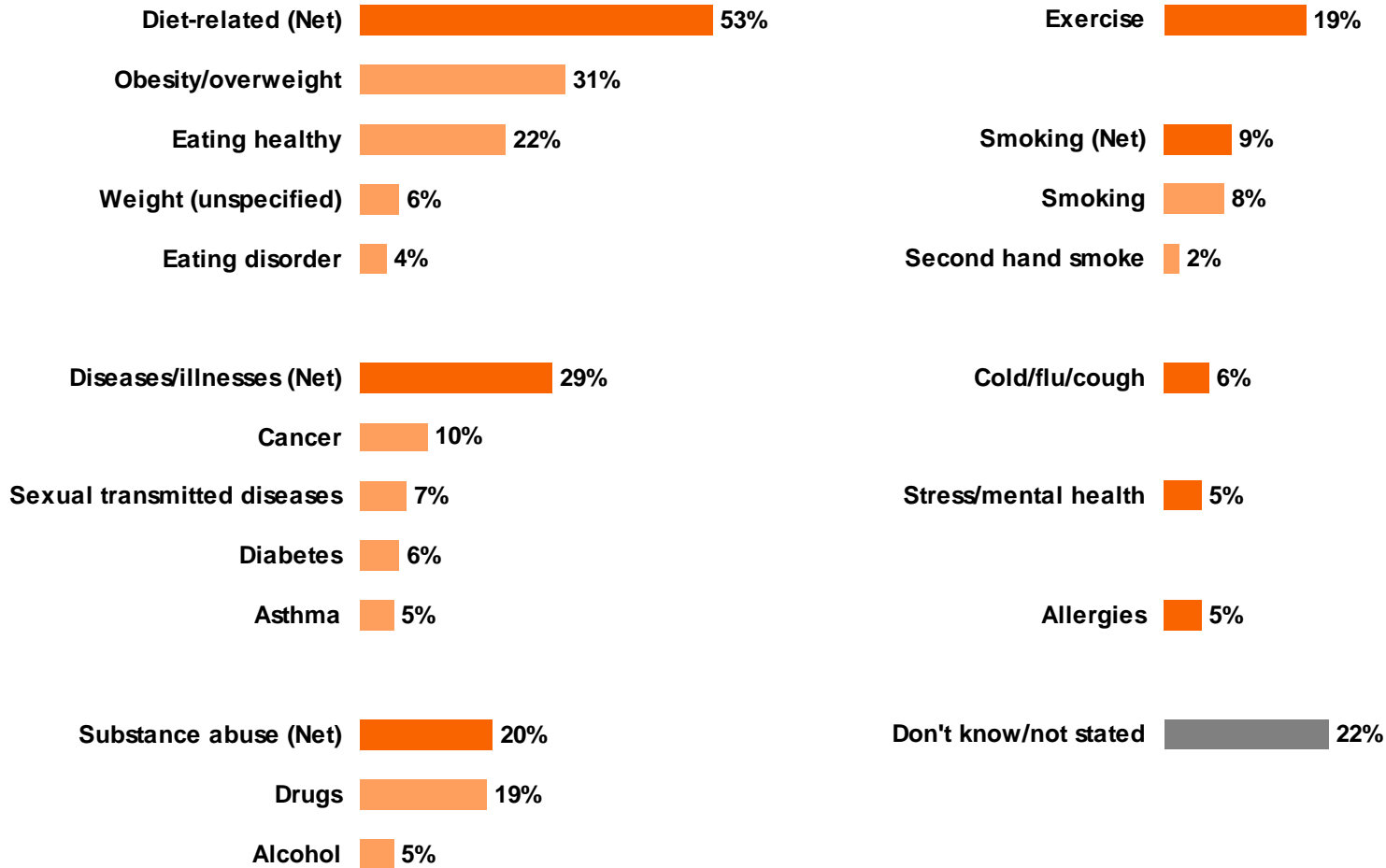
## **Section 1: Perceptions of Health Issues for Children**

# Perceptions of Top Health Concerns For Children

- ◆ Children ages 10-16 believe that diet-related concerns are the top health concerns facing children these days. Obesity and eating healthy are the most frequently mentioned items under this heading.
- ◆ Diseases and illnesses are also concern; roughly one third of children mention that diabetes, cancer, STDs and asthma are considered health concerns for children.
- ◆ Substance abuse and exercise are considered quite important; one-in-five children enlist both items as top concerns.
- ◆ Interestingly, youth view substance abuse as a much greater concern for children's health than smoking:
  - Two times as many children mentioned substance abuse compared to smoking (20% vs. 9%).
- ◆ A number of children, 1-in 5, simply do not know or cannot name an important health concern for children.

# Perceptions of Top Health Concerns For Children

Q1. Overall, what would you say are the three most important health issues facing children your age these days?



Base: All respondents (n=673)

## Perceptions of Top Health Concerns For Children (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ There is some variation among children's top health concerns across regions:
  - Substance abuse is identified as a bigger health concern on Vancouver Island than in the Lower Mainland (24% vs. 16%)
  - Mental health/stress issues are more prevalent in the Southern Interior than in the Lower Mainland (5% vs. 1%)
- ◆ Gender differences are also evident:
  - Not surprisingly, more girls than boys see eating disorders as a health concern (7% vs. 1%)
- ◆ Age matters too:
  - Eating healthy is seen to be a top health concern by more children 10-12 than 13-16 year olds (27% vs. 18%)
  - Whereas weight is a bigger concern among 13-16 year olds (9% vs. 3% for children aged 10-12)

## Perceptions of Top Health Concerns For Children (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Perceptions of your state of health also affect what children believe are top health concerns among youth:
  - Those who believe that their state of health is fair, poor or very poor are more likely to believe that obesity is a top health concern for children than those with excellent health (39% vs. 26%).

