



HEALTH STATISTICS

Protecting the public's health involves making critical health decisions that can affect millions of people. So it is vital that decision makers have accurate, relevant health information. As America's health protection agency, CDC takes the health pulse of the American people. We track threats, the leading causes of death, health inequalities, and access to care according to race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, region, and other population characteristics. CDC provides the essential information for policymaking, biomedical and health services research, and other public health applications. Information can change the world, and CDC is dedicated to providing the highest quality health information to the U.S. and our public health partners around the world.



40%
About 40% of the U.S. government's *Healthy People 2020* objectives are measured and tracked using data from CDC health statistics surveys.



66%
More than 66% of Medicare patients have multiple chronic diseases (such as heart disease and diabetes) that require lifelong medicine or limit daily activities.



5,000
Each year, 5,000 participants provide information for CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey that public health professionals use to track health conditions.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Improved the major data systems that track U.S. health, including the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), which measures nutritional health; the National Healthcare Surveys, which measure the medical sector; the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), which is the largest household health survey in the U.S.; and the National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), which tracks births and deaths in the U.S.
- Provided researchers around the world with data access on biomedical and health information.
- Worked toward developing an electronic death registration system for 25 states that would report deaths within 5 days and cause of death within 10 days—greatly improving CDC's ability to track leading causes of death.
- Monitored the introduction and use of electronic medical record systems in a variety of healthcare settings across the U.S.



315% Increase
Use of electronic health records by physicians increased 315% from 2003 to 2012.



The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey measures America's nutritional health.

A SURVEY THAT PROTECTS YOUR HEALTH

As an analyst with CDC's National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), Jill has long appreciated the value of the health information collected by one of the nation's longest-running nutrition surveys. But she never expected NHANES could have such a dramatic effect on her own life. NHANES is a yearly look at the health and nutrition status of 5,000 Americans across the country and is widely used by state and local health departments.

One afternoon, Jill visited the survey's Mobile Examination Center to participate in a quality control test of the equipment used for physical examinations. These dry-run exams are routinely conducted at each location that NHANES visits to prepare for the actual exams with real survey participants. Part of the exam involved Jill getting a blood test. When her results were examined, she was surprised to learn that her blood mercury level was exceedingly high.

It turned out that Jill had been eating a lot of fish—especially certain species known to have higher mercury levels. High blood mercury levels are known to harm a person's nervous system and can later cause all kinds of long-term health and mental issues. Because blood mercury levels are not measured as part of the usual blood tests offered during routine physical exams, Jill would never have discovered this potentially dangerous health condition had it not been through her work with NHANES. She is certainly very grateful to have participated in the NHANES dry-run exam that day.