

CURRENT SURVEYS



Are You in the Census and in a Current Survey?

Many Americans think the U.S. Census Bureau's only mission is to conduct the once every 10-year census. But did you know we conduct surveys every month involving thousands of households and businesses throughout the country? Whether you get a flu shot at a local clinic, participate in an after-school program, or draw unemployment benefits, there's a good chance that data collected throughout the decade by the Census Bureau were used in the planning of these services.

Our on-going surveys, called "current surveys", collect data that are used to continuously monitor and assess social and economic trends and conditions that affect our society. Information from these surveys supply in-depth and current information on characteristics of the American people such as labor force participation, income, crime victimization, incarceration rates and measures of health.

Didn't I already answer the census?

You may have answered the census, a count of everyone living in the United States every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution. However, your address—not you personally—has also been chosen to be part of a randomly selected sample for one of the current surveys conducted by the Census Bureau.

Why can't you use my census answers for this survey?

The current surveys conducted by the Census Bureau include many questions not asked by the census, and the two serve very different purposes. Sharing responses across surveys is prohibited—the law protects you and your information. All Census Bureau employees, including temporary employees, are required to take an oath for life to protect personally identifiable information about individuals or businesses gathered by the agency. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

Why is my response important?

Current surveys help measure present and emerging trends at the national and state levels. By responding, you help businesses, policy makers, and community planners identify and provide needed services to your neighborhood.

What if I have more questions?

Visit our Web site at http://www.census.gov/survey_participants/ for more information on participating in a current survey or a census.

What Current Surveys Are Being Conducted?

American Community Survey (ACS) – The American Community Survey is a key component of the Census Bureau's decennial census program. The ACS eliminates the need for a separate long form in the 2010 Census by providing detailed demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics for the United States every year instead of every 10 years.

Consumer Expenditure Survey (CE) – The Consumer Expenditure Survey program consists of two surveys, the Quarterly Interview Survey and the Diary Survey, that provide information on the buying habits of American consumers, including data on their expenditures, income, and consumer unit (families and single consumers) characteristics. The Census Bureau collects the survey data for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Current Population Survey (CPS) – The Current Population Survey collects up-to-date figures on people who have jobs, those who want jobs and those who are not in the market for jobs. The Census Bureau collects the information and the U.S. Department of Labor publishes the results. The survey results include a number of high-profile economic statistics, including the nation's unemployment rate that you read or hear about monthly in the news.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) – The National Crime Victimization Survey obtains accurate and current measures on the amount and kinds of crimes committed in the United States. The survey is used to assess the impact of crime on society, and it is the primary source of information on criminal victimization. The Census Bureau conducts the NCVS for the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, which is part of the U.S. Department of Justice.

National Health Interview Survey (HIS) – The National Health Interview Survey obtains information about the health status of children and adults, including health conditions and functional difficulties people might have; health behaviors, such as smoking, drinking and exercise; and access to health insurance and the kinds of health services people might receive.

Puerto Rico Community Survey (PRCS) – The Puerto Rico Community Survey is the version of the ACS that is conducted in Puerto Rico.

Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) – The Survey of Income and Program Participation collects information on income received from a variety of sources, on general demographic characteristics, and on other data related to government program participation and eligibility.



Other safeguards for your privacy

- Any item that could indirectly reveal who you are is removed. More than names and addresses are taken off everything we give out—no details on jobs, family, births, or residence that, if pieced together, could lead to identification, are ever released.
- NCHS withholds even statistical totals if they represent a location so small that the numbers might identify someone.
- Special security measures block outside contact with any confidential information stored in NCHS computers.
- We also use coded passwords (changed frequently) to prevent unauthorized data access.
- No authority can obtain identifiable data from NCHS. We deny access to your records to the police, military, and any branch of the federal government including the Internal Revenue Service, Immigration, and welfare agencies, for whatever reason. Your answers are also protected from the Freedom of Information Act as well as court subpoenas. NCHS' legal ability to protect your information has been upheld at the highest levels of federal courts.

For further information

If you have specific questions about how NCHS protects the information you provide, contact:

Confidentiality Officer,
National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road, Room 7116
Hyattsville, MD 20782

NCHSconfidentiality@cdc.gov
(888) 642-4159

NCHS data are released in printed reports and through the NCHS website.

