



Today, people have more ways than ever before to get information about cancer. They can watch TV, listen to the radio, talk to others by phone or in person, read newspapers and magazines, talk to their health care providers, or surf the Web. We know there's a lot of information out there—and that it varies in quality and reliability.

What we did not know, until now, was how to bridge the gap between the information people want and need and the information they get. Where do people turn for guidance on diet and exercise? What happens when a person or a loved one needs to make important medical decisions about treatment or cancer care? What information channels do they rely on and to what information sources do they turn? What makes them believe a source is credible?

The National Cancer Institute's Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS) addresses these questions and many others.

Where can I learn more?

You can find more information online at <http://hints.cancer.gov> where you can also:

- See HINTS questions and answers
- Download HINTS data
- See HINTS research including presentations, abstracts, and publications
- Download the HINTS survey instrument
- Download HINTS Briefs and other materials useful for health communication planning and practice

Questions about cancer?

Call 1-800-4-CANCER or visit www.cancer.gov

Visit our Web site
<http://hints.cancer.gov>



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Health
Information
National
Trends
Survey

hints

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES
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What is HINTS?

HINTS is a national survey designed to collect nationally representative data on the American public's need for, access to, and use of cancer-related information. HINTS was developed by the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences (DCCPS) of the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and was created to monitor changes in the rapidly evolving field of health communication.

What has HINTS done so far?

In 2003, HINTS surveyed a representative national sample of the American public, with an over-sampling of key underserved ethnic and minority populations. The baseline survey collected data on the public's use of mass media, new media, and personal channels. It also monitored the public's knowledge and acceptance of healthy living guidelines. Taken together, the components of the first HINTS captured an invaluable snapshot of how adults use the information resources around them to lead healthier lives. Subsequent surveys followed in 2005 (5,586 Americans surveyed) and 2008 (7,674 Americans surveyed).

How can HINTS help me?

HINTS can help inform public health planners, health care professionals, policy makers, and communication specialists. The survey:

- Shows how people access and use information about cancer
- Gives reliable and valid data on changing patterns, needs, and information opportunities in health
- Identifies how communication practices are changing
- Tells how people perceive their cancer risks

HINTS can help survey researchers and social scientists. The survey:

- Offers a testbed for new theories of health communication and behavior
- Collects data periodically, allowing researchers to monitor trends over time
- Embeds "marker" items from other federal surveys for comparison purposes
- Offers opportunities for local data collection

The HINTS survey:

- Takes the nation's pulse in a period of monumental change
- Finds out where people actually turn for help on important health issues
- Makes health care relevant to you, giving you what you need, when you need it, from sources that are reliable and trustworthy

Who is included in HINTS?

- A weighted probability sample of adults 18 years and older, yielding national estimates of the U.S. population.
- Separate samples collected periodically to monitor for trends
- An oversampling of Hispanic and African American households at baseline
- English speakers and Spanish speakers, as collected through translated versions of the survey