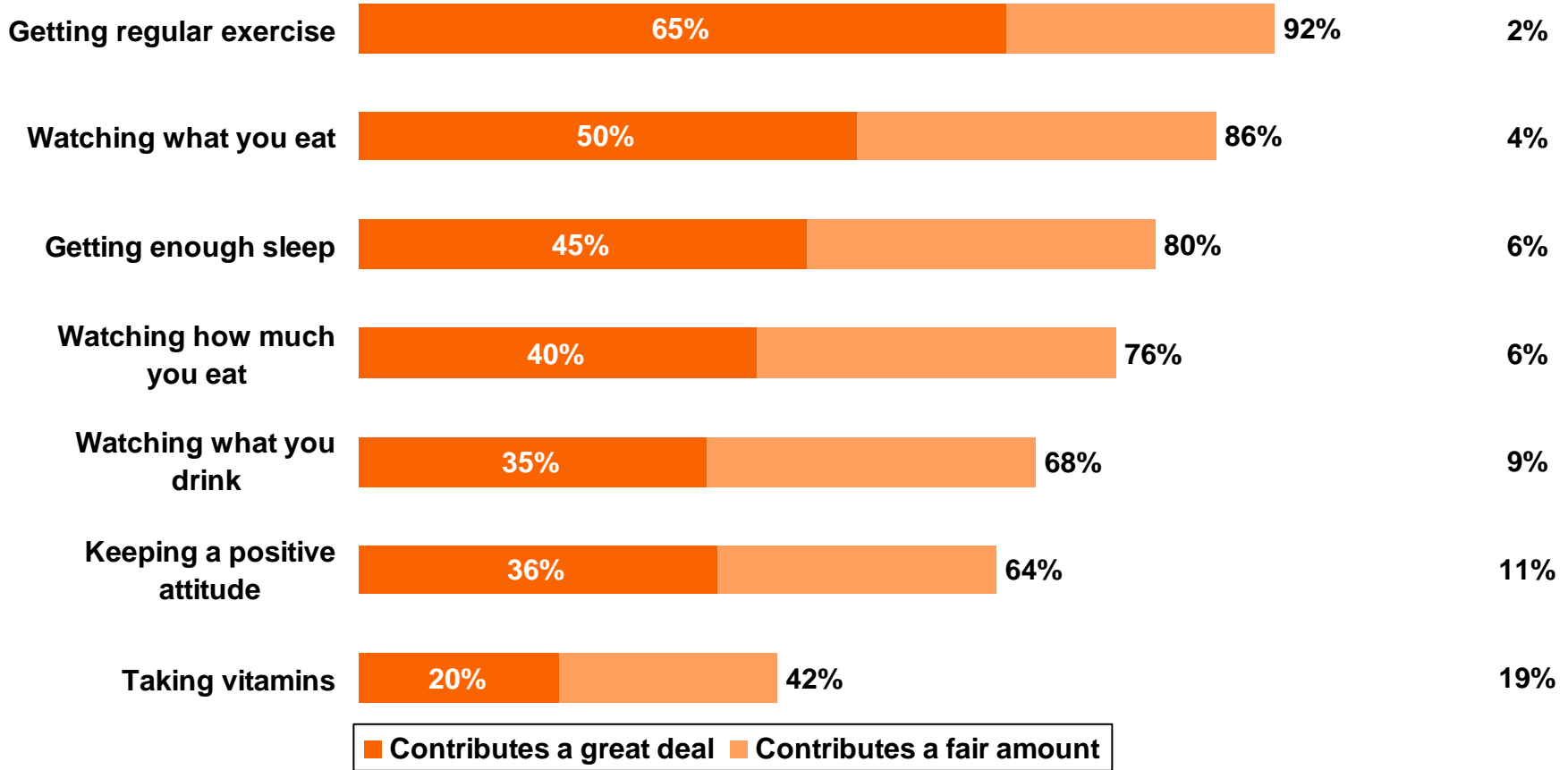
## What Contributes to “Good Health”

- ◆ There is a strong consensus among BC children that exercise, diet, and sleep are the top 3 contributors to good health. Three-quarters or more cite that these factors contribute strongly (either a great deal or a fair amount) to good health.
  - Notably, one-half to two-thirds of children surveyed felt that getting regular exercise and watching what they ate contributed “a great deal” to good health. This was above all other factors.
- ◆ Interestingly, children believe more strongly that watching *what* you eat affects your health more than watching *how much* you eat.

# What Contributes to “Good Health”

Q2. Please tell us how much you think each of the following contributes to “good health” in people your age?

Contributes little or not at all



Base: All respondents (n=673)

# What Contributes to “Good Health” (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ There are variations in responses among young males and females:
  - Girls are more likely than boys to believe strongly that watching what you drink and keeping a positive attitude are important to good health.
- ◆ Age also matters:
  - Getting regular exercise is seen as a stronger factor for good health among 15-16 year olds than children 10-12 (95% vs. 90%) though both still strongly agree that it is important.
  - Taking vitamins is also viewed more importantly among 10-12 year olds than 13-16 year olds (49% vs. 37%).
- ◆ Differences in household income do affect the perception that taking vitamins is good for your health, though relative to other factors taking vitamins is not viewed as overly important.
  - Slightly less than half of children in households with less than \$80K in household income believe that vitamins contribute strongly to one’s good health vs. only a third of children in households making more than \$80K who believe the same thing.

## What Contributes to “Good Health” (Subgroup Differences)

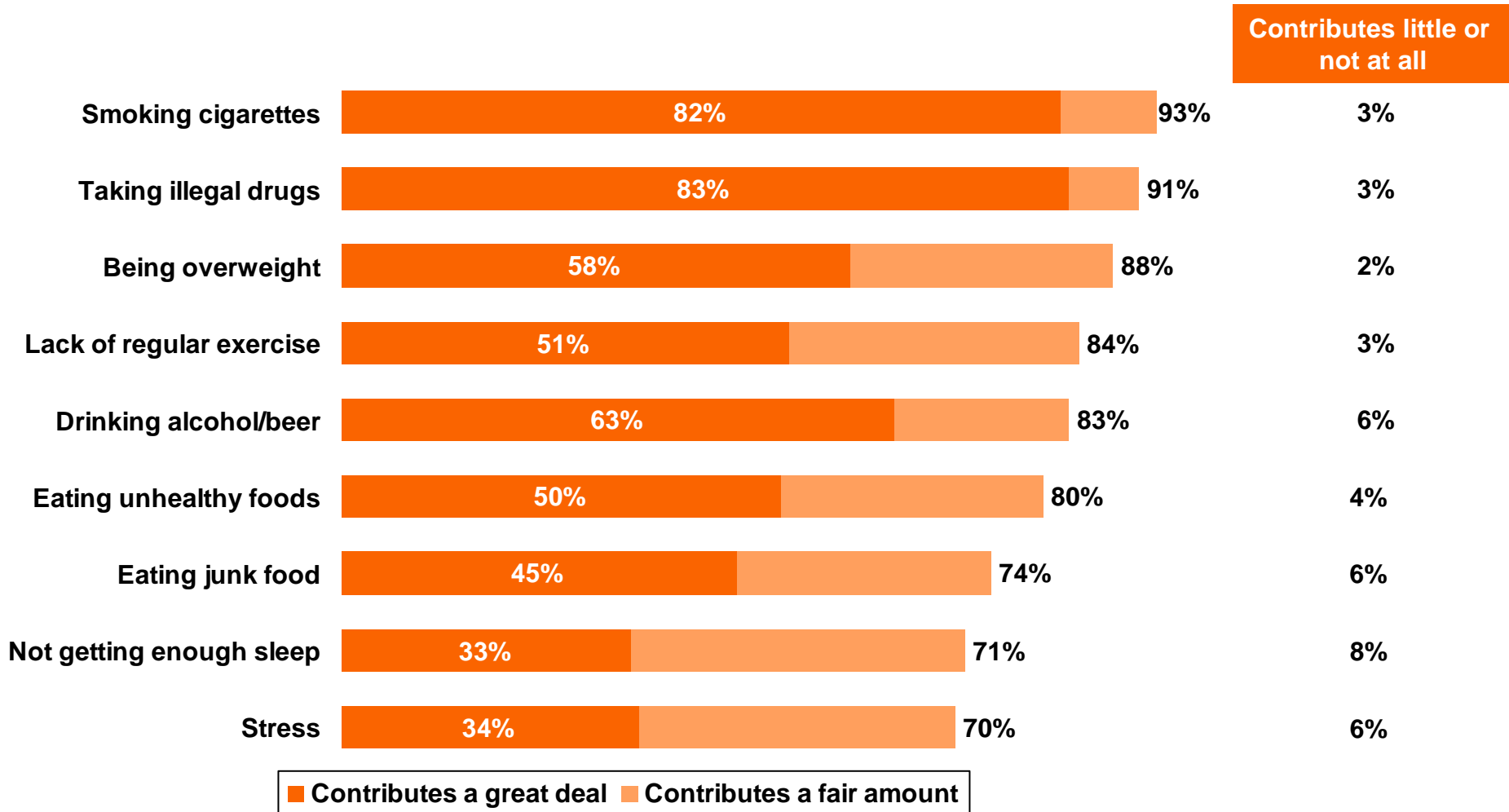
- ◆ Children who rate their health as excellent also tend to believe that exercise and keeping a positive attitude are important to good health to a greater degree than those who rate their health as fair, poor, or very poor (96% vs. 90% for exercise, 74% vs. 54% for keeping a positive attitude).
- ◆ Additionally, those who think about their health a lot or a fair amount are more likely to believe that all factors have a greater contribution to health than those who think about health only once in a while or almost never.

