
Inventory of National Rural Health Research Related Databases

Database name:	National Population Health Survey (Household Survey)
Thematic Coverage:	The NPHS is designed to collect information related to the health of the Canadian population, consisting of both a longitudinal and a cross-sectional component. This sheet details the 1996 survey. Information for the 1994 survey will differ slightly.
Maintained by:	Health Statistics Division, Statistics Canada
Availability:	A public version of the file is available through the Data Liberation Initiative (DLI). Some variables are suppressed (e.g., rural/urban flag) and other are aggregated (e.g., age). If information needs cannot be fully met by the public-use microdata file, it is possible to have access to the detail on the master file through the Remote Access Program, using dummy files to write extraction programs in SAS or SPSS. Custom tabulations are available for the master file on a cost recovery basis
Start Date:	1994
Release Date:	2 years after reference period
Frequency of collection:	Biannual; Cross-sectional component discontinued in 2000 and replaced with the Canada Community Health Survey
Data Collection:	One person aged 18+ asked to complete this survey for the household, completing information on all household residents 12+ years. Sample Computer Assisted Phone Interviews used for data collection.
Sample size:	210,377 for the General Component (44,439 for all 10 provinces plus an additional 165,938 for Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba) 81,804 for the Health Component (17,276 for all 10 provinces, plus an additional 64,528 for Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba) All data is weighted up to the Canadian population.
Geographic coverage:	All Canadian household residents, all ages, excluding natives on reserves, residents of institutions, residents of the Territories, and some remote areas of Ontario and Quebec.
Lowest geographic level collected:	Postal Code, from which all other geography indicators (e.g. urban/rural flags) are constructed.
Lowest geographic level of release:	Province (health region data can be derived in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta due to an increased sample size). Data is suppressed for unweighted cells with less than 30 observations.

Existing rural variable: Yes; Rural/urban flag for all individuals is available on the master file only.

2 level rural/urban flag

“This field permits the identification of “urban” areas, or indicates that the Enumeration Area (EA) is in a rural area. Urban areas are those continuously built-up areas having a population concentration of 1,000 or more and a population density of 400 or more per square kilometers based on the previous census. To be considered as continuous, the built up area must not have a discontinuity exceeding two kilometers. In Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta this variable is set to “valid skip” due to the fact that the grouped health area variable is available for these provinces. In Quebec and British Columbia, records falling within the CMA boundary of Montreal or Vancouver will also have this variable set to “valid skip” since the grouped CMA variable is available. This definition of urban/rural may not correspond to the areas which Canada Post identifies as urban or rural postal codes.” *Extracted from the NPHS users manual.*

Rural definitions that can be constructed from this database include (building block)[†]:

✓	Census “rural areas”	(Enumeration Area)
✓	Rural and Small Town definition	(Census Sub-Division)
✓	Metropolitan area and census agglomeration Influenced Zones	(Census Sub-Division)
✓	OECD “rural communities” definition	(Census Consolidated Subdivision)
✓	OECD “predominantly rural regions” definition	(Census Division)
✓	Ehrensaff’s “Beale codes”	(Census Division)

[†] Results for these areas of geography could conceivably be derived from postal codes if respondent confidentiality is ensured.

Data Elements:

- General health information
- Chronic conditions
- Determinants of health
- Access to services
- Health behaviours
- Use of health care services
- Health status

Notes:

A longitudinal file is also available through custom tabulations only.

There are two components that make up the household survey of the National Population Health Survey: The General Component and the Health Component. For the General Component data is applicable to all members of the household, while the health component is applicable to the respondent only.

The General Component contains general questions on disability, restriction of activities, socio-demographic characteristics, income, education and labour force participation. Estimates from the General Component are reliable at the Provincial level. However given the larger sample size estimates at the Census Division level should not be considered reliable.

The Health Component addresses issues of general health, health status, access and utilization of health care services. Data is gathered from respondents only. Estimates from the Health Component are only reliable at the provincial level.

Given sample size estimates at the Census Division level should not be considered reliable. However, further work needs to be done with the General component as to its' applicability to being derived at the Statistics Canada or OECD definitions of rural.

For more information, contact the Data Access Unit, Population Health Surveys, Health Statistics Division at nphs-ensp@statcan.ca.