

Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 2.2—Nutrition Common Questions and Answers for Users

The following document provides answers to common questions about the Canadian Community Health Survey, Cycle 2.2 - Nutrition. Further information can be found in the survey documentation. The Statistics Canada User Guide, derived variable documentation, questionnaire and record lay-outs can be accessed from the following link:

<http://www.statcan.ca/cgi-bin/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=5049&lang=en&db=IMDB&dbq=f&adm=8&dis=2>

Q.1 What kind of data are available in CCHS 2.2?

A.1 The CCHS 2.2 – Nutrition survey is composed of two distinct, yet complementary parts: (1) the **general health** component, and (2) the **24-hour dietary recall** component.

The general health component, as its name implies, collected information on the respondent's general health status, including chronic conditions, as well as health-related behaviours such as the consumption of vitamin and mineral supplements, fruit and vegetable consumption, physical and sedentary activities, smoking and alcohol consumption. This component also collected physical height and weight measurements of respondents, along with their socio-demographic characteristics.

The 24-hour dietary recall component was designed to collect information on all the foods and beverages consumed during the previous day's 24 hours from midnight to midnight. Respondents were asked to provide information on the time the food was consumed, the occasion (e.g., breakfast, lunch), additions to foods (e.g., butter on toast), detailed food descriptions, amounts consumed, and whether the meal was prepared at home or elsewhere.

Q.2 What is the difference between the first, second and third waves of the survey?

A.2 The CCHS 2.2 – Nutrition data were made available in **three separate waves**. The **first** wave involved the release of the data collected in the general health component, with the **exception** of the data on vitamin and mineral supplements (which were released in the third wave). In the **second** wave, the detailed 24-hour dietary recall data were released. The **third** wave consisted of the vitamin and mineral supplement data, along with some updates and corrections to previously released data.

Q.3 Can I obtain any dietary information for populations from any of the territories from this survey.

A.3 No, the territories were excluded from this survey.

Q.4 Were young children sampled in the CCHS 2.2 - Nutrition survey?

A.4 The CCHS, Cycle 2.2 collected information for respondents of all ages. The questionnaire was designed to be answered by the selected respondent. However, a proxy interview was required in cases where the respondent was aged 11 or under. For children under

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the age of 6, the parent was the only person providing the information. It was felt that for children of this age group, parents had more control over what their children ate. In the instances where parents could not provide the details, such as meals eaten at a daycare, parents were asked to contact the persons responsible to fill in the details as much as possible. For children aged 6 to 11, the interview was conducted with assistance from the parent.

Q.5 Are the data from CCHS 2.2 – Nutrition comparable to the data from the 1970 - 1972 Nutrition Canada Survey?

A.5 It is theoretically and empirically possible to compare estimates drawn from the two surveys, but certain limitations must be taken into account. We do not have a measure of reliability for the 1970 – 1972 survey (e.g., standard error). The response rates were low (47%) which may influence any results from the survey. Also, there is little information on how the weights were adjusted to account for non-response. These factors may influence the results of any comparisons, so it is important to note the limitations.

More details can be found in the *Guide to Accessing and Interpreting the Data*, Chapter 4, Section 4.4. This document is available at the following link:

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/surveill/nutrition/commun/cchs_guide_escc_e.html

Q.6 How do I access information on the Nutrition Canada survey?

A.6 Information on the Nutrition Canada survey can be accessed through a series of reports that were published from 1973 to 1980. These reports contain detailed information on the survey procedures, food consumption patterns, dental exams and anthropometry. In addition, reports specific to each province, First Nations and Inuits are available. They can be accessed through the National Archives of Canada and in many university libraries.

Q.7 How many respondents were measured for height and weight? How were the measured respondents chosen?

A.7 With their consent, all respondents were measured for height and weight. In cases where respondents were not willing to be measured or who were not physically able to participate in physical measurements (e.g., could not stand unassisted), they were asked to self report their height and weight.

During sample selection, 10% of the sample aged 18 years and over were asked to self report their height and weight in addition to being measured by the interviewer. This 10% of respondents who gave a self-reported answer and were also measured were chosen randomly.

Due to low response rates for the measured height and weight variables, the survey weight specific to the measured height and weight variables must be used. This weight is available on the data file.

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Q.8 What is the BNS, and where can I find a detailed listing of the codes?

A.8 The "BNS food and recipe groups" were developed by the Bureau of Nutritional Sciences (BNS) at Health Canada in the early 1990's based on the British and American food group systems. This variable represents a unique identifier which identifies the BNS food group to which the food item belongs.

This food group system contains two types of classification, one for basic foods and one for recipes. The BNS food groups provide the means to:

- a) categorize and then summarize the detailed food and recipe information collected in nutrition surveys, and
- b) facilitate analyses of the composition of the diet.

Health Canada, the provincial health ministries and universities have also used the BNS food groups to assess the contribution of food categories to the intake of selected nutrients by age/sex groups, income, education, eating locations, among others. BNS codes and descriptions are available at:

http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/document/5049_D23_T9_V1_E.pdf

Q.9 How were serving sizes defined during the collection of 24-hour dietary recall information?

