

Dear Sir/Madam,

National Diet and Nutrition Survey.

We are writing to tell you about an important and unique study that collects information on the eating habits and health status of people in the United Kingdom. It involves gathering information about the food people eat, as well as their lifestyles and general health. All answers will be treated in strict confidence in accordance with the Data Protection Act, and the information will only be used for research purposes and food policy planning.

In the next few days, an interviewer from the *National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)* will call at your address and will be able to explain more about the study. The interviewer will then select, at random, up to two people from your household whom we would like to take part in the survey. Each interviewer carries an identity card which includes their photograph and the *NatCen* logo shown on the top of this letter.

We hope that your household will be willing to help us with this study. All parts of the study are optional and selected individuals can take part in some parts and not others. We rely on the goodwill of those invited to take part to make the study a success. As a token of our appreciation, we will give **£30 in High Street Vouchers** to those completing the survey.

Some questions that you may have about the study are answered on the back of this letter. We also enclose a leaflet which tells you more about the study and why it is being done. If you have any other queries or want further information please contact Helen Selwood at *NatCen* on 0800 652 4572 or visit the National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) website: www.natcen.ac.uk/NDNS.

Many thanks in anticipation of your help.

Yours sincerely,



Gillian Swan
Nutrition Division, Food Standards Agency



Helen Selwood
Operations Department, NatCen

The interviewer who will be calling at your address is: _____



How was my address chosen?

Your address was chosen at random from a list of all postcodes in the UK (the Postcode Address File). This file is held by the Post Office and is available to the public. This file contains addresses but no names, so we could not address the letter to you by name.



What is the study about?

We want to find out about the eating habits, health status and lifestyles of people in the UK and the things that affect them.



Why should I take part?

We need information from a wide range of people including those in or out of work, children and the elderly; otherwise we would not get a true picture of the eating habits and health status of people in the UK. It is important that everyone who is chosen takes part so that the results are representative of the UK as a whole.



What will happen to any information I give?

Any information you give us is treated in strict confidence. The published results of the study will never include any names or addresses. The information collected is used for statistical and research purposes only and will be dealt with according to the principles of the 1998 Data Protection Act.



Who is carrying out the study?

The Food Standards Agency has asked the *National Centre for Social Research (NatCen)*, in collaboration with MRC Human Nutrition Research (HNR), based in Cambridge and the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London (UCL) to carry out the survey.

The *National Centre for Social Research* was set up in 1969 and is a registered charity (Registered Charity No. 1091768). *NatCen*, HNR and UCL are independent of any government departments and political parties.



Contact number and contact names

If you would like to talk to someone about the study, please phone *NatCen* on freephone 0800 652 4572 and ask for Helen Selwood or another member of the NDNS team.

Do I get anything from the survey?

If you wish, you may have a record of your measurements. Also, if you would like, we can send you feedback on your eating habits, which will tell you how what you eat compares with national recommendations.

If I have any other questions?

We hope this leaflet answers the questions you may have, and that it shows the importance of the survey. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ring one of the contacts listed below.

Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

Helen Selwood	Dr Jennifer Mindell
Operations Department National Centre for Social Research Kings House 101-135 Kings Road Brentwood Essex CM14 4LX	Department of Epidemiology & Public Health University College London 1-19 Torrington Place London WC1E 6BT
Freephone: 0800 652 4572	Tel: 020 7679 5646

Your help with this important survey is very much appreciated!

National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)

Information for adults



This study is being carried out for the Food Standards Agency, by the NDNS team: the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen), an independent research institute; Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research (HNR), based in Cambridge; and the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at UCL (University College London).

This leaflet tells you more about the survey and why it is being done.

What is it about?

Over the past twenty years or so there has been a considerable increase in the range of food available in the shops. For many people, this has meant changes in the kinds of food they eat and their eating habits.

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey is a large, national study to find out, in detail, about the eating habits of people in the UK. Everyone taking part will first be asked to first take part in an interview (Stage 1), carried out by one of our trained interviewers. This is to collect information on general eating habits and health, and some basic information about the individual, their lifestyle and their household. The interviewer will also measure your height and weight, if you agree.

We would also like to collect information about eating patterns. If you agree, the interviewer will give you a diary to record information about what you eat and drink over four days, and will arrange to visit you again to collect this and ask a few more questions. Every person who completes this part of the survey will be given **£30 in high street vouchers** as a token of our appreciation.

A small number of people may be asked to take part in a follow-up study that will measure how much energy they use.

The survey also collects, if you agree, some other physical measurements (Stage 2). During this stage of the survey, a registered

nurse will visit – at a time convenient for you – to ask you about your health, and to take the following physical measurements:

- Blood pressure (ages 4 and over)
- Waist and hip circumferences (ages 11 and over)
- Demi-span (all aged 65 and over)
- Mid-upper arm circumference (ages 2-15)
- Infant length (ages 1.5 to 2 years)

People will also be asked if they are willing to make a collection of urine and if they will provide a small blood sample.