## What Contributes to “Bad Health”

- ◆ Results from this question show that messages that adults have been trying to send youth are getting through. Youth are in agreement that the top contributors to bad health are cigarettes and drugs.
  - Fully 9-in-10 youth surveyed stated that smoking cigarettes or taking drugs contribute to bad health.
  - Significantly, more than 8-in-10 assert that these two actions contribute “a great deal” to bad health, a much higher proportion than all other factors.
  
- ◆ Young people in BC also identify a clear second tier of factors they believe contribute to bad health. More than 80% singled out being overweight, not getting enough regular exercise, drinking alcohol/beer, and eating unhealthy foods.
  - Interestingly, drinking alcohol/beer elicited the strongest views, with 63% saying this activity contributed “a great deal” to bad health.

# What Contributes to “Bad Health”

Q3. Please tell us how much you think each of the following contributes to “bad health” in people your age?



Base: All respondents (n=673)

# What Contributes to “Bad Health” (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Some regional results on what contributes to bad health echo results for top health concerns:
  - Consumption of alcohol/beer is seen as a greater contributor to bad health on Vancouver Island than in the Lower Mainland (88% vs. 80%).
  - Stress is also seen as contributing more to bad health in the Southern Interior than the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island (79% vs. 69% and 64%).
  - Results for top health concerns are consistent with those results.
- ◆ Some gender differences also exist:
  - More girls than boys felt that eating unhealthy foods, not getting enough sleep and stress contributed to bad health.
- ◆ Older youth (15-16 year olds) are generally more likely to feel that smoking cigarettes, taking drugs, being overweight and stress lead to ‘bad health’ compared to 10-12 year olds.
- ◆ Also, household income seems to influence children’s perception of stress as a contributing factor for bad health.
  - 76% of children with household incomes under \$40K strongly believe that stress leads to bad health vs. 65% of children living in \$80K+ households.

# What Contributes to “Bad Health” (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Those who think about their health “a lot” or “a fair amount” generally feel more strongly about the contribution most items have to poor health compared to those who don’t think much about health (either once in a while or almost never). These items are:
  - Being overweight
  - Lack of exercise
  - Eating unhealthy foods
  - Eating junk foods
  - Not getting enough sleep
  - Stress

# Who's Responsible for Personal Health

- ◆ Children believe parents are most responsible for their health, although a good number also feel they're responsible themselves.
- ◆ By comparison, very few BC children believe the greatest responsibility for their health is in the hands of the government, their schools or even doctors.
- ◆ Some subgroup differences do emerge. For example:
  - Girls are more likely to place responsibility on themselves (49% vs. 38% of boys) and boys are more likely to place it on their parents (59% vs. 48% of girls).
- ◆ Of those who believe their parents are most responsible for their wellbeing:
  - The younger the child the more likely they are to place the responsibility on their parents.
    - 61% of 10-14 year olds believe their parents are most responsible for their health vs. 34% of 15-16 year olds.
  - Children living in a household with annual income of less than \$60K are more likely to view their parents as most responsible for their well being than those who live in \$60K+ households.

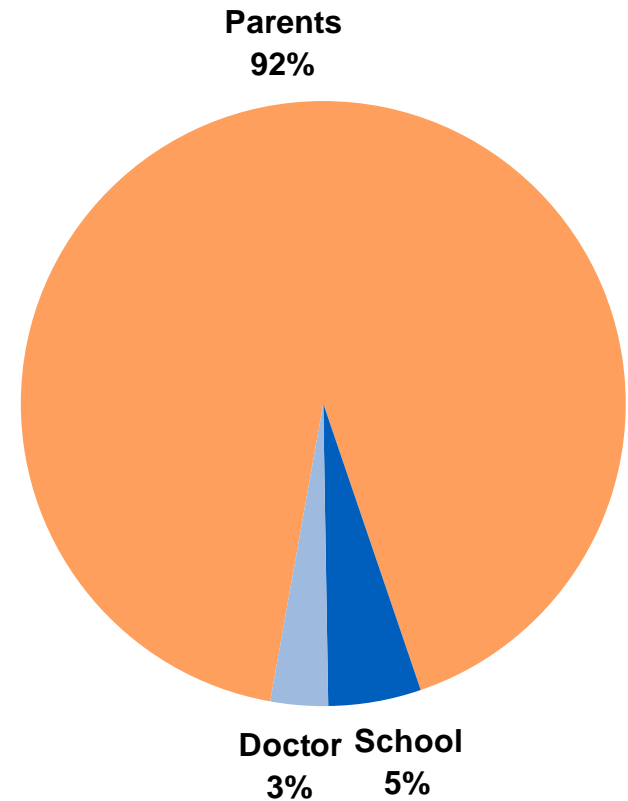
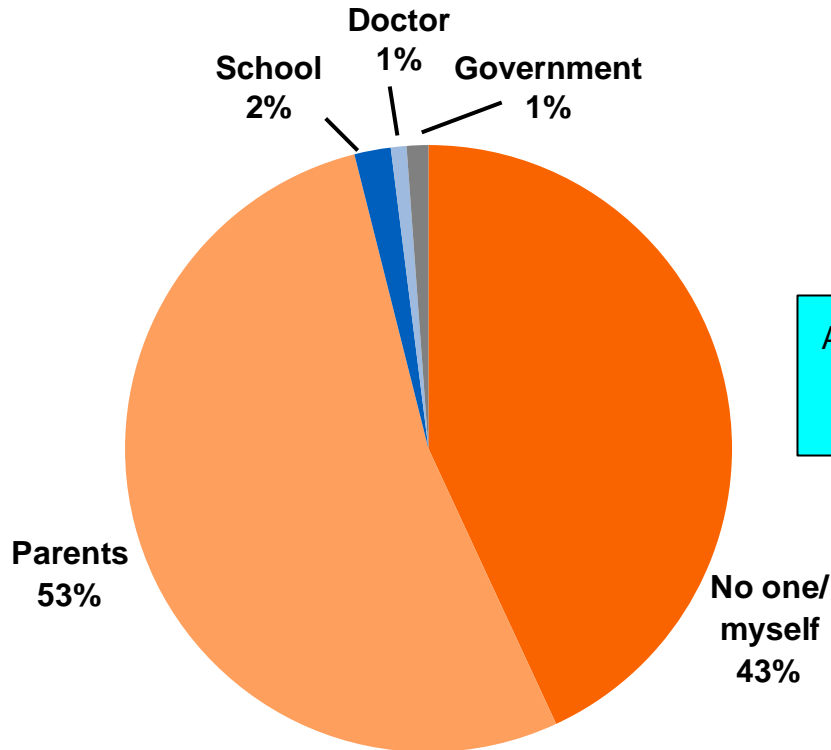
# Who's Responsible for Personal Health

- The less a child thinks about their health the more responsibility they place on their parents for their health.
  - 69% of children who think about their health once in a while/almost never believe their parents are most responsible for their health vs. 55% of children who think about their health some of the time vs. 38% of those who think about their health a lot or a fair amount.
- Additionally, children who believe their health is excellent are more likely than those with poorer health to believe parents are most responsible for their health.
- ◆ When asked who, besides themselves, was most responsible for their health, the vast majority of children who take on the responsibility for themselves singled out their parents.

# Who's Responsible for Personal Health

Q11. Of the following, which one is most responsible for keeping you in good health?

