

National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

2017-March 2020 Data Documentation, Codebook, and Frequencies

Weight History (P_WHQ)

Data File: P_WHQ.xpt

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Component Description

The NHANES program suspended field operations in March 2020 due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As a result, data collection for the NHANES 2019-2020 cycle was not completed and the collected data are not nationally representative. Therefore, data collected from 2019 to March 2020 were combined with data from the NHANES 2017-2018 cycle to form a nationally representative sample of NHANES 2017-March 2020 pre-pandemic data. These data are available to the public. Please refer to the Analytic Notes section for more details on the use of the data.

The Weight History section of the Sample Person Questionnaire (variable name prefix WHQ) provides personal interview data on several topics related to body weight, including self-perception of weight, self-reported weight over the participant's lifetime, attempted weight loss during the past 12 months, and methods used to try to lose weight and to keep from gaining weight.

Eligible Sample

Participants aged 16 years and older in the NHANES 2017-March 2020 pre-pandemic sample were eligible. However, eligibility varies by age for some questions. Please review the codebook carefully. Frequency counts were verified during the preparation of the file.

Interview Setting and Mode of Administration

Trained interviewers asked these questions, in the home, using the Computer-Assisted Personal Interview (CAPI) system.

For details on the administration of the WHQ_J, please refer to the Weight History Sample Person Questionnaire on the [NHANES website](#).

Quality Assurance & Quality Control

The CAPI system is programmed with built-in consistency checks to reduce data entry errors. CAPI also uses online help screens to assist interviewers in defining key terms used in the questionnaire.

Data Processing and Editing

Edits were made to some variables to ensure the completeness, consistency, and analytic usefulness of the data. Edits were also made, when necessary, to address data disclosure concerns. When a variable was modified globally, as part of the editing process, the third letter in the variable name was changed from a Q (i.e., WHQ) to a D (i.e., WHD). For example, height data were collected as feet and inches, but standardized to inches using the conversion factors 0.3937 inches per centimeter and 12 inches per foot. Current and past self-reported weights were standardized to weight in pounds using the conversion factor 2.2046 pounds per kilogram.

Reported heights and weights, considered being physiologically implausible or the result of interviewer data entry error, were coded as "missing."

If maximum weight (WHQ150) extended over more than one year, the interviewer recorded the most recent

age at which the survey participant reported that weight.

All responses to WHQ150 (age when weighed the most) of 80 years and older were coded as "80" to be consistent with the way age of the survey participant was coded in the demographic file.

Analytic Notes

The COVID-19 pandemic required suspension of NHANES 2019-2020 field operations in March 2020 after data were collected in 18 of the 30 survey locations in the 2019-2020 sample. Data collection was cancelled for the remaining 12 locations. Because the collected data from 18 locations were not nationally representative, these data were combined with data from the previous cycle (2017-2018) to create a 2017-March 2020 pre-pandemic data file. The resulting sample weights in the demographic file should be used to calculate estimates from the combined cycles. These sample weights are not appropriate for independent analyses of the 2019-2020 data and will not yield nationally representative results for either the 2017-2018 data alone or the 2019-March 2020 data alone. Please refer to the NHANES website for additional information for the NHANES 2017-March 2020 pre-pandemic data, and for the previous 2017-2018 public use data file with specific weights for that 2-year cycle.

Although data in this file were collected as part of the household interview, if they are merged with the MEC exam data, exam sample weights should be used for analyses.

Please refer to the [NHANES Analytic Guidelines](#) and the on-line [NHANES Tutorial](#) for further details on the use of sample weights and other analytic issues.

Codebook and Frequencies

SEQN - Respondent sequence number

Variable Name:	SEQN
SAS Label:	Respondent sequence number
English Text:	Respondent sequence number.
Target:	Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

WHD010 - Current self-reported height (inches)

Variable Name: WHD010**SAS Label:** Current self-reported height (inches)**English Text:** These next questions ask about {your/SP's} height and weight at different times in {your/his/her} life. How tall {are you/is SP} without shoes?**English Instructions:** ENTER HEIGHT IN FEET AND INCHES OR METERS AND CENTIMETERS.**Target:** Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
49 to 82	Range of Values	9952	9952	
7777	Refused	1	9953	
9999	Don't know	187	10140	
.	Missing	55	10195	

WHD020 - Current self-reported weight (pounds)

Variable Name: WHD020

SAS Label: Current self-reported weight (pounds)

English Text: How much {do you/does SP} weigh without clothes or shoes?

