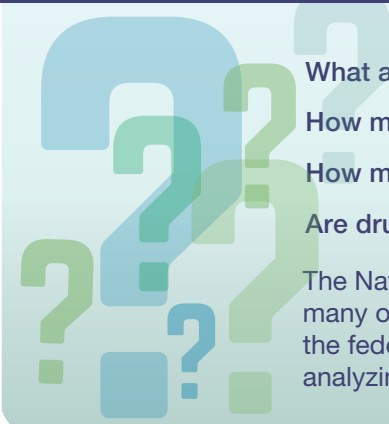
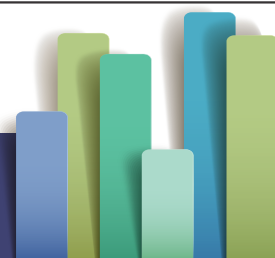


Health Statistics: Measuring Our Nation's Health



What are the leading causes of death in the United States?*

How many Americans smoke?*

How many children have had their vision tested?*

Are drug-poisoning deaths increasing?*

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) collects data needed to answer these and many other key questions about health and health care in the United States. NCHS is part of the federal statistical system, which includes agencies that are responsible for compiling, analyzing, and disseminating data for statistical purposes.

How does NCHS obtain data?

NCHS uses a variety of data collection mechanisms to fulfill its statutory mandate to obtain accurate statistics on a wide range of health issues. NCHS obtains data from all birth and death records filed in states. NCHS also conducts national surveys based on samples designed to represent the American population. Survey methods include:

- Personal interviews in households and by phone.
- Standardized physical examinations, diagnostic procedures, dental examinations, and laboratory tests in mobile examination centers.
- Review of facility information and patient medical records in hospitals, hospital emergency and outpatient departments, physicians' offices, nursing homes, home and hospice care agencies, and residential care facilities.

What data are produced?

NCHS produces data on a wide range of health indicators, such as:

- Births, such as teen, nonmarital, multiple, preterm, and low birthweight births.
- Diseases and health conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, cancer, heart disease, stroke, HIV/AIDS, lung diseases, osteoporosis, asthma, allergies, ADHD, arthritis, and pain.

- Other health status measures, including injuries, disabilities, environmental exposures, oral health, vision, hearing, and mental health.
- Health-related behaviors, such as smoking, physical activity, and alcohol use.
- Nutrition and growth charts.
- Preventive services, such as immunizations and cancer screening.
- Reproductive health, including fertility, contraceptive use, and sexual behaviors.
- Health insurance coverage and access to care.
- Health care use and services delivered by hospitals, hospital emergency and outpatient departments, physicians' offices, nursing homes, home and hospice care agencies, and residential care facilities.
- The health care system, including the use of health information technology and electronic medical records, changing patterns of service delivery, medications prescribed, and complications of care.
- Deaths, such as life expectancy, leading causes of death, fetal deaths, and infant mortality.

NCHS data—a vital public resource for health information—are used and disseminated by a wide range of organizations. To maintain and enhance this resource, NCHS must ensure that these data are relevant, accurate, timely, and accessible.

*The leading causes of death in 2018 were heart disease and cancer (the same as in 2017). The prevalence of current cigarette smoking among adults was stable from 2006 (20.8%) to 2009 (20.6%) and then decreased to 13.8% in 2018. During 2016–2017, 63.5% of children aged 3–5 years had ever had their vision tested by a doctor or other health professional. In 2018, the age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths in the United States (20.7 per 100,000) was 4.6% lower than the rate in 2017.

How does NCHS assure data quality?

- By adopting the highest possible standards for survey design, questionnaire development, and data collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination.
- With a strong commitment to protecting the confidentiality of information collected, thereby gaining the trust of survey respondents and promoting accurate data.
- Through an active program in research and methodology to address significant issues related to survey design—such as how to use advances in technology and how to achieve high response rates—and to assure validity by verifying that survey questions obtain the information NCHS intends to measure.
- By collaborating with other agencies to assure that surveys include appropriate content and that data are analyzed and interpreted accurately, enhancing the value of data for all users.

Who uses these data?

- Polymakers—to track implementation of health policies and programs, set priorities for research and prevention programs, and evaluate outcomes.
- Epidemiologists and researchers—to understand trends in health, health care delivery, risk factors, and outcomes.
- Businesses—to support health-related activities of manufacturing, marketing, and consulting firms and trade associations.
- Public health professionals—to identify and monitor health problems, risk factors, and disease patterns, and to assess the impact of interventions.
- Physicians—to evaluate health and risk factors of their patients (such as norms for cholesterol, body weight, blood pressure, and children's growth).
- Media and advocacy groups—to obtain accurate information for use in raising awareness of health issues.

Data are used to compare health indicators over time and across populations and geographic areas. Most data produced from NCHS surveys are national-level data; if sample sizes are large enough, state data can be produced. National, state, and county data are available on births and deaths.

How are data disseminated?