Q12. Aside from yourself, which one of the following would you say is most responsible for keeping you in good health?



Base: All respondents (n=673)

Base: No one is responsible for good health (n=283)



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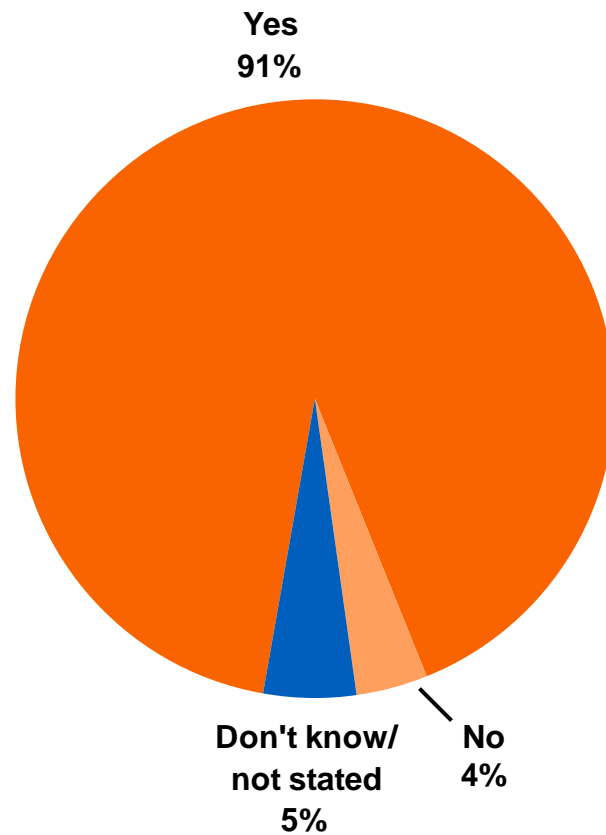
## **Section 2: Personal Health Management**

## Current Personal Health Evaluation

- ◆ Children generally believe that they are healthy right now, only 1-in-20 say they are not and another 1-in-20 don't know.
- ◆ Children in households with \$80K+ are more likely to feel healthy right now than children with a household income of less than \$40K (94% vs. 88%), though they still strongly feel that they are currently healthy.

# Current Personal Health Evaluation

Q14. What about right now? Are you healthy?



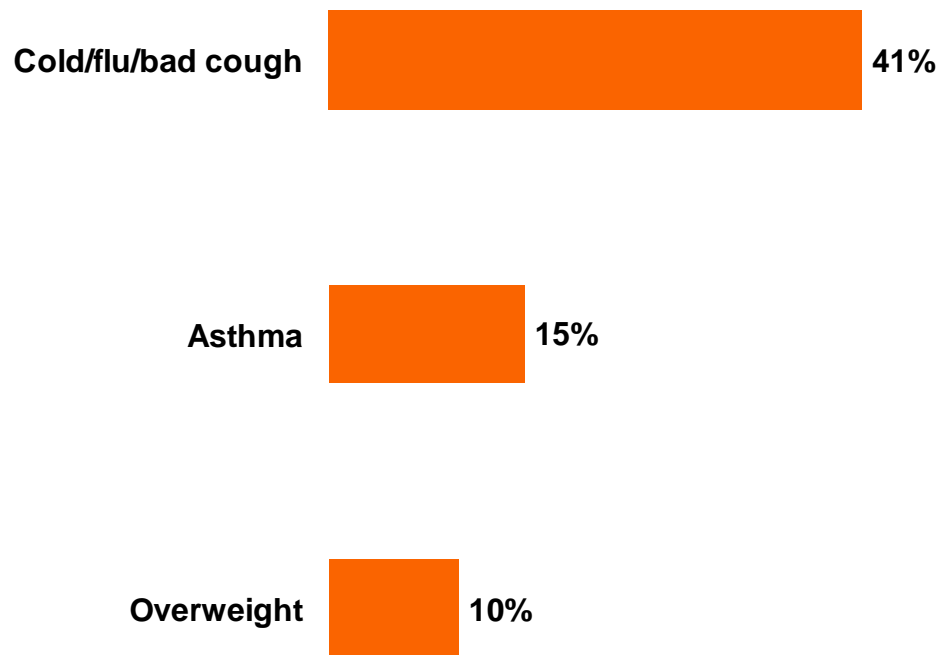
Base: All respondents (n=673)

## Current Health Problem and Action Taken

- ◆ Of the small number of children who say they're currently "unhealthy", the highest proportion of children state that they simply have a cold. Other complaints are that they have asthma or are overweight.
- ◆ The majority of children did go see a doctor due to their illness, though a sizeable number did not (40%).
- ◆ Only a very small number of children (1-in-20) were actually admitted to hospital due to their current health problem.

# Current Health Problem

Q15. What problem do you have?



Base: Not healthy (n=27)\*

\*Very small base size, interpret with extreme caution.

# Action Taken on Health Problem

Q16. Because of your health problem, did you have to ... ?

See a doctor in  
the clinic



57%

Be admitted to  
hospital



4%

Base: Not healthy (n=27)\*

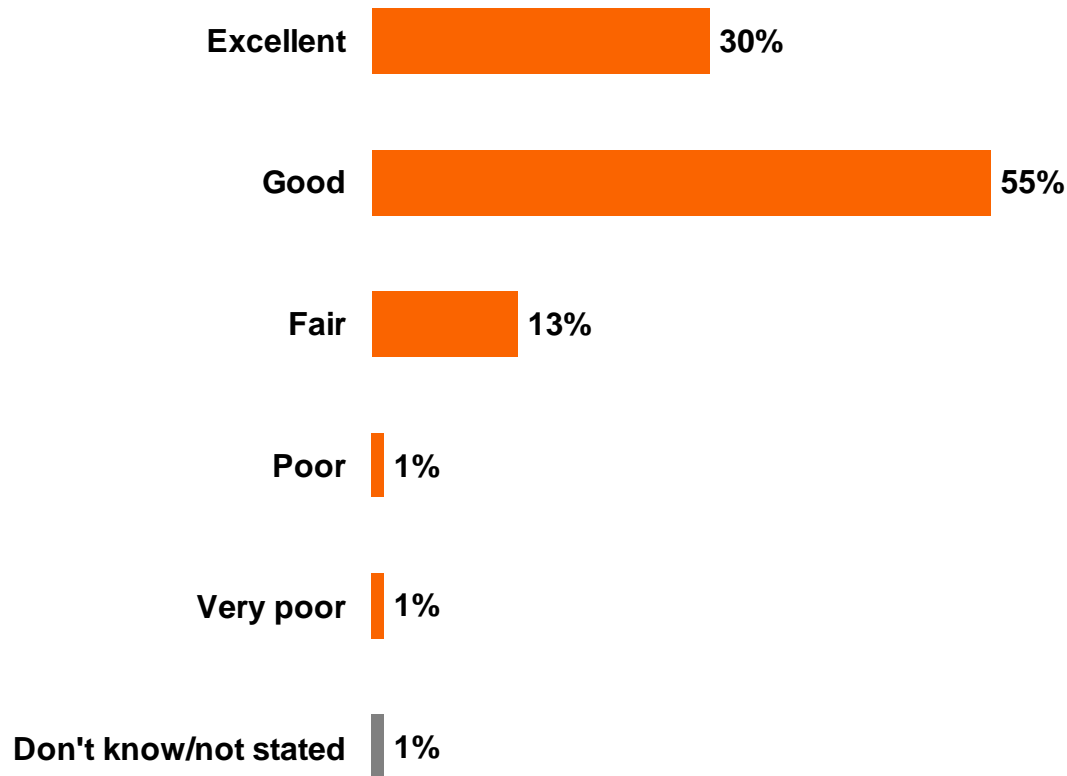
\*Very small base size, interpret with extreme caution.

