

The 2018 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) 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 American children 0 - 17 years old.
- Additionally, the NSCH provides estimates for 19 Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant National Outcome and Performance Measures and data for state-level Title V needs assessments (note not all data will be available for all states; the state level sample size determines the available data).

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 Census Bureau, Associate Director for Demographic Programs on behalf of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA/MCHB. The US Census Bureau oversees the sampling plan and survey administration by web and mail. They also collect the data and create the sampling weights.
- Additional funding for specific questions on the 2018 NSCH 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
 - 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.
- For the 2018 NSCH, a total of 30,530 surveys were completed nationally for children between the ages of 0-17 years. This was an Overall Weighted Response Rate of 43.1%.

- Approximately 599 surveys were collected per state (state range: 520 to 769). Survey results were weighted 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 or guardian) 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 (i.e., a parent) who chose to respond online were immediately directed to a more detailed, age-specific topical questionnaire for one randomly selected child.
- Households which did not initially respond online received two web follow-up invitations each followed by a postcard reminder. If there was still no response, the household was mailed a paper version of the screener.
- Participants could also request a paper copy of the screener and topical questionnaire if they did not wish to complete it online.

What topics are asked about in the survey?

- Child and family demographics
- Children's physical and mental health status, including health conditions and functional difficulties
- Health insurance status, adequacy and type of coverage
- Access to and use of health care services
- Medical home
- Transition to adult care
- Early childhood-specific information (0-5 years)
- Middle childhood and adolescent-specific information (6-17 years)
- Family health and activities
- Impact of child's health on family
- Parental perceptions of neighborhood characteristics
- Access to community-based services

What's new in 2018?

- 11 items on early language development (ages 1-5)
- Whether some conditions were identified by a blood test after birth
- Hospital stay of at least one night
- Youth and youth's family received a summary of child's medical history

For more details regarding the content available in the 2018 NSCH, please see the [full-length 2018 NSCH instrument](#). The changes are summarized in the "What's new and changed in the 2018 NSCH compared to 2017" document which is available on the [DRC website](#).

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 2018 NSCH survey data. The DRC's interactive data query (www.childhealthdata.org/browse/survey) allows users to instantly access the data to compare national and state-level findings among children of different ages, race/ethnicity, household income levels, health status, and many more subgroups (when sample size permits).
- Cleaned and labeled 2018 NSCH datasets in SAS, Stata and SPSS formats will also be available from the DRC at no cost to Title V leaders and partners and other federal, state or local government agencies, academic and not-for-profit research, educators, students and advocates.
- These datasets include additional key indicators, including the Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant National Performance and Outcome Measures, 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](#).