English Instructions: RECORD CURRENT WEIGHT. IF PREGNANT, ASK FOR WEIGHT BEFORE PREGNANCY. ENTER WEIGHT IN POUNDS OR KILOGRAMS.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
67 to 578	Range of Values	10010	10010	
7777	Refused	13	10023	
9999	Don't know	172	10195	
.	Missing	0	10195	

WHQ030 - How do you consider your weight

Variable Name: WHQ030**SAS Label:** How do you consider your weight**English Text:** {Do you/Does SP} consider {your/his/her}self now to be . . . [If {you are/she is} currently pregnant, what did {you/she} consider {your/her}self to be before {you were/she was} pregnant?]**English Instructions:** CAPI INSTRUCTION: DISPLAY OPTIONAL SENTENCE [If {you are/she is} currently pregnant...] ONLY IF SP IS FEMALE AND AGE IS 16 THROUGH 59.**Target:** Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	Overweight,	5001	5001	
2	Underweight, or	629	5630	
3	About the right weight?	4543	10173	
7	Refused	1	10174	
9	Don't know	21	10195	
.	Missing	0	10195	

WHQ040 - Like to weigh more, less or same

Variable Name: WHQ040**SAS Label:** Like to weigh more, less or same**English Text:** Would {you/SP} like to weigh . . .**Target:** Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	More,	1014	1014	
2	Less, or	6134	7148	
3	Stay about the same?	3039	10187	
7	Refused	0	10187	
9	Don't know	8	10195	
.	Missing	0	10195	

WHD050 - Self-reported weight - 1 yr ago (pounds)

Variable Name: WHD050

SAS Label: Self-reported weight - 1 yr ago (pounds)

English Text: How much did {you/SP} weigh a year ago?

English Instructions: ENTER WEIGHT IN POUNDS OR KILOGRAMS. IF PREGNANT, ASK FOR WEIGHT BEFORE PREGNANCY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
67 to 618	Range of Values	9999	9999	
7777	Refused	8	10007	
9999	Don't know	188	10195	
.	Missing	0	10195	

WHQ055 - CHECK ITEM

Variable Name:	WHQ055
English Instructions:	BOX 1. CHECK ITEM WHQ055: IF WEIGHT IN WHD050 IS 10 POUNDS OR MORE THAN WEIGHT IN WHD020 (E.G., WHD050 = 150 LBS WHD020 = 135 LBS), CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, GO TO WHQ070.
Target:	Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

WHQ060 - Weight change intentional

Variable Name: WHQ060**SAS Label:** Weight change intentional**English Text:** Was the change between {your/SP's} current weight and {your/his/her} weight a year ago intentional?**Target:** Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	Yes	1328	1328	WHD080A
2	No	847	2175	
7	Refused	0	2175	
9	Don't know	0	2175	
.	Missing	8020	10195	

WHQ070 - Tried to lose weight in past year

Variable Name: WHQ070**SAS Label:** Tried to lose weight in past year**English Text:** During the past 12 months, {have you/has SP} tried to lose weight?**Target:** Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	Yes	3453	3453	
2	No	5398	8851	WHQ225
7	Refused	0	8851	WHQ225
9	Don't know	0	8851	WHQ225
.	Missing	1344	10195	

WHD080A - Ate less to lose weight

Variable Name: WHD080A

SAS Label: Ate less to lose weight

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
10	Ate less food (amount)	2901	2901	
.	Missing	7294	10195	

WHD080B - Switched to foods with lower calories

Variable Name: WHD080B

SAS Label: Switched to foods with lower calories

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
11	Switched to foods with lower calories	1572	1572	
.	Missing	8623	10195	

WHD080C - Ate less fat to lose weight

Variable Name: WHD080C

SAS Label: Ate less fat to lose weight

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
12	Ate less fat	1580	1580	
.	Missing	8615	10195	