# How Children Rate Their Personal Health

- ◆ Most youth feel positively about their personal health.
  - 85% rate their health as either good or excellent.
- ◆ Although personal health ratings are positive across all regions and demographic subgroups in BC's population, there are a few differences worth noting:
  - By region:
    - Fewer youth on Vancouver Island rate their health as “excellent” than those in the Lower Mainland (21% vs. 33%).
  - By age:
    - Fewer 10-12 year olds would rate their health as excellent compared to 15-16 year olds (26% vs. 37%)

# How Children Rate Their Personal Health

Q4. How would you rate your own health, overall? Would you say your health is ... ?



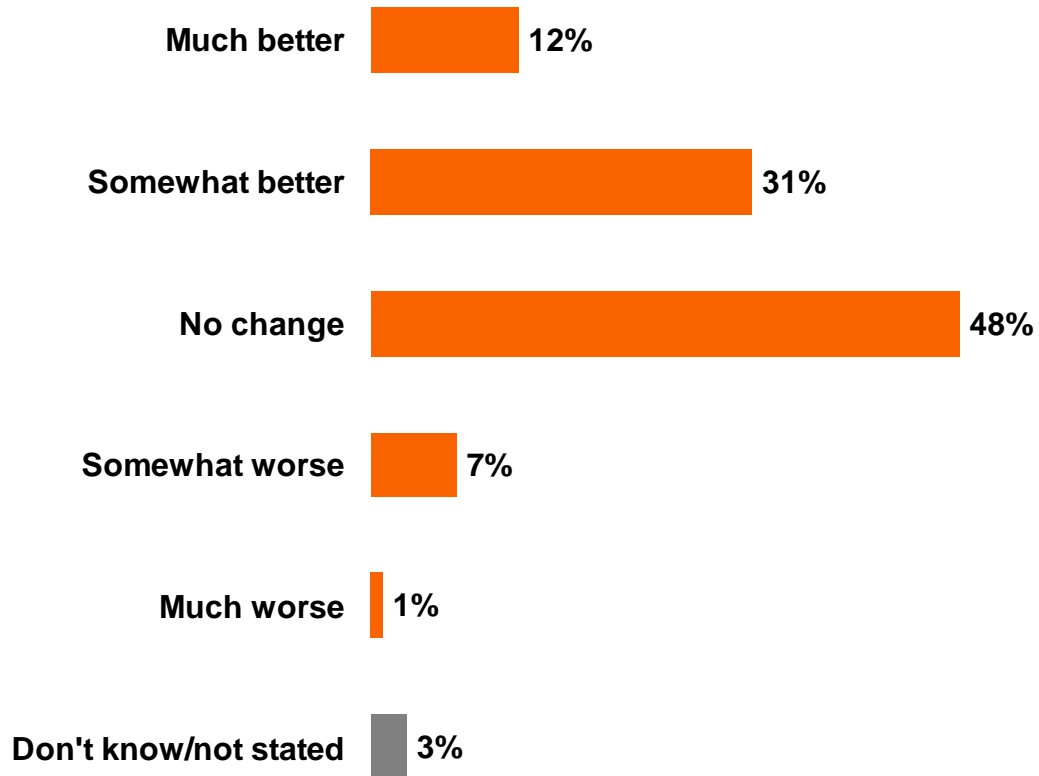
Base: All respondents (n=673)

# Overall Personal Health Compared to a Year Ago

- ◆ Most youth feel that their health has either stayed the same or improved over the past year.
  - Half believe that there has been no change
  - Roughly 2-in-5 believe their health has either improved somewhat or a lot since a year ago.
- ◆ Unfortunately, those who rate their health as fair, poor or very poor are more likely to believe that their health has worsened over the last year.
  - 22% of those who rate their health as fair/poor or very poor say their health has gotten worse in the past 12 months. This compares to only 4% of children who rate their health as either excellent or good.
- ◆ Interestingly, the amount of time children think about their health appears to impact perceptions of change in their health.
  - Those who think about their health some of the time, once in a while or almost never are more likely to believe that their health has not changed (57% vs. 33% of people who think about their health frequently).
  - To contrast, children who think about their health a lot or a fair amount report with greater frequency that their health has either improved since last year or has become somewhat worse than those who infrequently think about their health.

# Overall Personal Health Compared to a Year Ago

Q5. And, do you think you're in overall better health or worse health today than a year ago, or has there been no change?



Base: All respondents (n=673)

# Top Reasons for a Change in Health

## Top Reasons for Better Health:

- ◆ The most prominent reason children give for being in better health is that they're "getting more exercise". Half of the youth interviewed chose this as a reason for being in better health.
- ◆ "Eating better" is also seen as an essential contributing factor for improved health, though far fewer children raise this as a reason (26%).
- ◆ There are some regional and demographic differences in the reasons given for being in better health:
  - Getting more exercise:
    - Lower Mainland children are much more likely to attribute exercise as a cause of improved health than those in the South Interior (55% vs. 37%). In fact, South Interior children perceive exercise and eating better as equally effective reasons for better them being in better health (37% and 32%, respectively).

## Top Reasons for a Change in Health (cont'd)

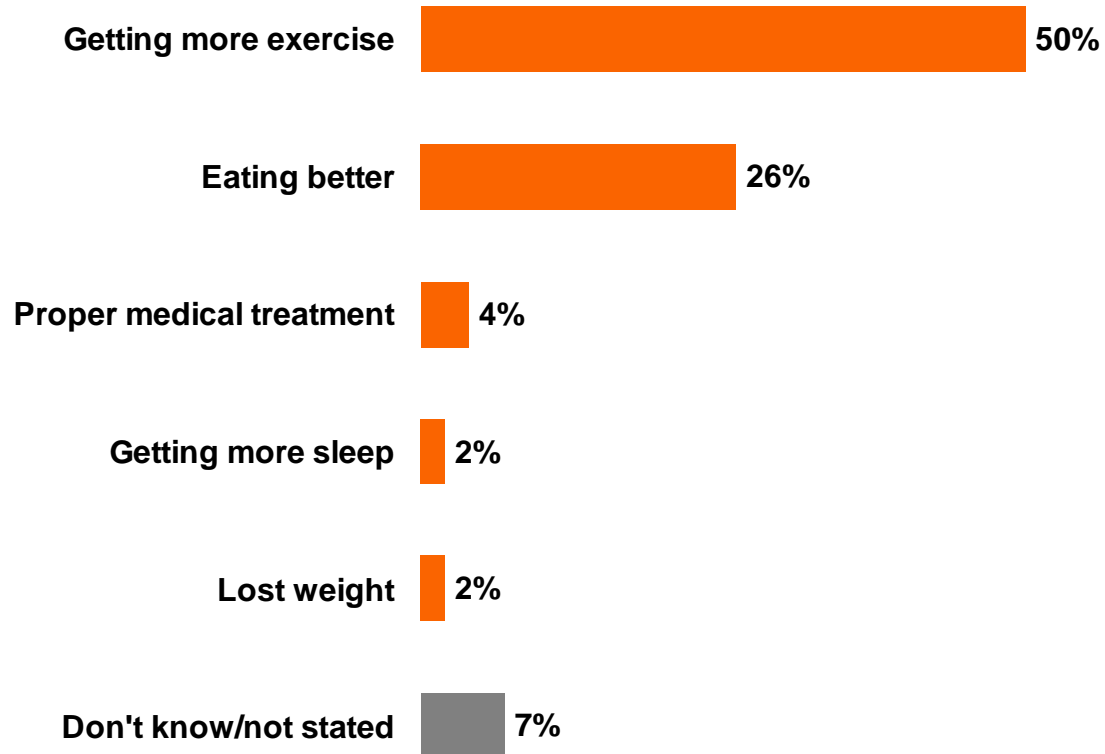
- Eating better
  - 33% of girls saw eating better as a reason for better health vs. 21% of boys
  - 32% of 10-12 year olds believe eating better improved their health vs. 19% of 15-16 year olds who believed the same thing
  - 37% of children with household incomes of less than \$40K vs. 22% of children making more than \$40K

### Top Reasons for Worse Health:

- ◆ Exercise is clearly viewed as an important component of good health. Similarly, lack of exercise is the most frequently mentioned reason for being in worse health compared to a year ago.
- ◆ Being overweight, being diagnosed with a disease, and stress are also listed as reasons for worsening health.

