



City and County of San Francisco
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 17, 2011

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National Health & Nutritional Examination Survey (NHANES) Comes to San Francisco

A Few Lucky San Franciscans Will Help CDC Learn About Health Status and Develop new Health Policies and Programs

San Francisco, CA – You know those growth charts that hang on the wall in every pediatrician’s office you have ever visited? They were developed as a result of a NHANES (*en-hanes*) survey. Or have you ever wondered how scientists knew there was too much lead in our blood and Congress, through the Environmental Protection Agency, phased it out as an additive in gasoline? NHANES survey. How did nutritionists know that fortifying cereal and grains with iron would effectively combat iron deficiency across the U.S.? NHANES’ nutritional survey. Everyone in the U.S., from babies yet to be born to the frail elderly, have benefited from the information gathered over the past 50 years. The survey itself may not be a household name, but the comprehensive data collected by NHANES has far reaching and significant impacts on everything from the quality of the air we breathe, the vaccinations you get from your doctor, to the emergence of low-fat and “light” foods on the shelves of your grocery store.

And now, a NHANES team of health professionals, nutritionists and health technicians is heading towards the City’s Golden Gate and wants everyone—but particularly San Francisco residents of Asian descent—to know they are coming and, if lucky enough to be selected for the survey, agree to participate. Two-thirds of the participants in San Francisco will be Asian. The San Francisco survey takes place from October through December, 2011.

San Francisco is fortunate to be one of 15 counties surveyed from across the U.S. Each year, approximately 7000 randomly-selected residents from these communities have the opportunity to participate in the latest NHANES, which is conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics. Think of it as the nation’s “health check-up.” The NHANES Survey

- Monitors the health and nutritional status of the U.S. Population
- Serves as a tool for developing effective health policies and programs
- Gives participants an opportunity to gain information about his or her own health
- Provides a comprehensive health survey, including personal interview and physical exam

The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health is to protect and promote the health of all San Franciscans.

We shall ~ Assess and research the health of the community ~ Develop and enforce health policy ~ Prevent disease and injury ~
~ Educate the public and train health care providers ~ Provide quality, comprehensive, culturally-proficient health services ~ Ensure equal access to all

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NHANES provides important data on the health of the U.S, such as the number of individuals who have heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, hypertension, respiratory disease and other conditions. This information is used by public health officials, legislators and physicians to develop sound health policies, direct and design health programs and services, and expand the health knowledge for the nations. As previously noted, NHANES data are used to create (and update) standardized growth charts used by pediatricians across the country to track children's growth.

Individuals selected for the survey represent the U.S. Population covering all ages and race and ethnicities. Respondents first participate in a health interview conducted in the respondent's home. The health examination that follows takes place in one of three mobile examination centers that travel to different communities, large and small, urban and rural, across the country for data collection.

All participants receive an examination by a physician, as well as a dietary interview, and body measurements that include height and weight. Some will be eligible for a hearing test, a scan to evaluate body fat, a breathing test, as well as a blood pressure test. The various tests and procedures depend upon the age of the participant.

No medical care is provided directly in the examination center, but a report on the medical findings is given to each participant along with an explanation from survey medical staff. All individual information collected in the survey is kept strictly confidential, and privacy is protected by public law.

In addition, beginning in 2012, NHANES will embark on a new effort to increase attention to the importance of health related fitness in youth in the United States. This youth survey called the National Youth Fitness Survey (NYFS) will provide additional information with which to evaluate the fitness level of children and adolescents. Given the epidemic levels of childhood obesity throughout the nation, results from this national survey are extremely important. NHANES will begin pilot testing the exam protocol for the NYFS here in San Francisco.

Residents will have an invitation-only opportunity to participate in either the NHANES or the NYFS. Individuals who agree to participate will receive compensation for their time and travel expenses.

A **press conference** to discuss the current NHANES program for San Francisco is scheduled for **Tuesday, October 18, 2011, 11 a.m., San Francisco Department of Public Health, 101 Grove St., Room 300, San Francisco, CA.** Doctors, representatives from the Asian community and NHANES will be available for interviews in English and Chinese.

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