The analysis of all the measurements and samples will tell us a lot about the health and nutrition of the population. During the visit, the nurse will be able to explain the importance of these measurements and answer any questions.

All stages of the research are optional, and you can take part in some parts and not others.

Why have we come to your household?

To visit every household in the UK would take too long and cost too much money. Instead we select a sample of addresses in such a way that all addresses in the country have a chance of being selected. You will represent thousands of other people in the country. The addresses were taken from the Postcode Address File, a list compiled by the Post Office of addresses to which mail is delivered.

Some people think that they are not typical enough or are too different from other people to be of any help in the survey. The important thing to remember is that the community consists of a great many different types of people and we need to represent them all in our survey. The results will present a more accurate picture if everyone we approach agrees to take part, and we hope you will.

Is the survey confidential?

Yes. We take very great care to protect the confidentiality of the information we are given. The survey results will not be in a form which can reveal your identity. This will only be known to the NDNS team.

If you agree, however, your name, address and date of birth, but no other information, will be passed to the National Health Service Central Register and Cancer Registry. This would help us if we wanted to know what happens to your health in the future.

Is the survey compulsory?

No. In all our surveys we rely on voluntary co-operation. The success of the survey depends on the goodwill and co-operation of those asked to take part. The more people who do take part, the more useful the results will be. However, you may take part in some parts of the survey but not others and you are free to withdraw from any part of the study at any time.

With your agreement we would like to send your body mass index (BMI), blood pressure and the blood sample results most directly related to your health to your GP. Your GP can interpret the results in the light of your medical history. We believe that this may help to improve your health.

If the GP considers your results to be satisfactory, then nothing further will be done. If your results showed, for example, that your blood pressure was above what is usual for someone of your sex and age, your GP may wish to measure it again. It is for you and your GP to decide what is the best action to take, if any.

Might there be implications for insurance cover?

If you agree to your results being sent to your GP, then he/she may use them in medical reports about you. This may occur if you apply for a new life assurance policy, or for a new job. Insurance companies may ask those who apply for new policies if they have had any medical tests. If so, the insurance company may ask if they can obtain a medical report from the GP. Because of the Access to Medical Reports Act 1988 an insurance company cannot ask your GP for a medical report on you without your permission. Having given your permission, you then have the right to see the report before your GP sends it to the insurance company and you can ask for the report to be amended if you consider it to be incorrect or misleading.

The purpose of a medical report is for the company to judge whether to charge normal premiums, whether to charge higher premiums or whether, in exceptional circumstances, to turn down life insurance on account of the person's health. If you think you may apply for health insurance in the future, you can choose not to know the results of any tests and not to let your GP know these results.

If I have any other questions?

We hope this leaflet answers the questions you may have, and that it shows the importance of the survey. If you have any other questions, please do not hesitate to ring one of the contacts listed below or you can ask the NatCen nurse. Your co-operation is very much appreciated.

Helen Selwood

Operations Department
National Centre for
Social Research
Kings House
101-135 Kings Road
Brentwood
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CM14 4LX

Freephone: 0800 652 4572

Dr Jennifer Mindell

Department of
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University College
London
1-19 Torrington Place
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Thank you very much for your help with this important survey



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- Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research (HNR), based in Cambridge, and;
- the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London (UCL)

You have already taken part in the first stage of the study – an interview, collection of dietary information and some measurements (height and weight). We would like you to take part in the second stage of the study. Read on to find out more!

The Second Stage

A qualified, registered nurse will ask you some further questions and will ask your permission to take some measurements. The measurements are described on the next page. You need not have any measurements taken if you do not wish to but, of course, we very much hope you will agree to them. They are a very important part of this survey. If the survey results are to be useful to the Food Standards Agency, we need information from all types of people with a range of dietary habits and lifestyles. As with information obtained in the first part of the survey, we take great care to protect the confidentiality of all information and test results. If you decide not to see the nurse, the information you have already given us will still be useful but it will be even more valuable with this extra information.

The measurements

• **Blood pressure**

High blood pressure can be a health problem. A person's blood pressure can vary from day to day with emotion, meals, tobacco, alcohol, medication, temperature and pain. Blood pressure is measured using an inflatable cuff that goes around the upper arm. Although the nurse will tell you your blood pressure along with an indication of its meaning, a diagnosis of 'high blood pressure' cannot be made on measurements taken on a single occasion.

• **Waist-to-hip ratio**

Lately there has been much discussion about the relationship between weight and health. We have already recorded your weight and height but another factor is the distribution of weight over the body. The ratio of your waist to hip measurements is most useful for assessing this.

Urine sample

The nurse will ask you if you would be willing to make a collection of urine. We are interested in measuring useful diet indicators in the urine, such as sodium and potassium. These cannot be determined

as accurately from your diet records but we can get this information from the analyses of the urine sample you provide. We would be very grateful if you would take a collection over 24 hours – this will give us much more reliable information than a single collection, about the usual levels of certain elements in your diet. The sample will **not** be tested for drugs or viruses. As a token of our appreciation we will send you **£15 in high street vouchers** for completing this part of the study.