# Top Reasons for Being in Better Health

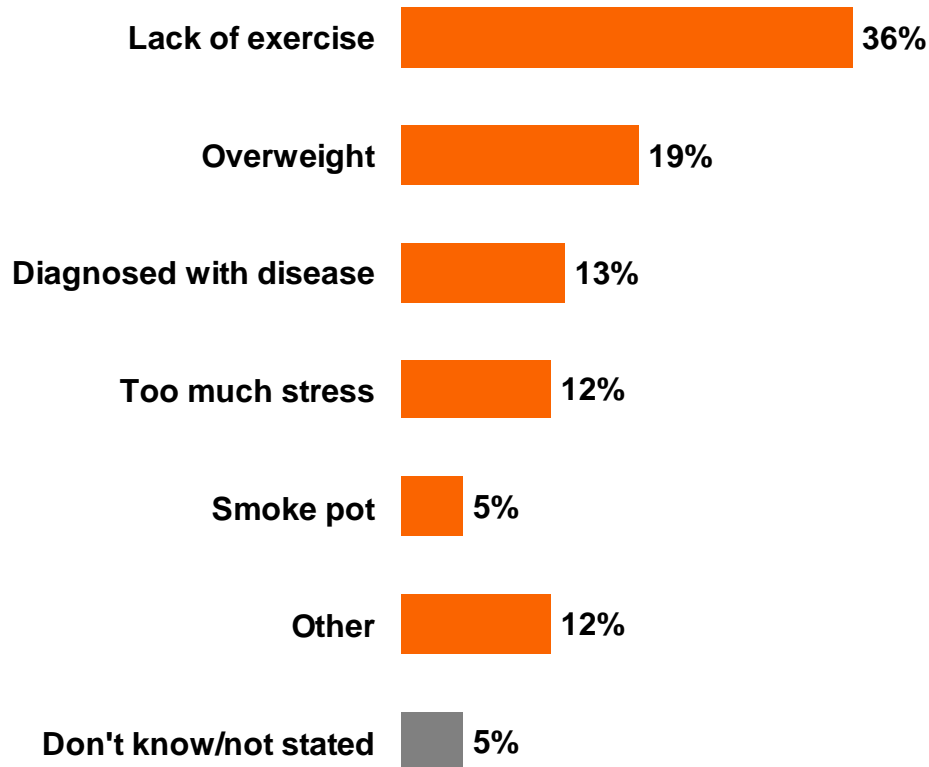
Q6. What's the main reason you're in better health?



Base: Overall better health (n=286)

# Top Reasons for Being in Worse Health

Q7. What's the main reason you're in worse health?



Base: Overall worse health (n=48)\*

\*Very small base size, interpret with extreme caution.



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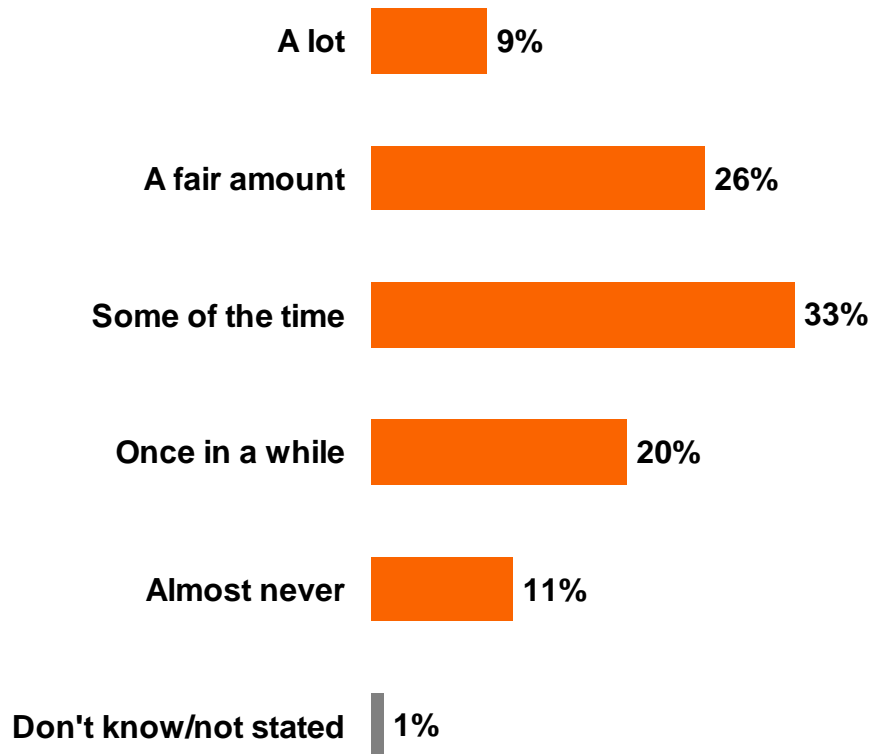
## **Personal Health Activity**

# Time Spent Thinking About Personal Health

- ◆ Youth are “all over the map” when it comes to how much time they say they spend thinking about their personal health.
  - About a third think about their health “some of the time”.
  - Roughly another third think about their health “a lot” or “a fair amount”
  - And, another third think about their health either “once in a while” or “almost never”.
- ◆ There are some important population subgroup differences:
  - Girls are more likely to spend time thinking about their health than boys:
    - 44% of girls think about their health either a lot or a fair amount vs. 28% of boys who do the same.
  - The older the child, the more they seem to think about their own health.
    - 34% of 15-16 year olds think about their health a fair amount vs. 23% of children aged 10-14.
  - Also, those who believe their health is fair, poor, or very poor tend to mull over their health more frequently.
    - 17% of those with fair/poor/very poor health think about their health “a lot” vs. 8% of those with excellent/good health.

# Time Spent Thinking About Personal Health

Q8. How often do you think about your own health?



