

## SEXUAL ACTIVITY AND CONTRACEPTIVE USE

In 2013, 46.8 percent of students in grades 9–12 reported having had sexual intercourse at least once during their lifetime. While this self-reported prevalence among high school students has not changed significantly from 2011 (47.4 percent), there has been a sustained decrease since 1991, when 54.1 percent of high school students reported ever having had sexual intercourse.<sup>1</sup>

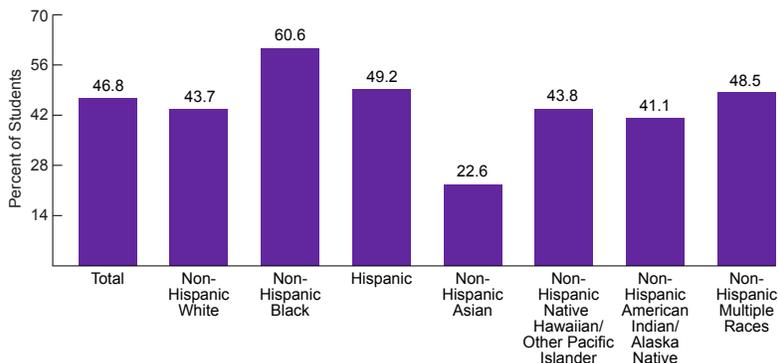
Among all students, a similar number of male and female high school students reported having ever had sex (47.5 and 46.0 percent, respectively). With respect to race and ethnicity, 60.6 percent of non-Hispanic Black high school students reported having ever had sexual intercourse, compared to 49.2 percent of Hispanic, 43.7 percent of non-Hispanic White, and 22.6 percent of non-Hispanic Asian high school students (figure 1). The proportion of students who reported having had sexual intercourse increased with grade level: 30.0 percent of 9th-grade students had done so, compared to 41.4 percent of 10th-graders, 54.1 percent of 11th-graders, and 64.1 percent of 12th-graders.

Overall, 34.0 percent of students reported current sexual activity, defined as sexual intercourse with at least one person during the

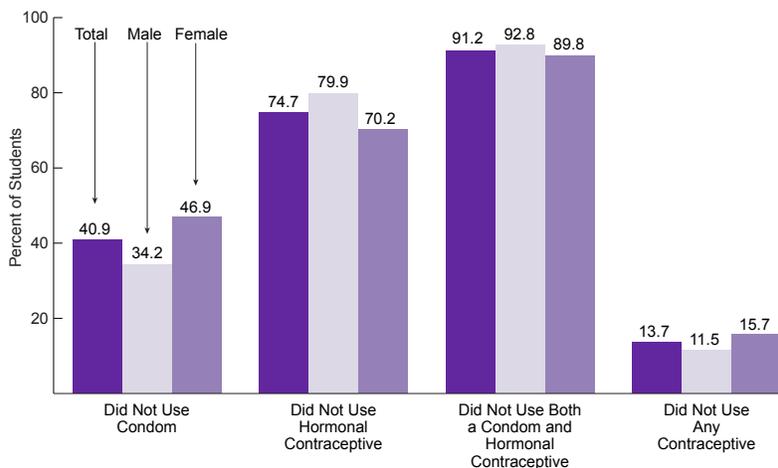
past 3 months. Among those students who reported current sexual activity, 40.9 percent reported not using a condom (whether they or their partner wore it) during their last intercourse (figure 2). With regard to sex, 46.9 percent of females reported not using a condom, compared to 34.2 percent of males. Additionally, female students were more likely than male students to report that no method to prevent pregnancy had been used (by themselves or partners) during their last intercourse (15.7 and 11.5 percent, respectively). With regard to grade level, the proportion of sexually active students to report not using a condom was highest among 12th-graders (47.0 percent).

Contraceptive use is a key component to reducing unintended pregnancies,<sup>2</sup> and the majority of pregnancies occurring to adolescents are unintended.<sup>3</sup> The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services *Healthy People 2020* campaign includes national goals to increase the proportion of adolescents aged 17 years and younger who have never had sexual intercourse, reduce the number of pregnancies among adolescent females, increase the proportion of births that are intended, and increase contraceptive use among females who are at risk of unintended pregnancy.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1. High School Students Who Have Ever Had Sexual Intercourse, by Race/Ethnicity, 2013**



**Figure 2. Lack of Contraceptive Use\* During Last Sexual Intercourse Among Sexually Active\*\* High School Students, by Sex, 2013**



\*By themselves or partners. \*\*Defined as having had sexual intercourse with at least one person during the past 3 months.

**Data Sources**

Figure 1 and 2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Available at: <http://nccd.cdc.gov/YouthOnline>. Accessed September 20, 2014.

**Endnotes**

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2013. *Morbidity and Mortal Weekly Report*. June 13, 2014;63(4). Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf>. Accessed September 20, 2014.
2. Guttmacher Institute. Preventing unintended pregnancy: the need and the means. *The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy*. December 2003;6(5). Available at: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/tgr/06/5/gr060507.html>. Accessed September 20, 2014.
3. Finer LB, Zolna MR. Shifts in intended and unintended pregnancies in the United States, 2001–2008. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2014;104(S1):S44–S48. Available at: <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/ajph.2013.301416.pdf>. Accessed September 20, 2014.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Healthy People 2020* Topics & Objectives: Maternal, Infant, and Child Health. Available at: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/>. Accessed September 20, 2014.

**Suggested Citation**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. *Child Health USA 2014*. Rockville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015. Online at <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/chusa14/>