



National Health Interview Survey

About NCHS

The CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is the Nation's principal health statistics agency, providing data to identify and address health issues. NCHS compiles statistical information to help guide public health and health policy decisions.

Collaborating with other public and private health partners, NCHS employs a variety of data collection mechanisms to obtain accurate information from multiple sources. This process provides a broad perspective on the population's health, influences on health, and health outcomes.

National Health Interview Survey

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) provides information on the health of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population through confidential interviews conducted in households. The NHIS is one of the nation's largest in-person household health surveys. It provides data for analyzing health trends and tracking progress toward achieving national health objectives. These data, continuously collected throughout the year, are also used for epidemiologic and policy analysis such as characterizing those with various health conditions, determining barriers to accessing and using appropriate health care, and evaluating Federal health programs.

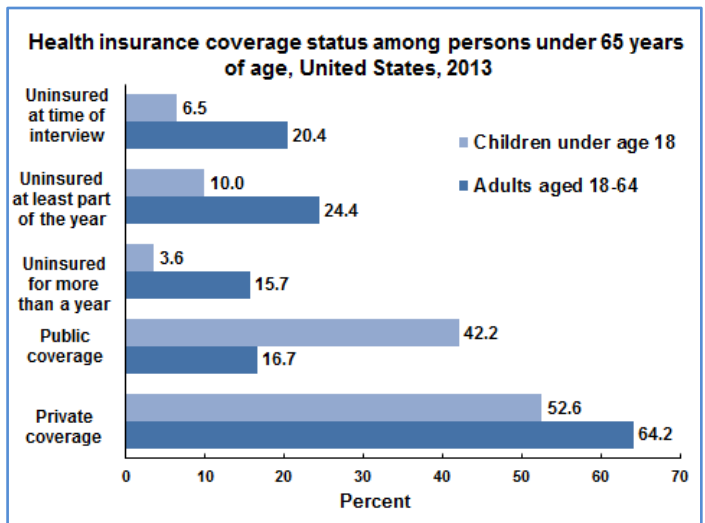
Major health topics addressed

- Physical and mental health status
- Chronic conditions, including asthma and diabetes
- Access to and use of health care services
- Health insurance coverage and type of coverage
- Health related behaviors, including smoking, alcohol use, and physical activity
- Measures of functioning and activity limitations
- Immunizations
- Injuries and poisonings

Examples of NHIS Data

Health insurance data from 2013 show:

- The percentage of **uninsured persons at the time of interview** was 20.4 percent for persons aged 18-64 years and 6.5 percent for children under age 18.
- A total of 44.8 million persons (14.4 percent) of all ages were **uninsured at the time of the interview**, 55.4 million (17.8 percent) had been **uninsured for at least part of the year** prior to the interview, and 33.4 million (10.7 percent) had been **uninsured for more than a year** at the time of the interview.
- Among children under age 18, the percentage who were **uninsured at the time of the interview** decreased from 13.9 percent in 1997 to 6.5 percent in 2013.

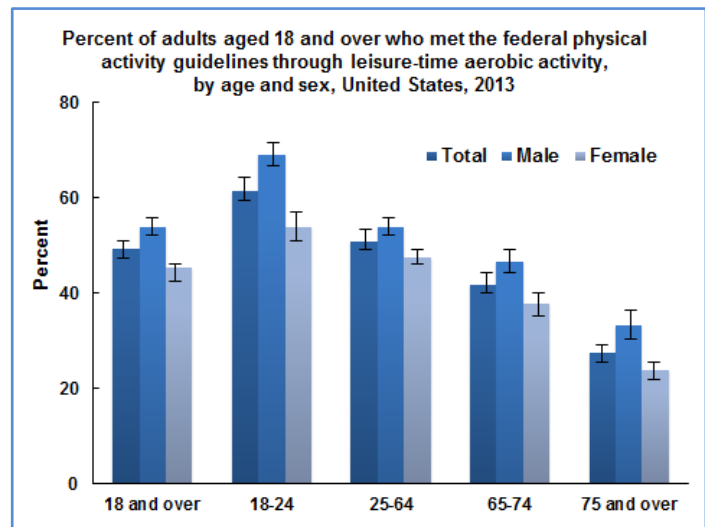


Source: National Health Interview Survey, 2013

Federal **physical activity** guidelines for Americans recommend that adults perform at least 150 minutes a week of moderate aerobic activity, or 75 minutes a week of vigorous aerobic activity, or an equivalent combination of both.

NHIS leisure-time physical activity data from 2013 show:

- For both sexes combined, as age increased, the percentage of adults who met the **physical activity** guidelines for aerobic activity decreased.
- For all age groups, women were less likely than men to meet the **physical activity** guidelines for aerobic activity.
- The annual percentage of adults who met the **physical activity** guidelines for aerobic activity increased from 41 percent in 2006 to 49 percent in 2013.



Source: National Health Interview Survey, 2013

Other NHIS data from 2013 show:

- The percent of persons of all ages with a **usual place to go for medical care** was highest for non-Hispanic whites at 88.3 percent and lowest for Hispanics at 79.0 percent.
- The percent of **current smokers** among adults 18 years and older was highest for non-Hispanic whites at 20.2 percent and lowest for Hispanics at 11.6 percent.
- The prevalence of **diagnosed diabetes** (based on self-report of physician diagnosis) was higher among non-Hispanic blacks and Hispanics than among non-Hispanic whites.

Wireless Substitution Data

Twice a year, NHIS releases the most up-to-date estimates of telephone coverage available from the federal government. These estimates, based on in-person interviews, are used by survey researchers and political pollsters to ensure that their random-digit-dial telephone surveys include sufficient numbers of households with **only wireless telephones**. If telephone surveys do not include wireless-only households, coverage bias could result from differences between persons with and without landline telephones for the substantive variables of interest.

- Results indicate nearly two of every five American homes (41.0 percent) had only **wireless telephones** during the second half of 2013, an increase of 1.6 percentage points since the first half of 2013. In addition, nearly two-thirds (65.7 percent) of adults 25-29 years of age lived in households with only wireless telephones.
- Adults living in wireless-only households had a higher **prevalence of having five or more alcoholic drinks** in 1 day during the past year (29.0 percent) than adults living in landline households (17.2 percent). Wireless-only adults were also more likely to be **current smokers** (22.4 percent vs. 15.2 percent).

Challenges and Future Opportunities

- Implement an online system for real-time analysis of NHIS data, allowing users to easily analyze state-level data.
- Redesign the questionnaire to increase relevance, enhance data quality, and minimize respondent burden, in consultation with other federal agencies and the Healthy People program.
- Maintain efforts successful since 2005 to release public-use data files within 6 months of the data collection year.

For further information about NCHS and its programs, visit us at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs.htm>.
 For further information on the NHIS, visit us at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>.