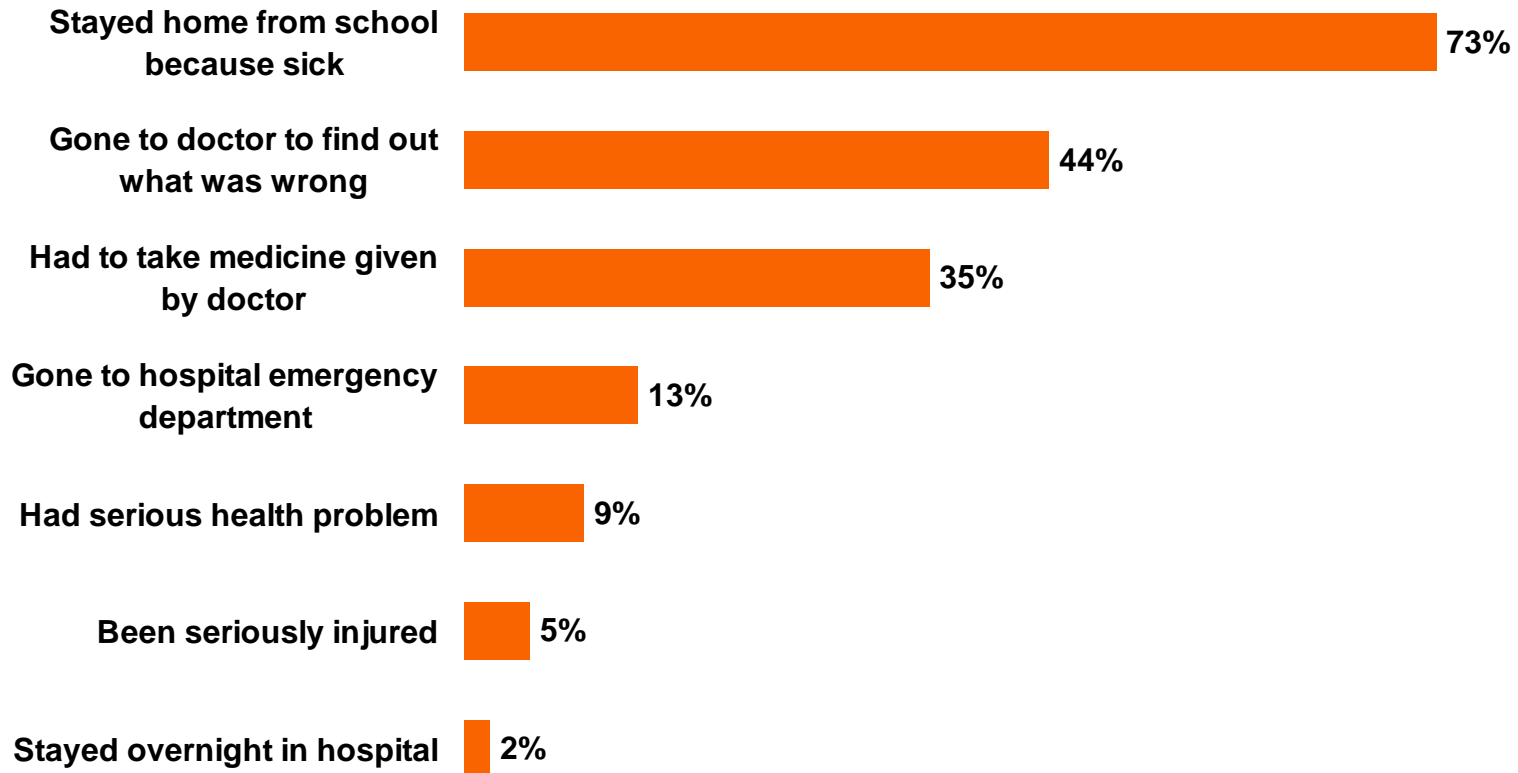
Base: All respondents (n=673)

# Health Experiences This Year

- ◆ Most illnesses that children experience are not very serious
  - Just 1-in-8 BC children say they had to go to the hospital since January and only 1-in-50 actually stayed over night.
  - Additionally, only 1-in-10 children believe they have dealt with a serious health problem this year, and 1-in-20 mentioned they were seriously injured.
- ◆ Most children are just staying home sick; 73% stayed home from school due to an illness this year.
- ◆ Health-related experiences or activities tend vary by age:
  - More 15-16 year olds had to take prescription medicine than 10-14 year olds (42% vs. 33%)
  - More 13-16 year olds had to go to the hospital emergency room than 10-12 year olds (16% vs. 9%)

# Health Experiences This Year

Q13. Since the beginning of this year in January, have you ... ?



Base: All respondents (n=673)

## Health Experiences This Year (cont'd) (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Some gender differences also surfaced:
  - 78% of girls had to stay home from school sick this year vs. 70% of boys
  - 39% of girls took prescription medicine vs. 32% of boys.
- ◆ Children who've been admitted to a hospital at some point since January this year have dealt with more health problems than children who have not been admitted:
  - They are more likely to have seen the doctor, taken prescription medication, gone to the hospital this year, and stayed over night, as well as have a serious health problem.

## Health Experiences This Year (cont'd) (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Children who rate their health as “excellent” have substantially fewer reported health issues/problems, even when compared to children who have rated their health as “good”.
  - 78% of children who rate their health as good/fair/poor/very poor stayed home due to an illness this year vs. 63% of children who rated their health as excellent.
  - 56% of children with fair/poor/very poor health and 46% of children with good health had to see a doctor this year vs. 35% of children with excellent health
  - 39% of children with good/fair/poor/very poor health took prescription medicine vs. 28% of children in excellent health.
  - 12% of children with good/fair/poor/very poor health had a serious health problem vs. 4% of children who rated their health excellent.

## Frequency of Doing Healthy Activities

- ◆ The most popular health-related activity youth participate in is “getting regular exercise”. This is followed by “keeping a positive attitude” and “getting enough sleep”.
- ◆ Few youth state that they ‘always’ partake in these activities, though they do admit doing them most or some of the time.
- ◆ Diet-related activities such as watching what you eat, drink, and how much you eat, are harder to pursue on a regular-basis with roughly 4-in-10 taking part in these behaviours always or most of the time.

## Frequency of Doing Healthy Activities (cont'd) (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Regional results are pretty consistent across the board with one exception only:
  - Children from the Lower Mainland are more likely to watch what they eat compared to children on Vancouver Island (40% vs. 30%)
- ◆ More girls are conscious of what they consume than boys:
  - More girls watch *what* they eat (49% vs. 34%),
  - Watch *how much* they eat (43% vs. 29%),
  - And, watch what they drink (45% vs. 32%)
- ◆ Younger children are more likely to watch their vitamin intake and the sleep they are getting than older children.
  - 64% of 10-12 year olds consciously watch the amount of sleep they are getting vs. 51% of 15-16 year olds
  - 29% of 10-12 year olds make sure they are taking their vitamins vs. 18% of 15-16 year olds.

