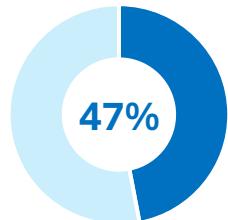


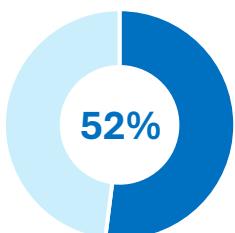
# Adolescent Digital Media Use in the MetroWest Region

Highlights from the 2023 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey (Grades 7-12)

Frequent smartphone use\* (3+ hours/day) is reported by:

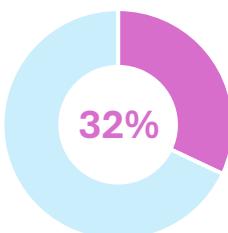


47% of middle school youth

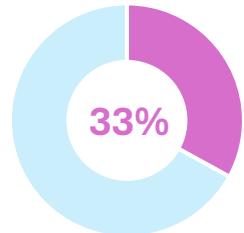


52% of high school youth

Frequent social media use\* (3+ hours/day) is reported by:



32% of middle school youth



33% of high school youth

Girls report more smartphone and social media use, and boys report more gaming.

For example, in middle school:



Frequent smartphone use is reported by:  
54% of girls  
40% of boys



Frequent social media use is reported by:  
38% of girls  
26% of boys



Frequent gaming is reported by:  
15% of girls  
34% of boys

Note: Patterns are similar in high school.

Digital media use can have negative consequences on school performance and physical health.



Students report worsening of:<sup>†</sup>

% of middle school students

% of high school students



Attention in school

24%

39%



Sleep

45%

53%



Physical health

21%

24%

Frequent social media use is linked to poor mental health.



- Anxiety symptoms<sup>‡</sup> are reported by 34% of frequent users vs. 19% of less frequent users in middle school.
- Depressive symptoms<sup>\*\*</sup> are reported by 30% of frequent users and 18% of non-frequent users in high school.



Social media use can also have benefits.

Among high school students, social media helps them:

63%

Feel more connected to peers

24%

Get support during a challenging time

56%

Find people with similar interests or hobbies

21%

Speak up about things that are important to them

Note: Middle school youth also report benefits.

For questions or support regarding digital media use and its consequences, reach out to your school's counseling department or nurse's office, your pediatrician, or a mental health specialist in your community.