WHD080D - Exercised to lose weight

Variable Name: WHD080D
SAS Label: Exercised to lose weight
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
13	Exercised	2963	2963	
.	Missing	7232	10195	

WHD080E - Skipped meals

Variable Name: WHD080E
SAS Label: Skipped meals
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
14	Skipped meals	1134	1134	
.	Missing	9061	10195	

WHD080F - Ate diet foods or products

Variable Name: WHD080F
SAS Label: Ate diet foods or products
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
15	Ate 'diet' foods or products	445	445	
.	Missing	9750	10195	

WHD080G - Used a liquid diet formula

Variable Name: WHD080G
SAS Label: Used a liquid diet formula
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
16	Used a liquid diet formula such as slimfast or optifast	326	326	
.	Missing	9869	10195	

WHD080H - Joined a weight loss program

Variable Name: WHD080H

SAS Label: Joined a weight loss program

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
17	Joined a weight loss program such as Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, Tops, or Overeaters Anonymous	199	199	
.	Missing	9996	10195	

WHD080I - Took prescription diet pills

Variable Name: WHD080I
SAS Label: Took prescription diet pills
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
31	Took diet pills prescribed by a doctor	138	138	
.	Missing	10057	10195	

WHD080J - Took non-RX suppl. to lose weight

Variable Name: WHD080J
SAS Label: Took non-RX suppl. to lose weight
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
32	Took other pills, medicines, herbs, or supplements not needing a prescription	261	261	
.	Missing	9934	10195	

WHD080K - Took laxatives or vomited

Variable Name: WHD080K
SAS Label: Took laxatives or vomited
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
33	Took laxatives or vomited	78	78	
.	Missing	10117	10195	

WHD080M - Drank a lot of water

Variable Name: WHD080M

SAS Label: Drank a lot of water

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
34	Drank a lot of water	2793	2793	
.	Missing	7402	10195	

WHD080N - Followed a special diet

Variable Name: WHD080N
SAS Label: Followed a special diet
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
30	Followed a special diet	339	339	
.	Missing	9856	10195	

WHD0800 - Ate fewer carbohydrates

Variable Name: WHD0800

SAS Label: Ate fewer carbohydrates

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
41	Ate fewer carbohydrates	1602	1602	
.	Missing	8593	10195	

WHD080P - Started to smoke or began to smoke again

Variable Name: WHD080P

SAS Label: Started to smoke or began to smoke again

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
42	Started to smoke or began to smoke again	55	55	
.	Missing	10140	10195	

WHD080Q - Ate more fruits, vegetables, salads

Variable Name: WHD080Q

SAS Label: Ate more fruits, vegetables, salads

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
43	Ate more fruits, vegetables, salads	2553	2553	
.	Missing	7642	10195	

WHD080R - Changed eating habits

Variable Name: WHD080R
SAS Label: Changed eating habits
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
44	Changed eating habits	2023	2023	
.	Missing	8172	10195	

WHD080S - Ate less sugar, candy, sweets

Variable Name: WHD080S

SAS Label: Ate less sugar, candy, sweets

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
45	Ate less sugar, candy, sweets	2158	2158	
.	Missing	8037	10195	

WHD080T - Ate less junk food or fast food

Variable Name: WHD080T
SAS Label: Ate less junk food or fast food
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
46	Ate less junk food or fast food	2309	2309	
.	Missing	7886	10195	

WHD080U - Had weight loss surgery to lose weight

Variable Name: WHD080U
SAS Label: Had weight loss surgery to lose weight
English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?
English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.
Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
35	Had weight loss surgery	27	27	
.	Missing	10168	10195	

WHD080L - Other

Variable Name: WHD080L

SAS Label: Other

English Text: How did {you/SP} try to lose weight?

English Instructions: HAND CARD WHQ1. CODE ALL THAT APPLY.