More information is provided in the 24-hour urine instruction leaflet, which the nurse will give you.

Blood sample

We would be very grateful if you would agree to donate a small blood sample after an overnight fast, which means having nothing to eat and only water to drink during an 8-hour overnight period. A trained nurse would visit in the morning, at a time convenient for you, to take a small amount of blood (no more than 34.9ml or 2.5 tablespoons) from your arm using sterile equipment. As a token of our appreciation we will send you **£15 in high street vouchers** for completing this part of the study.

Everyone's blood is a little bit different and reflects dietary habits. Your blood can tell us very interesting things about your nutritional health status, and about the ways in which your body benefits from the food you eat. By using modern laboratory methods, we will be able to measure a very wide range of components in your blood. All of the measurements will be related to nutrition and will be looked at alongside the other information you provided about what you eat. The analysis of your blood sample together with those of all other survey participants will provide us with unique information about the nutritional status of the UK population that cannot otherwise be obtained.

Amongst others, the components of your blood that will be measured include:

Blood lipids - We will measure total cholesterol. Cholesterol is a type of fat present in the blood, related to diet. Too much cholesterol in the blood increases the risk of heart disease.

Haemoglobin & ferritin - Haemoglobin is the red pigment in the blood, which carries oxygen. A low level of haemoglobin is called anaemia. Ferritin measures the body's iron store.

Blood cell count - Blood contains many types of cells, all with different functions. Examples are the red cells, which carry oxygen and the white cells that fight infection.

Vitamins and Minerals - We will carry out analyses for a number of vitamins.

We would also like to store a small amount of your blood. In the future, better and/or new tests for other nutritional markers may become available that allow us to re-test your blood so that we can learn more about how to improve the nutritional health of the population. Any future testing of this blood will also require the consent of the Food Standards Agency, who is funding this study.

The blood samples will **not** be tested for the HIV (AIDS) virus or used for genetic testing.

You are of course free to choose not to give a blood sample and the nurse will ask for your written permission before a blood sample is taken. Everyone who has given consent is free to withdraw at any time.

Letting your GP know the results

The measurements that are potentially clinically relevant will be sent back to you and also to your GP (for their records about you), if you agree. You can choose not to receive the results of your tests if you wish. To make sure that the right results are sent to the right people we use an identification number on the blood sample. Only NatCen can link this number with the name and address of a person.

Interviewer: Name _____

Date of visit _____

Nurse: Name _____

Date of visit _____

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Thank you for your co-operation

Helen Selwood
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Essex
CM14 4LX

Tel: 0800 652 4572

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**National Diet and Nutrition
Survey
(NDNS)**

MEASUREMENT RECORD CARD

FULL NAME: _____

HEIGHT: _____ cm
 _____ ft/ins

WEIGHT: _____ kg
 _____ st/lbs

BMI: _____
 (age 16 and over)

For adults, height and weight information can be used to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). Further information on this calculation and guidance on BMI can be found in the accompanying leaflet or on this website:
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/interactivetools/bmi.aspx

WAIST AND HIP MEASUREMENT (age 11 and over)

First Measurement Waist _____ cms Hip _____ cms
 _____ inches _____ inches

Second Measurement Waist _____ cms Hip _____ cms
 _____ inches _____ inches

MID-UPPER ARM CIRCUMFERENCE (2-15 years):
 _____ cm _____ cm

DEMISPAN MEASUREMENT (age 65 and over)

First measurement _____ cms *Second measurement* _____ cms

INFANT LENGTH (age under 2):
 _____ cm

BLOOD PRESSURE (age 4 and over)

	Systolic (mmHg)	Diastolic (mmHg)	Pulse (bpm)
(i)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(ii)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
(iii)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Blood pressure interpretation for people aged 16 and over:
 Summary of advice given by nurse:

<input type="checkbox"/> Normal	<input type="checkbox"/> Raised
<input type="checkbox"/> Mildly raised	<input type="checkbox"/> Considerably raised

Visit your GP to have your blood pressure checked within:

National Diet and Nutrition Survey

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the next stage of our survey.

A qualified nurse _____

will call on _____ at _____

She/He will be able to give you more information about the measurements.

If for any reason you cannot keep this appointment, please telephone our NDNS Team on freephone 0800 652 4572 so you can make another appointment.

- For 30 minutes before the nurse arrives, if possible please could you:
 - not smoke
 - not drink alcohol
 - avoid vigorous exerciseas this could affect your blood pressure readings.
- It would also be very helpful if you could wear light clothing.
- The nurse needs to record the prescribed medicines that you may be taking as some medicines may affect the measurements. If you are taking any prescribed medicines it would be very helpful if you could have the containers ready for the nurse.

Thank you

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