

## Less drinking, good health and happy with weight: survey reveals almost all is well in Østfold

Written by Admin

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Youth in Østfold have very good health, are drinking less than youth in other Norwegian counties and are more content with their own weight than youth in other Norwegian counties. These are among the results found in the health survey called "Østfoldhelsa 2008".

The survey was done by The Public Health Programme in Østfold and Østfold County Council in cooperation with the Norwegian Institute of Public Health and TNS Gallup.

The survey is a part of the WHO and EU supported HEPRO project, which was led by Østfold County Council. In this project, 45000 Europeans from six countries answered questions about their own health.

- This provides us with a very good foundation for further analysis and comparisons between the countries, says project manager Mr Arvid Wangberg.

More than 1500 high-school students participated in the survey. The questionnaire contained questions about health, well-being and environment. Results were made public at a conference in Sarpsborg on 15 January.

- The survey in Østfold shows that the participants to a large extent evaluate their health as good or very good, in fact, 90 percent answered this. The numbers from Østfold indicate that more young people here rate their health as "very good" compared to other counties, says Senior Adviser Liv Grøtvedt at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health.

The survey also shows that high-school students in Østfold drink less alcohol than youth the same age in other counties.

Monitoring the health status of the population is part of an important and focused public health work. The public health Programme in Østfold has the last 10 years done several comprehensive health and environment surveys in the age group 15-79 years. This is the first youth survey.

- The results are, generally, very positive, because they show that young people in Østfold view themselves as healthy, with a high degree of well-being. Over 90 percent answer that they enjoy school. Many of the participants, almost 70 percent, are physically active several times a week, and we see less drinking than in other counties. This is of course positive, says chairman of the board Aase Rennesund in The Public Health Programme.

However, there are also challenges. More girls, for example, start using snuff. A higher prevalence of mental disorders was also found compared to earlier data from other counties.

- The youth survey is meant to be a source of inspiration in the public health work, in working with growing up conditions and in creating a debate on the importance of a good youth policy,

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says Rennesund.