

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS): Asthma Content

The BRFSS is a state-level survey of the adult civilian noninstitutionalized population of the United States (age 18 and older). It is conducted cooperatively by the states and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The survey tracks health risk behaviors and preventative health practices. Information from the survey is used to improve the health of the American people and assess progress toward the Healthy People 2020 goals, which are national health objectives established by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Before 1999, several states included questions about asthma on their BRFSS questionnaires, but the wording of the questions varied among those states. In 1999, an optional two-question adult asthma module was added to the BRFSS, representing the first effort to systematically collect state-based asthma prevalence data. Beginning in 2000, the two questions were included in the core BRFSS questionnaire and were asked in all participating states and territories.

Beginning with 2001, nine questions on adult asthma history and two questions on child prevalence became available as an optional asthma module. In 2002, the adult and child questions were separated. The nine adult questions became the Adult Asthma History Module. In 2005, the ninth question on the adult module, which had asked about taking medication in general, was separated into two questions: one about controller medications and one about rescue medications. The two child questions became the Child Asthma Prevalence Module in 2005. In 2005 as well, the Random Child Selection Module was added as an additional step before the administration of the Child Asthma Prevalence Module.

For each year of BRFSS asthma data, two asthma prevalence measures were constructed. Lifetime asthma is defined as an affirmative response to the question "Have you ever been told by a doctor {nurse or other health professional} that you have asthma?" (through 2010) or "Has a doctor, nurse or other health professional ever told you that you had any of the following:" and "Ever told you had asthma?" (starting 2011). Current asthma is defined as an affirmative response to that latter question followed by an affirmative response to the subsequent question, "Do you still have asthma?"

2011 BRFSS Sampling and Weighting Changes:

The 2011 BRFSS data collection changed from a landline sample survey to a dual-mode survey: landline and cell phone. The 2011 BRFSS data reflects a change in weighting methodology (called "raking") and the addition of cell phone-only respondents. Due to these two methodological changes, data from years 2010 and earlier are not considered strictly comparable to data from year 2011 and later. Consequently, BRFSS data from 2010 and earlier should not be compared or combined with BRFSS data from 2011 and later.

More information about the changes to the 2011 BRFSS can be found at the web location:

<http://www.cdc.gov/surveillancepractice/reports/brfss/brfss.html>

Administered by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, CDC, conducted by states

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Survey Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/>

Sampling Frame and Methodology:

- Continuous survey; annual data release
- State-level sample
- Telephone interview
- Two samples: households with landline telephones (disproportionate stratified sample) and cellular telephone respondents (random sample) among the adult civilian non-institutionalized population
- Geography: National, 50 States, District of Columbia, United States Territories

Data available for selected metropolitan/micropolitan areas (see SMART - Selected Metropolitan/ Micropolitan Area Risk Trends):

http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/smart/smart_data.htm

Respiratory Health Content:

Asthma prevalence, adults 18 years and over:

- Lifetime asthma prevalence
- Current asthma prevalence
- Periodic modules on asthma symptoms, medication use, health care use, severity and control – participating states only

Asthma prevalence, children 17 years and younger:

- Lifetime asthma prevalence
- Current asthma prevalence

Questionnaire, Data Access, & Technical Documentation:

All Years Questionnaires: <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/questionnaires.htm>

All Years Data and Documentation: http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/annual_data/annual_data.htm

Results, Reports, & Resources:

Online BRFSS asthma prevalence tables: <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/brfss/default.htm>

Behavioral Risk Factors Data Portal: <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/health-area/behavioral-risk-factors>

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BRFSS Prevalence and Trends Tool: <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/brfssprevalence/>

Note: Starting in 2011, asthma questions are available under the Chronic Health Indicators category

Most Recent Asthma State or Territory Data: http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data_states.htm

Chronic Disease Indicator: <http://www.cdc.gov/cdi/index.html>

Chronic Disease Indicators Data Portal: <https://chronicdata.cdc.gov/health-area/chronic-disease-indicators>

AsthmaStats: http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/asthma_stats/default.htm

BRFSS GIS Maps data: http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/gis/gis_maps.htm

BRFSS MMWR Surveillance Summaries: <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/publications/ssummaries.htm>

Publications & Resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/publications/index.htm>

Developed by CDC National Asthma Control Program: <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/NACP.htm>

Updated
6/19/2018

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Relevant BRFSS Survey Questions:	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005-2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Adult Prevalence														
Did a doctor ever tell you that you had asthma?														
Have you ever been told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you had asthma?														
Do you still have asthma?														
Has a doctor, nurse or other health professional ever told you that you had any of the following:														
(Ever told) you had asthma?														
Do you still have asthma?														
Adult History Module (Participating states vary each year)														
How old were you when you were first told by a doctor, nurse, or other health professional that you had asthma?														
DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, have you had an episode of asthma or an asthma attack?														
DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, how many times did you visit an emergency room or urgent care center because of your asthma?														
DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, how many times did you see a doctor, nurse, or other health professional for urgent treatment of worsening asthma symptoms?														
DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, how many times did you see a doctor, nurse, or other health professional for a routine checkup for your asthma?														
DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS, how many days were you unable to work or carry out your usual activities because of your asthma?														
Symptoms of asthma include cough, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and phlegm production when you don't have a cold or respiratory infection. DURING THE PAST 30 DAYS, how often did you have any symptoms of asthma?														
DURING THE PAST 30 DAYS, how many days did symptoms of asthma make it difficult for you to stay asleep?														
DURING THE PAST 30 DAYS how often did you take asthma medication that was prescribed or given to you by a doctor? This includes using an inhaler.														
DURING THE PAST 30 DAYS, how many days did you take a prescription asthma medication to PREVENT an asthma attack from occurring?														
DURING THE PAST 30 DAYS, how often did you use a prescription asthma inhaler DURING AN ASTHMA ATTACK to stop it?														
Child Prevalence														
Earlier you said there were [fill in number] children age 17 or younger living in your household. How many of these children have ever been diagnosed with asthma?														
Does this child/How many of these children still have asthma?														
Has a doctor, nurse or other health professional ever said that the child has asthma?														
Does the child still have asthma?														

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Relevant BRFSS Survey Questions:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005-2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Random Child Selection Module														
What is the birth month and year of the “Xth” child?														
Is the child a boy or a girl?														
Is the child Hispanic or Latino?														
Is the child Hispanic, Latino/a, or Spanish origin?														
Which one or more of the following would you say is the race of the child?														
Which one of these groups would you say best represents the child’s race?														
How are you related to the child?														

Note: Dark grey areas in table represent inclusion of asthma content for given year(s)

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