

## Injury Risks

*The following report is based on a portion of self-reported data from the 2002 Hamilton County Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), conducted among 2,752 Hamilton County students in grades 9 through 12. A total of 19 schools, including 16 public and 3 private schools, participated in the survey. The questionnaire was designed by the Centers for Disease Control with eight questions generated by the Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional Health Council. The questionnaire included 96 questions addressing behaviors concerning personal safety, violence, depression and suicidal thoughts, tobacco use, alcohol and drug use, sexual behaviors, diet, and exercise. Within the analysis, all discussions of differences between respondent groups are based on differences which are statistically significant.*

*The survey was administered in the classroom and relies on anonymous, self-reported responses.*

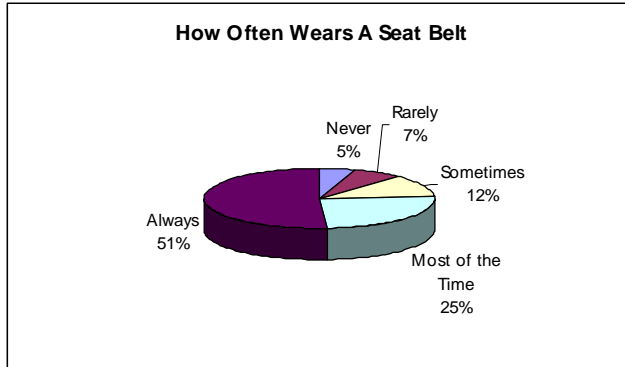
### Executive Summary

- ▼ Half of all student respondents reported that they always wear a seat belt, and 25% reported that they wear a seat belt most of the time. The percentage of students who always wear seat belts increases as students move from grade 9 (45%) to grade 12 (60%).
- ▼ Twelve percent of all students indicated they never or rarely wear seat belts. Non-use of seat belts is significantly higher among students who had been in a vehicle operated by a drinking driver. One in five students who had ridden with a drinking driver and 32% of students who had themselves driven while drinking reported they rarely or never wear a seat belt.
- ▼ One in four students had ridden in a car within the past month with a driver who had been drinking. This behavior was fairly evenly distributed among the demographic groups studied. In fact, no less than 22% of students in any demographic group reported riding with a driver who had been drinking.
- ▼ Twelve percent of all students drove a car within the past month after drinking alcohol. Driving after drinking increases with grade level, rising from 7% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 20% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, when students are more likely to have a driver's license.
- ▼ Seventy-four percent of students who ride bicycles report they never wear a helmet. Only 8% always wear a helmet.
- ▼ Forty-five percent of motorcycle riders always wear a helmet when riding, while 26% never wear one.

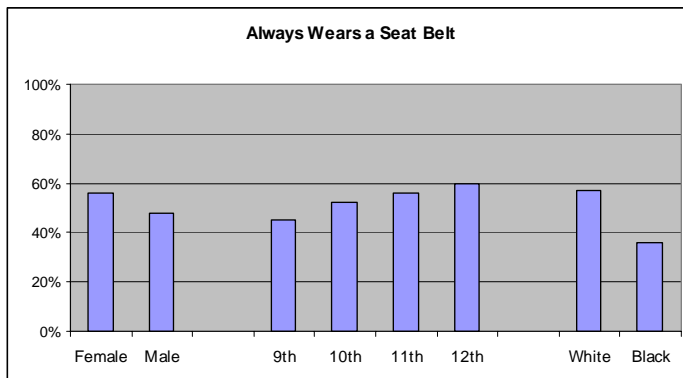
## i. Seat Belt Use

### A. 2002 YRBS

Half of all students surveyed reported that they always wear a seat belt when riding in a car driven by someone else. An additional 25% of students reported wearing a seat belt most of the time. Only 12% reported they rarely or never wore a seat belt.