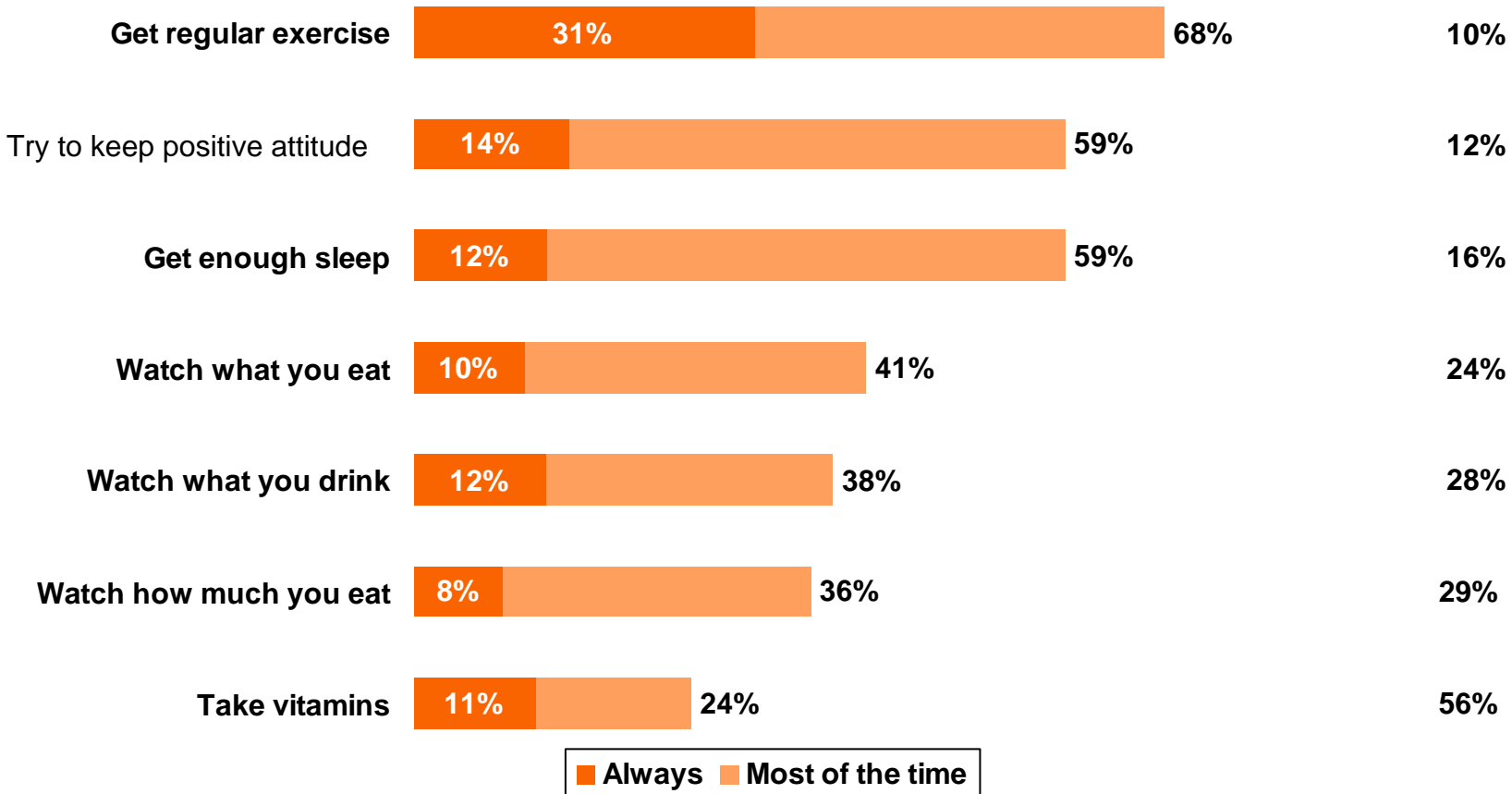
## Frequency of Doing Healthy Activities (cont'd) (Subgroup Differences)

- ◆ Children with excellent or good health consistently partake in all healthy exercises more frequently than children with fair/poor/very poor health.
- ◆ Not surprisingly, children who think about their health regularly are also more willing to participate in healthy activities on a frequent basis than those who think about their health some of the time, once in a while, almost never.

# Frequency of Doing Healthy Activities

Q9. How often do you consciously do each of the following?

Once in a while/Almost never



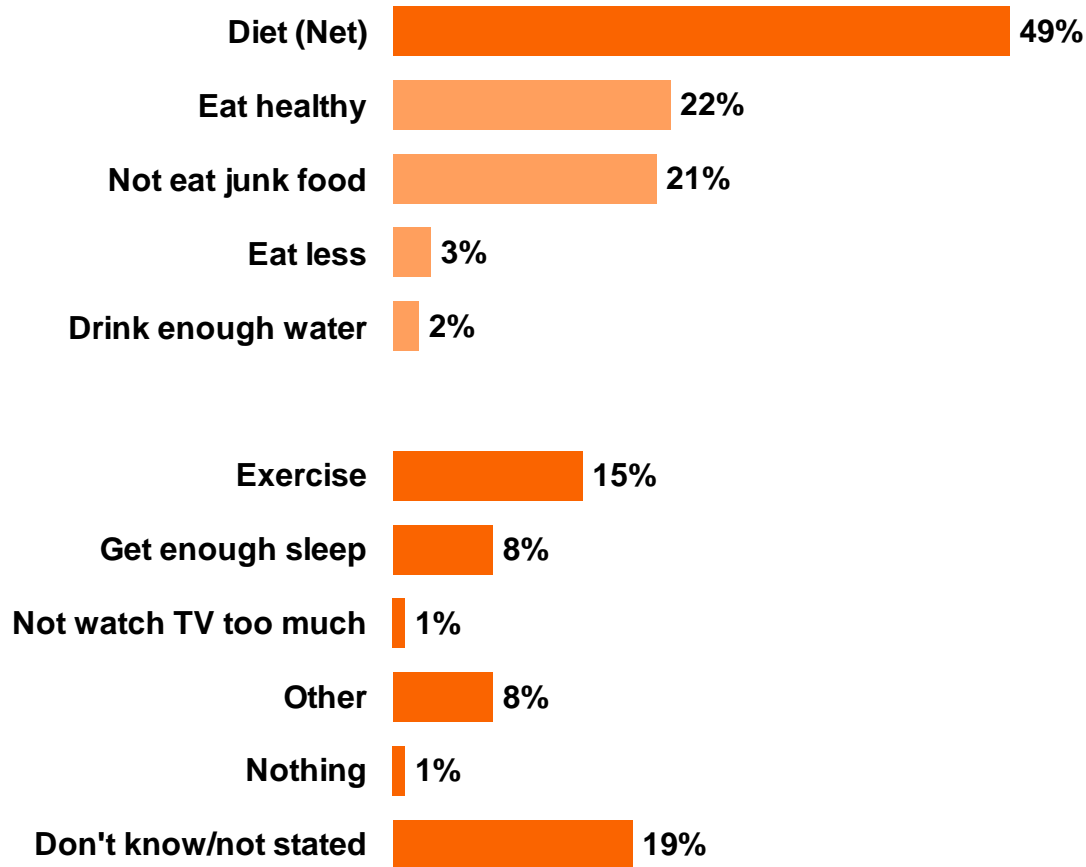
Base: All respondents (n=673)

## Top Challenges to Staying Healthy

- ◆ The top challenge to staying healthy is “keeping a good diet” – eating healthy and not eating junk food are top challenges for youth. Half of youth claim that diet-related items are the hardest things for them to do to maintain their health.
- ◆ Eating junk food can be more challenging depending on your age or gender:
  - More girls than boys find the hardest thing to do to stay healthy is not eating junk food (27% vs. 16%)
  - Also, 10-14 year olds find it harder to stay away from junk food than 15-16 year olds (25% vs. 14%)
- ◆ Those who think they are in excellent health are the *least* likely to have difficulty motivating themselves to work out (8% vs. 18%).
- ◆ Children who frequently think about their health are more likely to feel the challenges of staying in shape.
  - Those who think about their health a lot or fair amount are more likely to have difficulty motivating themselves to exercise compared to those who think about their health some of the time/once in a while or almost never.

# Top Challenges to Staying Healthy

Q10. When you think about doing the right things to stay healthy, what do you find is the hardest thing for you to do?



Base: All respondents (n=673)



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## **Demographics**

# Demographic Profile

	Total BC (n=673) %
<b>Gender:</b>	
Male	52
Female	48
<b>Age:</b>	
10 to 12	43
13 to 14	28
15 to 16	29
<i>Mean</i>	<i>13 years</i>
<b>Income:</b>	
Under \$40,000	31
\$40,001-\$79,999	42
Over \$80K	27
<b>Region:</b>	
Lower Mainland	44
Vancouver Island	25
North Interior	10
South Interior	21