Target: Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
40	Other	79	79	
.	Missing	10116	10195	

WHQ225 - Times lost 10 lbs or more to lose weight

Variable Name: WHQ225**SAS Label:** Times lost 10 lbs or more to lose weight**English Text:** How many times {have you/has SP} lost 10 pounds or more because {you were/he was/she was} trying to lose weight? Was it . . .**Target:** Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	1 to 2	2797	2797	
2	3 to 5	1476	4273	
3	6 to 10	515	4788	
4	11 times or more	448	5236	
5	Never	4907	10143	
7	Refused	0	10143	
9	Don't know	52	10195	
.	Missing	0	10195	

WHQ105 - CHECK ITEM

Variable Name:	WHQ105
English Instructions:	BOX 3. CHECK ITEM WHQ105: IF SP's AGE >= 36, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, GO TO BOX 4.
Target:	Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

WHD110 - Self-reported weight-10 yrs ago (pounds)

Variable Name: WHD110

SAS Label: Self-reported weight-10 yrs ago (pounds)

English Text: How much did {you/SP} weigh 10 years ago? [If you don't know {your/his/her} exact weight, please make your best guess.]

English Instructions: ENTER WEIGHT IN POUNDS OR KILOGRAMS. IF PREGNANT, ASK FOR WEIGHT BEFORE PREGNANCY.

Target: Both males and females 36 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
72 to 700	Range of Values	6769	6769	
7777	Refused	11	6780	
9999	Don't know	208	6988	
.	Missing	3207	10195	

WHQ115A - CHECK ITEM

Variable Name:	WHQ115A
English Instructions:	BOX 4. CHECK ITEM WHQ115a: IF SP's AGE >= 27, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, GO TO WHD140.
Target:	Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

WHD120 - Self-reported weight-age 25 (pounds)

Variable Name: WHD120

SAS Label: Self-reported weight-age 25 (pounds)

English Text: How much did {you/SP} weigh at age 25? [If you don't know {your/his/her} exact weight, please make your best guess.] If (you were/she was) pregnant, how much did (you/she) weigh before (your/her) pregnancy?

English Instructions: ENTER WEIGHT IN POUNDS OR KILOGRAMS. IF PREGNANT, ASK FOR WEIGHT BEFORE PREGNANCY.

Target: Both males and females 27 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
55 to 530	Range of Values	7892	7892	
7777	Refused	7	7899	
9999	Don't know	384	8283	
.	Missing	1912	10195	

WHQ125 - CHECK ITEM

Variable Name:	WHQ125
English Instructions:	BOX 5. CHECK ITEM WHQ125: IF SP's AGE >= 50, CONTINUE. OTHERWISE, GO TO WHD140.
Target:	Both males and females 16 YEARS - 150 YEARS

WHD130 - Self-reported height - age 25 (inches)

Variable Name: WHD130

SAS Label: Self-reported height - age 25 (inches)

English Text: How tall {were you/was SP} at age 25? [If you don't know {your/his/her} exact height, please make your best guess.]

English Instructions: ENTER HEIGHT IN FEET AND INCHES OR METERS AND CENTIMETERS

Target: Both males and females 50 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
41 to 89	Range of Values	4770	4770	
7777	Refused	3	4773	
9999	Don't know	183	4956	
.	Missing	5239	10195	

WHD140 - Self-reported greatest weight (pounds)

Variable Name: WHD140

SAS Label: Self-reported greatest weight (pounds)

English Text: Up to the present time, what is the most {you have/SP has} ever weighed?

English Instructions: ENTER WEIGHT IN POUNDS OR KILOGRAMS. DO NOT INCLUDE WEIGHT DURING PREGNANCY.

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
85 to 700	Range of Values	9548	9548	
7777	Refused	9	9557	End of Section
9999	Don't know	135	9692	End of Section
.	Missing	503	10195	

WHQ150 - Age when heaviest weight

Variable Name: WHQ150

SAS Label: Age when heaviest weight

English Text: How old {were you/was SP} then? [If you don't know {your/his/her} exact age, please make your best guess.]

English Instructions: ENTER AGE IN YEARS. Response cannot be greater than the age of the SP.

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
10 to 79	Range of Values	9330	9330	
80	80 years or older	143	9473	
77777	Refused	3	9476	
99999	Don't know	69	9545	
.	Missing	650	10195	