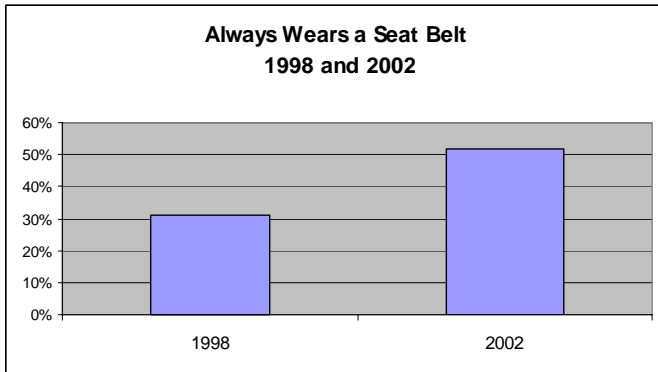


Females (56%) were more likely than males (48%) to always wear a seat belt, and a higher percentage of white students (57%) than black students (36%) always buckle up. Seat belt use increases with student grade, from 45% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders to 60% of 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Students from two-parent families were more likely to always wear a seat belt (60%) than were students in other living situations (which ranged from 41% to 43%).



## B. Comparison to 1998 YRBS

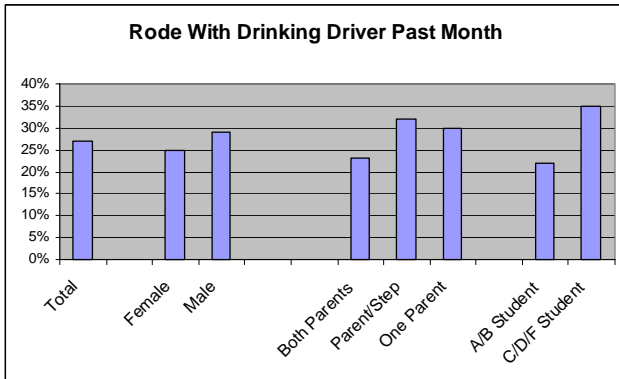
The relative number of students reporting they always wear a seat belt increased 21 percentage points over the 1998 survey (from 31% to 52%).



## II. Riding and Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

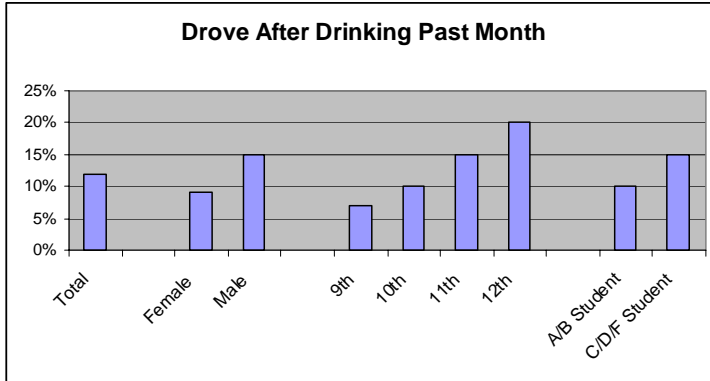
### A. Riding With Driver Under Influence

One in four students reported they had ridden in a car within the past month with someone who had been drinking alcohol. This behavior was fairly evenly distributed among the demographic groups studied. While significant differences existed among demographic groups, a minimum of 22% of every group reported riding with a driver who had been drinking.



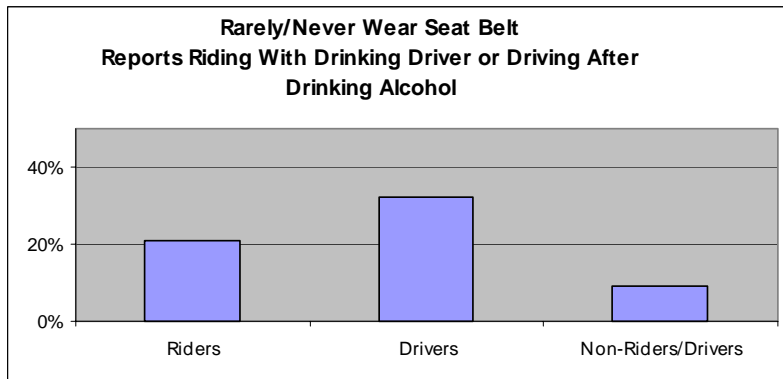
### B. Driving Under Influence of Alcohol

