

# Youth social media use

## Health indicator report

### Background

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- The purpose of this health indicator report is to provide information about social media use among youth aged 12-17 living in Halton Region.
- There is a lack of evidence on the long-term impacts of social media use on youth.<sup>1</sup> However, emerging evidence correlates social media use with adverse mental health impacts.<sup>2</sup> The Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) has called on healthcare providers to counsel families on healthy screen use and for families to use strategies such as media plans and screen-free times.<sup>2</sup>
- This health indicator report uses data from the Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY). Social media is defined as going online for the following activities: Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter (now known as X). In the 2019 CHSCY survey, data were collected from youth aged 12-17.<sup>3</sup> Electronic Devices include tablets, mobile devices, game consoles, desktop or portable computers, and televisions.<sup>4</sup>

### Key findings

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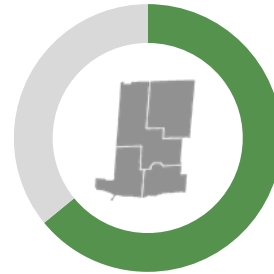
- In 2019, 64% of Halton youth aged 12-17 reported their time spent on social media over the past 7 days as being several times a day or more.
- In 2019, among youth aged 12-17, females were more likely than males to report being on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days. This difference was **statistically significant**.
- In 2019, among youth aged 12-17, those in Oakville were more likely than those in Halton Hills to report that they had been on social media several times a day or more in the past 7 days. This difference was **statistically significant**.
- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by income, education, and immigrant status, as well as mental health in the percentage of youth aged 12-17 who reported being on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days.



# Youth social media use

## Halton vs. Ontario

- In 2019, 64% of Halton youth aged 12-17 reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days.
- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences between Halton and Ontario in the percentage of youth aged 12-17 who reported time spent on social media over the past 7 days as being several times a day or more.



**64%**  
of Halton  
youth

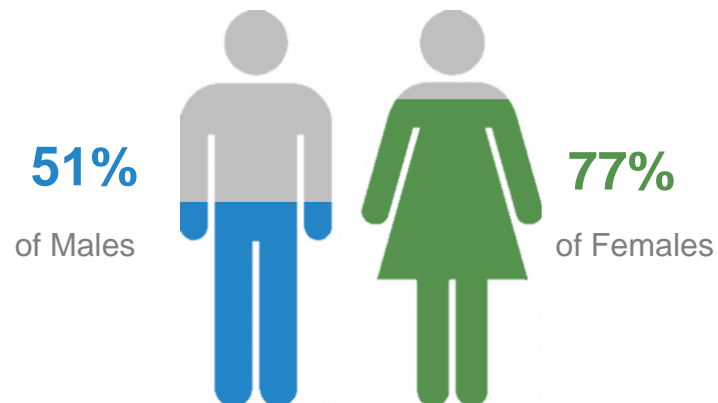


**64%**  
of Ontario youth

Percentage Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days, Ontario vs. Halton Region, 2019.

## Sex

- In 2019, among youth aged 12-17, females were more likely than males to report being on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days. This difference was **statistically significant**.



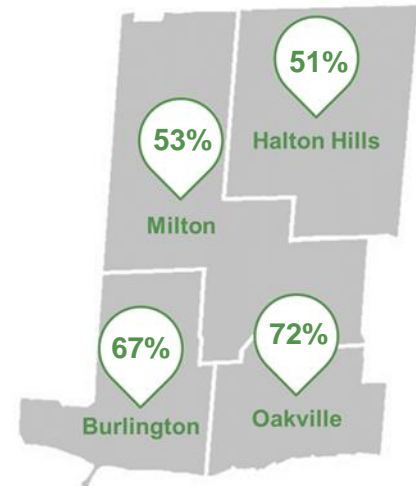
Percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days, by sex, Halton Region, 2019.



# Youth social media use

## Municipality

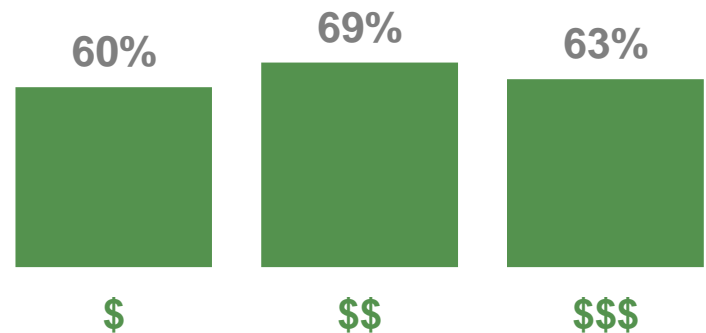
- In 2019, among youth aged 12-17, those living in Oakville were more likely than those in Halton Hills to report that they had been on social media several times a day or more in the past 7 days. This difference **was statistically significant**.



Percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days, by municipality, Halton Region, 2019.

