

The 2017-18 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) Combined Data Set FAST FACTS

What is the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH)?

- The NSCH is a national survey, funded and directed by the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB) that provides rich data on multiple, intersecting aspects of children's health and well-being – including physical and mental health, access to and quality of health care, and the child's family, neighborhood, school, and social context.
- Starting in 2016, the NSCH has several key changes from prior years of the survey. Among these changes, the NSCH consolidated content from two previous surveys (the [NSCH](#) and the [National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs](#)) and is administered via web-based and mail instruments.
- From 2016 onward, the NSCH is fielded annually by the US Census Bureau. 2018 is the third administration of the redesigned NSCH.
- Most data collected during the 2018 NSCH will be comparable to data from the 2016 and 2017 NSCH as the surveys were conducted with the same design and administration.

What is the purpose of the National Survey of Children's Health?

- The NSCH is designed to produce national and state-level data on the physical and emotional health of children 0 - 17 years old in the United States.
- Additionally, the NSCH provides estimates for 19 [Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant](#) National Outcome and Performance Measures, and data for each state's Title V needs assessment.
- For more information on the purpose and specific topics asked about in the NSCH, see [2017 NSCH Fast Facts](#), [2018 NSCH Fast Facts](#), [2017 NSCH Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs), [2018 NSCH FAQs](#), and [NSCH supporting documents](#).

Who sponsors and conducts the National Survey of Children's Health?

- The Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB) provides the primary funding and direction for the NSCH. More information can be found here: <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/data/national-surveys>.
- The NSCH is conducted by the United States (US) Census Bureau, Associate Director for Demographic Programs on behalf of the US Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA MCHB. The US Census Bureau oversees the NSCH's sampling plan and administration by web and mail. They also collect the data and create the sampling weights.
- Additional funding for specific questions on the 2017 and 2018 surveys was provided by:
 - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (NCBDDD)
 - United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service
 - United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Who were the participants in the National Survey of Children's Health?

- Households were randomly sampled and contacted by mail in order to identify those with one or more children under 18 years old. In each household, one child was randomly selected to be the subject of the survey.
- The survey oversampled children with special health care needs and children 0-5 years of age.
- A total of 52,129 surveys were completed for 2017 and 2018 combined. 21,599 surveys were completed in 2017 and 30,530 in 2018. The Overall Weighted Response Rate was 37.4% for 2017 and 43.1% for 2018.
- The 2017 and 2018 combined data set contains approximately 1,022 surveys per state (state range: 952 to 1,112).
- Survey data were weighted each year (adjusted for the combined dataset) to represent the population of non-institutionalized children ages 0-17 who live in housing units nationally and in each state.

How were data for the survey collected?

- Households received a mailed invitation asking an adult in the household who is familiar with the child's health and health care (usually a parent) to complete a short screener questionnaire (via web or paper). The screener asked participants to identify all children ages 0-17 living in the household.
- If a child (or children) was reported to live in the household, participants who chose to respond online were immediately directed to a more detailed, age-specific topical questionnaire for one randomly selected child.
- Participants could also request a paper copy of the screener and topical questionnaire if they did not wish to complete it online.
- For more details about individual survey methods, see [2017 NSCH Survey Sampling and Administration Diagram](#), [2017 Methodology Report](#), [2018 NSCH Survey Sampling and Administration Diagram](#), and [2018 Methodology Report](#).

How similar are the 2017 NSCH and the 2018 NSCH?

- The majority of the questions in the NSCH are the same in both the [2017](#) and [2018](#) surveys.
- For a comparison of the 2017 and 2018 surveys, see "[What's new and changed in the 2018 National Survey of Children's Health as compared to the 2017 NSCH](#)" on the DRC website and the "[NSCH Crosswalk 2017-2018](#)" on the Census website.

What is a combined data set, and what is its purpose?

- A combined data set is one where two or more data sets from individual survey rounds (in this case, the 2017 and 2018 NSCH) are combined into one data set.
- Only items that are the same in both data sets are included in the 2017-2018 combined data set.
- Combining two years of data into one data set gives more opportunities to conduct analyses using variables with small sample sizes or low prevalence for certain response options, as well as the ability to conduct more complex cross-tabs among variables. This is particularly helpful for users who want to analyze data at the state level.
- The combined dataset includes the adjusted weight variable "fwc_1718" which accounts for combining two years of data. The estimates obtained from this combined dataset apply to the average annual or midpoint population size across 2017 and 2018.
- Information on how to combine the datasets and adjust the weights is available in the [Methodology Report](#) and [Guide to Multi-Year Estimates](#) provided by the US Census Bureau.

Are data from the NSCH available to the public?

- The Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health (DRC) website (www.childhealthdata.org) provides quick, easy, hands-on access to 2017 and 2018 NSCH survey data. The DRC's interactive data query (www.nschdata.org/browse/survey) allows users to instantly access the data and compare national

and state-level findings among children of different ages, race/ethnicity, income levels, health status, and many more subgroups.

- Cleaned and labeled 2017-2018 NSCH datasets in SAS, Stata, and SPSS formats will also be available from the DRC at no cost. These datasets include additional key indicators, available at the national and state level, created by DRC staff. You can request the datasets on the DRC website under [“Request a Dataset”](#). For more information, contact info@cahmi.org.
- You can also access the public use data sets in SAS and Stata via the [Census Bureau](#).

Suggested Citation: Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (2019). “Fast Facts: 2017-2018 National Survey of Children’s Health.” Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health, supported by Cooperative Agreement U59MC27866 from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration’s Maternal and Child Health Bureau (HRSA MCHB). Available at www.childhealthdata.org. Revised 10/7/2019.

This project is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Humans Services (HHS) under grant number U59MC27866, National Maternal and Child Health Data Resource Initiative, \$4.5M. This information or content and conclusions are those of the author and should not be construed as the official position or policy of, nor should any endorsements be inferred by HRSA, HHS, or the U.S. Government.