For further information and to access NCHS products, visit or call:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>
(800) 232-4636

For more information about the NHIS, visit the NHIS website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>

or contact us at:

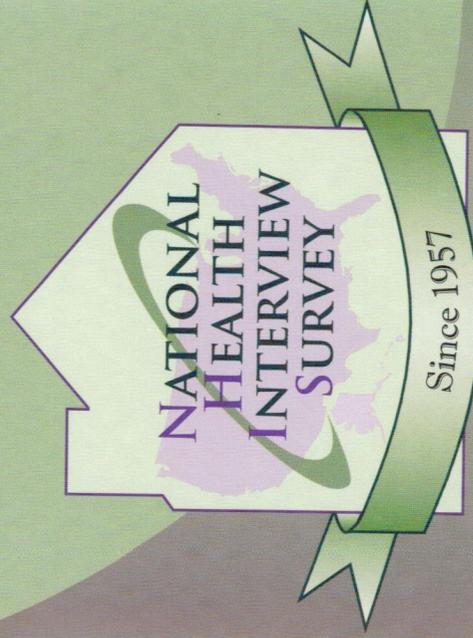
NHIS@cdc.gov
(301) 458-4001

America's Health Counts



*How the National
Health Interview
Survey Keeps
Your Information*

*Strictly
Confidential*



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NATIONAL HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEY (NHIS)

1. HOW WAS I CHOSEN FOR THE SURVEY?

Every month we pick between 5,300 and 5,500 home addresses across the entire United States. We pick addresses using scientific methods so they represent all communities in the U.S.

2. WHY NOT INTERVIEW AT THE HOUSE ACROSS THE STREET? WHY IS MY PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

It is important that the people living at the address selected be in the survey. Due to the scientific methods used to pick addresses, we cannot exchange one address for another. If we did that, the survey results would not describe the entire country.

3. I AM NOT SICK – WHY SHOULD I TAKE PART IN A HEALTH SURVEY?

This is a survey of the Nation's health. We want to know how many people are sick and why they are sick, but it is also important to know how many people are healthy and why they are healthy. Everyone's answers are important.

4. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO ASK ME?

The NHIS covers a wide range of topics like doctor visits, medical conditions, health insurance, physical activity, and injuries. We also ask questions that help us better understand the health information you give us. For example, we ask about race, income, and permission to combine your answers with information from other places, like medical records. Most people have no difficulty with any of the questions in the NHIS. However, others find some questions to be sensitive. You do not have to answer any questions you don't want to.

5. WHY DO YOU ASK ABOUT IMMUNIZATIONS?

Immunizations help prevent infectious disease, disability, and death. To get the most accurate picture of children's immunization levels, we may ask you for permission to contact your child's immunization providers. This is only for young children and teenagers, and we ask their providers only for immunization dates and doses. Like all the data we collect, this information is treated as confidential.

6. WHO WILL SEE MY ANSWERS?

We take your privacy very seriously. Only those NCHS employees, our specially designated agents including the U.S. Census Bureau, and our full research partners who must use your personal information for a specific reason can see your answers. Everyone else who uses your data can do so only after all information that could identify you and your family is removed. The answers you give us are used for statistical research only. This means that your answers will be combined with those given by other people in a way that protects everyone's identity.

Strict laws prevent us from releasing information that could identify you or your family to anyone else without your consent. Congress authorized the NHIS data collection in Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act (42 United States Code 242k). The federal laws that require all information we collect to be held in strict confidence are Section 308(d) of the Public Health Service Act [42 United States Code 242m (d)] and the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (PL 107-347). If any federal employee, contractor, or agent gives out confidential information not authorized by law, he or she can be fired, fined and/or imprisoned.

7. WHO LOOKS OUT FOR THE INTERESTS OF SURVEY PARTICIPANTS?

Every year, the Research Ethics Review Board (ERB) of the National Center for Health Statistics reviews survey content and methods to protect study participants. You may call the ERB if you want to ask about your rights as a participant in this research study. The toll-free number is 1-800-223-8118. Please leave a brief message with your name and phone number. Say you are calling about Protocol # 2009-16. Your call will be returned promptly.