## Income

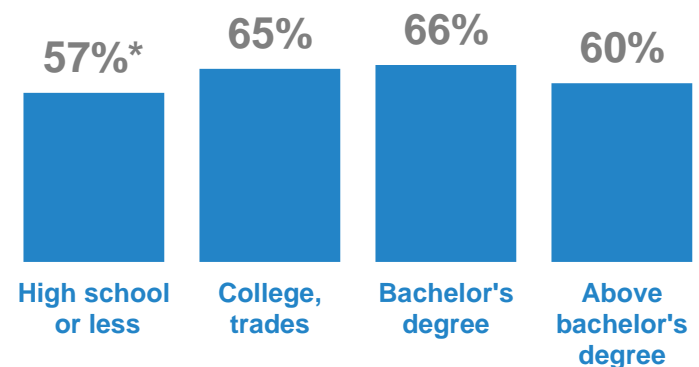
- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by parents' highest level of income in the percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days.



Percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days, by parents' highest level of income, Halton Region, 2019.

## Education

- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by parents' highest level of education in the percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days.



Percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days, by parents' highest level of education, Halton Region, 2019.

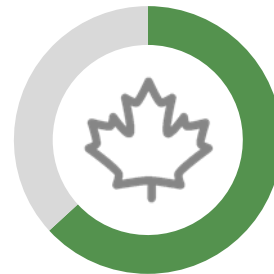
Estimates marked with an asterisk (\*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.



# Youth social media use

## Immigrant status

- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by immigrant status in the percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days.



**63%**  
of Non-immigrants

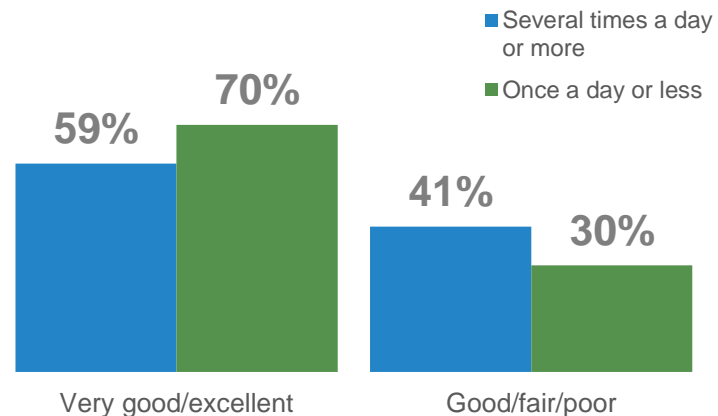


**66%**  
of Immigrants  
/non-permanent  
residents

Percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days, by immigrant status, Halton Region, 2019.

## Mental Health

- In 2019, there were no statistically significant differences by mental health in the percentage of Halton youth aged 12-17 who reported that they had been on social media several times a day or more over the past 7 days.



Percentage of youth aged 3-17 who reported mental health, by time spent on social media in the past 7 days, Halton Region, 2019.

# About CHSCY

- The Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY) explores issues that have an impact on the physical and mental health of children and youth. CHSCY was developed by Statistics Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Offord Centre.
- CHSCY is an occasional and voluntary survey that is designed to provide reliable estimates at the provincial level and across age groups. CHSCY was first conducted in 2019 and included 50,000 children and youth ages 1-17 from across Canada's provinces and territories, including 1,138 children and youth in Halton and 22,651 children and youth in Ontario.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2019, CHSCY was administered as a cross-sectional survey, meaning that respondents were surveyed at a single point in time.<sup>3</sup>
- Two questionnaires were used to collect survey data. One questionnaire was administered to the Person Most Knowledgeable (PMK) about the selected child or youth aged 1 to 17.<sup>4</sup> A separate questionnaire was administered directly to the selected youth aged 12 to 17.<sup>4</sup> Youth aged 15 to 17 could be identified as their own PMK if they lived on their own or did not live with a parent.<sup>4</sup>
- For more information on CHSCY methodology and limitations, see the CHSCY Data Notes and Data Interpretation Guide at [www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Public-Health/Health-Statistics](http://www.halton.ca/For-Residents/Public-Health/Health-Statistics).

# Data notes

## Definitions:

**Social media** use is defined as going online for the purposes of social networking, including Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (now known as X).

**Data Source:** Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth [2019], Statistics Canada, Share File, Ontario MOHLTC

Estimates marked with an asterisk (\*) should be interpreted with caution due to high variability.

## References

1. Canadian Pediatric Society [CPS]., & Ponti, M. (2023). Social media and youth: A call to action. <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/social-media-and-youth-a-call-to-action>
2. Department of Health and Human Services [HHS]. (2023). Social Media and Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory. <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/sg-youth-mental-health-social-media-advisory.pdf>
3. Statistics Canada. (2019) Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth. <https://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&Id=1215270>
4. Statistics Canada. (2020). 2019 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth (CHSCY): User Guide.

For more health indicator and health status reports, visit the Halton Health Statistics webpage at [halton.ca](http://halton.ca).