A.9 During the interview, when collecting the 24-hour dietary recall information, a "*Food Model Booklet*" was used as the main measuring guide to help the respondent describe the size or amount of the food consumed. The booklet contains pictures of various sizes of glasses, mugs, bowls, mounds/pats/spreads, and circles. In addition, it includes a grid, two wedges, and a page of shapes and chicken pieces.

Q.10 Can comparisons be made between the CCHS, Cycle 2.2 and CCHS .1 Cycles?

A.10 When comparing results between the CCHS, Cycle 2.2 and a CCHS .1 Cycle a number of issues need to be kept in mind as they could influence the comparability of the data. First, the CCHS .1 Cycles sample at the health region level, whereas the CCHS, Cycle 2.2 samples at the provincial level. This difference in sampling could create differences in the estimates. Second, the CCHS .1 Cycles are a mix of telephone and in-person interviews. All the CCHS 2.2 interviews were conducted in-person. This difference in mode of collection has been shown to have an impact on survey results. More details on the effects of collection mode can be found at the following link:

http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/document/3226_D16_T9_V1_E.pdf.

Third, the context of the surveys is very different. The CCHS, Cycle 2.2 was conducted in the context of a nutrition survey, rather than a broad population health survey. This focused nutrition context may affect how respondents answer the questions. Finally, differences between the two surveys could be the result of a real change in the population or change in policies/programs. However, it is difficult to separate these real changes from the other survey effects, which could have an impact on the data. Further information on comparing results from various survey sources can be found at the following link:

http://www.statcan.ca/english/sdds/document/3226_D17_T9_V1_E.pdf

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Q.11 How do self-reported versus measured height and weight compare?

A.11 In general obesity rates are lower when using self-reported measures of height and weight. Weight tends to be under-estimated and height over-estimated with self-reported data. This has the effect of lowering the calculated Body Mass Index (BMI). More information on comparisons between self-reported and measured height and weight can be found in the methodology section in two articles on obesity in Canada. These articles can be found at the following link:

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/research/82-620-MIE/82-620-MIE2005001.htm>

A more recent report was released in Health Reports in May 2008. This article can be accessed from the following link:

<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/82-003-XIE/2008002/article/10569-en.pdf>

Q.12 Is it possible to analyze respondents by type of diet?

A.12 No, information was not collected on specific types of diets, for example, low-carbohydrate, vegetarian or vegan diets. While it may be possible to classify respondents to these types of diets using the recall information, it is not possible to determine whether the day of their recall is representative of their normal diet.

Q.13 How can we create the food insecurity derived variable as calculated in the Food Security Report?

A.13 The food security derived variable available on the CCHS, Cycle 2.2 data files is not the derived variable used in the Health Canada report. The SAS code used to create the Health Canada derived variable can be obtained from the following email address: cnha_acns@hc-sc.gc.ca

Q.14 Is there a trans fat variable on the file? If not, are there sufficient details on other fats to calculate trans fats?

A.14 Although trans fatty acids are of public interest, these values cannot be included in the Canadian Nutrient File (CNF) database of nutrient values and therefore are not in the nutrient intakes reported by CCHS 2.2. Most of the foods in the CNF are generic representations of a particular food description. For example, data for chocolate chip cookies are a nationally representative average of the most popular selling brands in Canada and do not correspond to a specific brand name. The fatty acid content of individual brands can vary widely, and many companies are presently in the process of re-formulating due to consumer demand.

Q.15 How can we compute the number of servings of every food group consumed by respondents?

A.15 In order to calculate the number of servings from each food group, the CFG (Canada Food Guide) file needs to be used. This file is used with the detailed food files and is available in the Research Data Centres.

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Q.16 Why are there some discrepancies between a summary variable and the individual variables which measure the sum of its parts (i.e. total fats/lipids and the various fats which make up this total)?

A.16 This is usually a result of the use of different chemical methodologies to arrive at the values for the summary variable versus the individual variable. For example, as the individual fatty acids are determined by a different analytical method than that of total lipids, the sum of fatty acids is rarely exactly equal to the total lipids value. The methods used to separate out each fatty acid for quantification are not expected to yield 100% recoveries. Moreover, the total summary variable may contain related components just as total lipid may also contain cholesterol, plant sterols, phospholipids and other minor lipid components outside the fatty acid total.

Q. 17 What comparisons can be made between the revised BRFSS (fruit and vegetable consumption) module and fruit and vegetable consumption in the detailed food data?

A.17 The revised BRFSS module only measures the number of times an individual consumes fruit and vegetables per day, and not the number of servings that are consumed. The number of times consuming fruit and vegetables is the only point of comparison between the module and the detailed food file. In addition, the 24-hour food recall is designed to capture many occasions of fruit and vegetable consumption which may not be captured using the BRFSS module (e.g. occasional snacks, small quantities used in recipes). Furthermore, the 24-hour recall reports the intake from midnight to midnight prior to the interview day, while the BRFSS module does not have a specific reference period. Respondents can report their usual consumption in the past day, week or month, which is then converted to a daily amount. Given the above reasons, there may not be any significant comparisons that can be made between the BRFSS module and the detailed food data.