

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Health Statistics
National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey
Internet address: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes.htm>

The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) provides information on the health and nutritional status of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population of the United States residing in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In 1999, the NHANES design shifted from periodic to continuous data collection. Although each annual sample is nationally representative, for confidentiality and reliability reasons, the survey data are released as public use data files in two-year cycles. Thus, the data release cycle for the ongoing (and continuous) NHANES is described as NHANES 1999-2000, NHANES 2001-2002, NHANES 2003-2004, etc. In addition to the analysis of data from any two-year cycle, it is possible to combine two or more cycles (e.g., 1999-2000 and 2001-2002) to create NHANES 1999-2002, thus increasing sample size and analytic options.

The most recent public use data files and related documentation are available for download from the corresponding NHANES website as follows:

- NHANES 1999-2000 Data Files
Internet address: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhanes/NHANES99_00.htm
- NHANES 2001-2002 Data Files
Internet address: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/nhanes/nhanes01-02.htm>

The Dietary Interview (Individual Foods File) contains detailed information about the types and amounts of each food a survey participant consumed in a 24-hour period. This data file is accompanied by three additional PDF files:

- Codebook – includes names assigned to each data item, question text, response categories, valid values, and other information.
- Documentation – includes information about data collection, quality control, data processing, and analytical procedures.
- Frequencies – includes raw frequency counts for all items in the data file.

The Food Code Format File provides text descriptions for the food codes and was created as a technical support file for linking the text descriptions with the food codes used in the Individual Foods File. The Food Code Format File also is accompanied by a Documentation file in PDF format.

Demographic variables are contained in the Demographics File of the corresponding two-year NHANES. Variables such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, country of birth, marital status, pregnancy status, income, and poverty income ratio are included. The dietary files can be linked to demographic variables by the survey participant identification number (variable name SEQN), which is found in all NHANES files. The Demographics File also includes survey design variables such as two-year and four-year sample weights. Information about using the sample weights and analyzing the data are provided in the NHANES Analytic Guidelines – June 2004 Version. The Guidelines are available as a PDF file on the Internet at:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhanes/nhanes_general_guidelines_june_04.pdf.

NOTE: The Adobe® Reader® is needed to view PDF files. Readers are available for free download from the Internet at the Adobe® website (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>).