

# Poor health habits add up to poor grades for teens

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(HealthDay)—American high school students with poor grades are much

more likely to have unhealthy behaviors—including illegal drug use—than teens at the top of the class, federal health officials say.

There's a strong link between teens' [health habits](#) and their academic achievement, according to a new U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey.

"As our nation's children embark on another school year, it's important to remember that health and academic performance are not mutually exclusive," said the CDC's director, Dr. Brenda Fitzgerald.

Analyzing data from a 2015 federal government survey, the researchers found that compared to students with mostly A's, students with mostly D's and F's were:

- nine times more likely to say they'd injected illegal drugs.
- five times more likely to say they'd skipped school at least one day in the past month due to safety concerns.
- four times more likely to say they'd had four or more sexual partners.

And compared to students with mostly D's and F's, the A-range students reported healthier behaviors. The better students were:

- twice as likely to eat breakfast every day in the past week.
- 1.5 times more likely to have been physically active at least 60 minutes a day on five or more days in the past week.

The study doesn't show a direct cause-and-effect relationship. Still, "these findings highlight the connection between student health and [academic achievement](#). Schools, parents and communities can all work together to ensure a healthy and successful future for our children," Fitzgerald said in an agency news release.

"When it comes to youth, health and education professionals should work in concert with communities and parents to help them create the best possible environment for the health, well-being and future success of the next generation," Fitzgerald added.

The study was published Sept. 8 in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

**More information:** The American Academy of Pediatrics has more on [teen health](#).

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