



# National Center for Health Statistics

## National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey



DECEMBER 18, 2024

CDC’s website is being modified to comply with President Trump’s Executive Orders.

## About NHANES

### AT A GLANCE

- NHANES is the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.
- NHANES is a national survey that measures the health and nutrition of adults and children in the United States.
- NHANES is the only national health survey that includes health exams and laboratory tests for participants of all ages.



## Overview

The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) collects data about the health of adults and children in the United States. We also collect data about what participants eat, drink, and take as supplements to determine how many nutrients are in their diet. These dietary interviews and blood tests help us measure the nutritional status of U.S. adults and children.

CDC’s [National Center for Health Statistics](#) (NCHS) conducts NHANES. NHANES is the only national health survey that includes health exams, laboratory tests, and dietary interviews for participants of all ages.

NHANES data can help improve the health of Americans. Survey data have driven changes in how doctors treat patients and how public policy supports good health.

### Keep Reading:

[What NHANES Data Have Achieved](#)

### Invited to participate?

Visit our [NHANES Participants Website](#) to learn more about how you were selected, what you can expect, and why it's so important to take part in our survey.

[Learn more](#)



## NHANES through the years

The NHANES program began in the early 1960s. It started as a series of surveys that focused on different population groups and health topics. Since 1999, NCHS has conducted NHANES without interruption—what we call continuous NHANES. Now, NHANES can focus on different health and nutrition measurements to meet changing information needs.

Learn more about the history of NHANES in the [CDC Archive](#).

## What's collected

Each year, about 5,000 adults and children in communities across the United States participate in NHANES. We use a random, scientific process to select the people we invite to participate. This process ensures that this group of people can accurately represent the health and nutritional

status of everyone in our diverse nation.

**Keep Reading:**  
[Who Participates In NHANES](#)

To collect data about a wide range of health and nutrition topics, NHANES includes—

- Interviews about health, diet, and personal, social, and economic characteristics
- Visits to our mobile exam center for dental exams and health and body measurements
- Laboratory tests by highly trained medical professionals


**Keep Reading:**  
[What NHANES Studies and How It Works](#)

## Data and documentation


NCHS [publishes reports](#) featuring analysis of NHANES data. Selected estimates also are available as part of [interactive data visualizations](#) that provide tables and charts.

### Data files

[NHANES data files and related documentation](#) are publicly available to download and analyze. The related documentation can help researchers understand and use NHANES data. All potentially identifiable information has been removed to ensure the confidentiality of participants and their households.

[NHANES restricted data files](#) are available through the NCHS Research Data Center (RDC) for a fee. To access restricted NHANES data, researchers must submit requests in the [Standard Application Process portal](#) . The RDC provides [instructions](#) for preparing and submitting an application to access restricted data.

### Linked data

NHANES data also have been linked with data from other sources. This provides more robust datasets that can be used to analyze relationships between data from different sources. Learn more about these [linked datasets](#) .

## How the data are used

Experts use NHANES findings to—

- Determine how common major diseases and behaviors that increase the risk of death, disease, or injury (risk factors) are
- Assess nutritional status and how it relates to promoting good health and preventing disease
- Develop national estimates for obesity, diabetes, and blood pressure
- Study the science of health, patterns and spread of disease, and trends in medical conditions
- Drive public health policy
- Direct and design health programs and services

**Keep Reading:**  
[How People Use NHANES Data](#)

## Program director



Dr. Alan Simon leads the NCHS division that conducts NHANES.

**Dr. Alan Simon** is the Director of the NCHS Division of Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (DHANES) at CDC.

Prior to coming to this role in 2022, Dr. Simon was a medical officer and project scientist for the IDeA States Pediatric Clinical Trials Network. The network is part of the Environmental influences on Child Health Outcomes (ECHO) program in the National Institutes of Health's Office of the Director. There he focused on large, multicenter clinical trials engaging children in rural and underserved states.

Previously, he worked in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women's Health in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health. His work on women and girls' health encompassed a variety of areas, including sports team participation, eating disorders, and opioid misuse.

Dr. Simon also has a decade of experience as a medical officer in the NCHS Office of Analysis and Epidemiology and the NCHS Division of Health Care Statistics.

He received a BA in Economics from Cornell University and an MD from Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. He completed his residency in Pediatrics at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, DC. After residency, he was a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholar at Johns Hopkins University.

He has authored more than 70 publications in the areas of adult and child health, health services, and epidemiology.

## Contact NHANES

For inquiries or suggestions, NHANES staff may be contacted by mail, phone, or email at:

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National Center for Health Statistics  
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1 (800) 232-4636  
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[Contact CDC-INFO](#)

### Get email updates



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### SOURCES

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[National Center for Health Statistics](#)