- Through a comprehensive website featuring easy access to published reports and statistics as well as tutorials and interactive web tools to further support use of the data. NCHS produces a wide range of publications—from easily understandable Data Briefs to more in-depth analyses and methodological studies—to meet different data needs.
- By making public-use data files available. Allowing users to work with these data for their own inquiries fosters valuable analyses that build on information presented in routine NCHS reports.
- Through Research Data Centers that provide secure access to detailed data while maintaining confidentiality of respondents.

All Data Briefs are available in an interactive, searchable, and sortable table format on the NCHS website.

Data Brief Number	Year	Month	Authors	Data Collection	Title	Resources
280	2018	November	Holly Hedegard, M.D., Sally C. Carter, M.A., and Margaret Warner, Ph.D.	National Vital Statistics System	Smoking Mortality in the United States, 1975-2017	death certificates, international and Areas, International and National Vital Statistics System
279	2018	November	Holly Hedegard, M.D., Anahit M. Manly, MPH, and Margaret Warner, Ph.D.	National Vital Statistics System	Drug-Induced Deaths in the United States, 1995-2017	poisoning, opioids, News, National Vital Statistics System, Mortality File
278	2018	November	Kevin S. Murphy, B.S., Suzanne M. Wells, M.S., Alexander A. Kucenas, M.A., and Elizabeth Atlas, Ph.D.	National Vital Statistics System	Mortality in the United States, 2017	file registers, leading causes, National Vital Statistics System
277	2018	December	Kristen A. Harris, Ph.D., and Joyce T. Allen, Ph.D.	National Survey of Family Growth	Cooccurring Conditions Among Women Aged 15-49 in the United States, 2013-2017	U.S. women, LARC, National Survey of Family Growth
276	2018	November	Elizabeth M. Ely, Ph.D., Anne R. DiMatteo, Ph.D., and T.J. Matthews, M.D.	National Vital Statistics System	Infant Mortality by Date of Death in the United States, 2014	infant deaths, deaths, infant and foetal, National Vital Statistics System
275	2018	November	Talene C. Clarke, Ph.D., MPH, Patricia M. Barnes, M.A., Lindsey J. Black, MPH, Barbara J. Newman, B.A., and Richard E. Nahay, Ph.D., MPH	National Health Interview Survey	Use of Time, Multitasking, and Characteristics Among U.S. Adults Aged 18 and Over	complementary health approaches, health, national health, National Health Interview Survey
274	2018	November	Hedegard H. Black, M.P.H., Patricia M. Barnes, M.A., Talene C. Clarke, Ph.D., MPH, Barbara J. Newman, B.A., and Richard E. Nahay, Ph.D., MPH	National Health Interview Survey	Use of Stages, Medication, and Characteristics Among U.S. Children Aged 1-17 Years	complementary health approaches, National Health Interview Survey
273	2018	October	Elizabeth M. Ely, Ph.D., and Bruce E. Hendricks, Ph.D.	National Vital Statistics System	Trends in Fertility and Maternal Age at First Birth Among U.S. and Metropolitan Counties: United States, 2000-2017	rank, 19 years, origin, National Vital Statistics System
272	2018	October	Cheryl D. Fryar, M.S.P.H., Jeffrey P. Hughes, M.P.H., Kristen A. Harris, Ph.D., M.S., and Nannan Tang, Ph.D.	National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	Fat and Consumption Among Adults in the United States, 2013-2016	fat, redness, skin, skin, NHANES
271	2018	September	Kevin S. Murphy, M.S., M.D., Kristin A. Harris, Ph.D., M.S., Joseph Atlas, M.A., and Nannan Tang, Ph.D., D.Sc.	National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	Smoking Consumption in the United States, 2013-2016	smoking, NHANES, NHANES
270	2018	September	Kristin A. Harris, Ph.D., M.S., Anne R. DiMatteo, Ph.D., and Joseph Atlas, M.A.	National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	Smoking Consumption Among Adults in the United States, 2013-2016	smoking, NHANES
269	2018	September	Nicholas D. Breznick, M.P.H., Yu-Ching Chen, Ph.D., Qingping Gu, Ph.D., Mary E. Sherwin, Ph.D., and Sharon Swartz, Ph.D.	National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey	Prevalence of Total, Cholesterol, and Lipoprotein Cholesterol Among Adults: United States, 2011-2016	leading chronic diseases, hypertension, AHA, NHANES
268	2018	August	Joyce A. Martin, MPH, Brady E. Hamilton, Ph.D., and Michelle K. Ockerman, MHS	National Vital Statistics System	Deaths in the United States, 2017	health status, Medical systems, deaths, National Vital Statistics System
267	2018	August	Robin A. Cohen, Ph.D., and Sandra J. Zimmerman, MPH	National Health Interview Survey	High Blood Cholesterol: Prevalence Among Adults Aged 18 and Over: United States, 2011-2016	health insurance, prevalence, National Health Interview Survey
266	2018	August	Elizabeth C. W. Gregory	National Vital	Each of 7 Topics in Focus	data, health, national

For more information about NCHS, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs>.