Overall, 12% of students reported they had driven a car one or more times in the past month when they had been drinking alcohol. Fifty-five percent of drinking and driving students reported they had done so on more than one occasion in the past month. Reported driving after drinking alcohol increased with grade level, presumably as more students obtained driver's licenses, from 7% in 9<sup>th</sup> grade to 20% in 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Drinking after driving was also more common among males than females and among poorer performing students (primarily C's, D's, or F's) than better performing students (primarily A's or B's).



### C. Riding or Driving Under Influence and Seat Belt Use

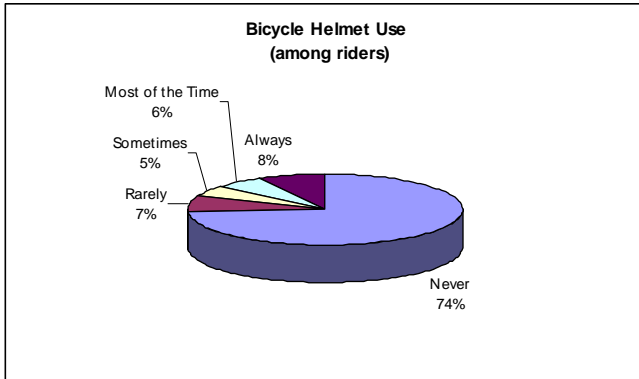
Some students are not only taking risks by driving or riding in a vehicle when the driver has been drinking, many are compounding the risk by not wearing a seat belt. One in five students who had ridden with a driver who had been drinking indicated they rarely or never wear seat belts. Moreover, 32% of students who had driven after drinking indicated they rarely or never wearing a seat belt. This is compared to only about 9% of students not riding or driving under the influence of alcohol.



### III. Safety Helmet Use

#### A. Bicycle Helmets

Thirty-nine percent of students reported they rode a bicycle helmet within the past twelve months. Eight of ten bike riders reported they rarely or never wear a bicycle helmet. Only 8% reported that they always wear a helmet.

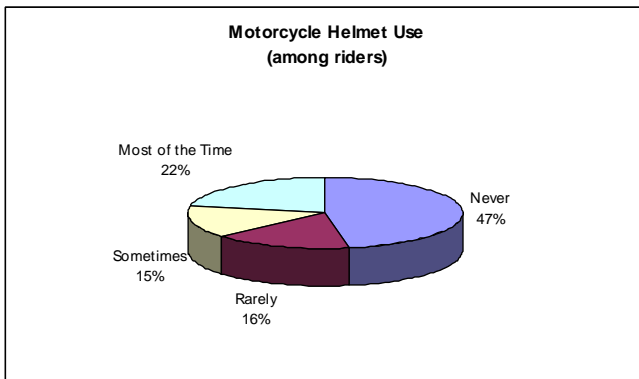


While the overwhelming majority of all bicycle riders never wear a bike, helmet non-use is higher among:

- ▼ Black students than white students (90% vs.78%)
- ▼ Students living in single-parent homes and parent/stepparent homes than two-parent homes (85% and 79% vs. 67%)
- ▼ Poorer performing students than better performing students (81% vs. 67%)

#### B. Motorcycle Helmets

One in four students reported they had ridden a motorcycle in the past year. Forty-five percent of motorcycle riders indicated they always wear a motorcycle helmet, while 26% never wear one.



The percentage of student motorcycle riders always wearing a helmet is higher among:

- ▼ Female than male students (62% vs. 38%)
- ▼ Better performing students than poorer performing students (53% vs. 38%)