

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, everybody who provides information about their eating patterns will be given **£30 in High Street Vouchers**.

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 Susan Duffy 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



Susan Duffy
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 Susan Duffy 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.

Susan Duffy

Dr Jennifer Mindell

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CM14 4LX

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Epidemiology &
Public Health
University College
London
1-19 Torrington Place
London
WC1E 6BT

Freephone: 0800 652 4572 Tel: 020 7679 5646

Website: www.natcen.ac.uk/NDNS

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 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. Your answers will only be used for research purposes. You may be recontacted about your answers for further research but only if you have given permission to do so.

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.

National Diet and Nutrition Survey Measurement Record Card

SN:

NAME: _____

HEIGHT: _____ cm
_____ ft/ins

WEIGHT: _____ kg
_____ st/lbs

BMI: _____

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/magazine/interactive/bmi/index.aspx

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National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS)

The second stage – a nurse visit



Thank you for taking part in the first stage of the study. We would like to invite you to take part in the second stage of the study. Read on to find out more!

The second stage of the survey is a visit by a registered nurse who will contact you in a couple of months. We will send you a **£5 high street voucher** as a thank you for agreeing to see the nurse.

When the nurse visits, they will ask you a few questions about your health and will then explain a bit more about the other elements of the nurse visit, which are:

- **Measurements:** including blood pressure readings and waist and hip measurements.

Why?

Because blood pressure is affected partly by what you eat and drink. Waist and hip measurements tell us about your body shape, which is affected by your diet and exercise.



- **A urine sample:** the nurse will ask you if you would be willing to make a collection of urine for us to test.

Why?

We are interested in measuring useful diet indicators in the urine, such as

sodium and potassium, which cannot be determined very accurately from your diet records. As a token of our appreciation we will send you **£10 in high street vouchers** for completing this part of the study.



- **A blood sample:** the nurse will ask you if you would be willing to provide a small blood sample for us to test.

Why?

Your blood can tell us very important things about your nutritional health status, and about the ways in which your body benefits from the food you eat. If you are interested, we will also send you the results of some of the tests. As a token of our appreciation we will send you **£15 in high street vouchers** for completing this part of the study.

Please remember that all of the above elements of the nurse visit are **optional**. If you don't want to do one of the above measurements then please just tell the nurse when they visit. As with the first stage of the survey, we take great care to protect the confidentiality of all information and test results.



Your nurse will give you another leaflet when she/he visits, which explains the different measurements in more detail.

We hope that you will help us with this next important part of the survey!



Any questions?

Our nurse will try to answer any questions you have. Or, if you like you can email or speak to one of us using the contact details below:

Susan Duffy: Tel ~ *Freephone* 0800 652 4572; email ~ ndns@natcen.ac.uk

Dr Jennifer Mindell: Tel ~ 020 7679 5646; e-mail ~ j.mindell@ucl.ac.uk

Website: www.natcen.ac.uk/NDNS

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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