

## The 2021 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 instituted 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 began administering the survey via web-based and mail instruments.
- From 2016 onward, the NSCH is being fielded annually by the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau. 2021 is the sixth administration of the redesigned NSCH.
- Most data collected during the 2021 NSCH will be comparable to data collected from 2016-2020 as the surveys were conducted with the same design and administration. NSCH surveys conducted prior to 2016 will not be comparable as the methods and design of the survey changed significantly; therefore, comparison or trend analyses can not be conducted between surveys completed prior to 2016 and those completed starting in 2016 to now.

### 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 (note that not all data will be available for all states; the state level sample size determines the available data).
- For more information on the purpose and specific topics asked about in the NSCH, see [2021 NSCH Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) and [2021 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 U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, HRSA MCHB. The U.S. 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 2021 survey 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.
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, Obesity (DNPAO)

## 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 households with more than one child only one 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 2021 NSCH, a total of 50,892 surveys were completed nationally for children between the ages of 0-17 years. State range 788 to 2,956.
- The weighted Overall Response Rate was 40.3%.
- Survey data 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) 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. The NSCH screener and topical questionnaires were available in both English and in Spanish.
- The 2021 survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional items were added to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on health care utilization.
- For more details about individual surveys, see [2021 NSCH Survey Sampling and Administration Diagram](#) and [2021 Methodology Report](#).

## 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 and community characteristics
- Impact of COVID-19 on health care use and childcare

For more details regarding the content available in the 2021 NSCH, please see the [full-length survey instrument](#). To see what is new or changed in the 2021 NSCH, [click here](#).

## Are data from the NSCH available to the public?

- The Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health (DRC) website ([www.childhealthdata.org](http://www.childhealthdata.org)) provides quick, easy, hands-on access to 2021 NSCH survey data. The DRC's [Interactive Data Query](#) 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 2021 NSCH datasets in SAS, Stata, and SPSS formats will also be available from the DRC at no cost. These datasets include 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](mailto:info@cahmi.org).
- You can also access the public use datasets in SAS and Stata via the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).

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