

Metro Public Health Department Epidemiology and Data FAQ

1. What data do you have available?

The data that are currently available from the Epidemiology Program are outlined at

<http://www.nashville.gov/Portals/0/SiteContent/Health/PDFs/HealthData/201209AavailableDataResourcesMPHDEpidemiology.pdf>. This document will help you understand what data sources we can readily access and a little about each one including a brief description of the data source, what geographic levels are supported, and a sample of the demographic variables included.

2. Why can I not get information for the current year? Why are the data you are presenting old?

The use of current year data is extremely rare in Epidemiology. As we are provided access to raw data, our team must be allowed time to clean the datasets to ensure their integrity, perform data quality checks, perform analysis, and produce reports. The majority of data we use (mortality, natality, fetal deaths, hospital discharge) are provided to us by the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH). Some of these data have a greater lag time than others, but a minimum of 1-2 calendar years is typical. Once a calendar year ends, reporting agencies, including Metro Public Health, are given a specified period of time to complete the previous year's reporting. Once all the data are reported, TDH can begin their statewide compilations, quality assurance, and processing. Some data reported to TDH must then also be reported to federal agencies where the compilation, quality assurance, and processing are repeated. After the data move up this chain, they are then verified and can be passed back down. At this point, MPH and others make a request to TDH for the specific data they wish to use in their work. All these requests are then reviewed, those that are approved are processed, and the data sent back out. It is only after the data have gone through this process and sent to us that the Epidemiology Program can begin working with the data. This is true of just about all the data we have available even if the data originate within other programs within MPH.

3. Can you provide me a dataset that I can analyze myself?

No. As the majority of the data we use are provided to us by TDH, for specific purposes, we cannot in-turn provide the datasets to anyone else. If you are in need of a dataset for a specific project, you may submit a request to TDH for a full dataset by contacting healthstatistics.health@tn.gov.

4. Why are there irregular gaps between the surveys (YRBS and BRFSS) presented on your website?

The YRBS is administered nationally in the spring of odd-numbered years. Typically, the survey is done at the state-level with a few classes from Metro Nashville Public Schools being included as part of the state sample. When the survey is administered in this fashion, the data may not be representative at the

county level, and the sample would be too small. The years for which we do have local YRBS data were years where the administration at the county level was funded from a grant or some other source. The inconsistent availability of such funding sources creates these gaps.

Similarly, the BRFSS while it is administered on an ongoing basis is designed to be used at the state level and is not representative at the county level. Therefore, like the YRBS, only when additional funds are available can the BRFSS be administered in a manner that will provide enough data for us to report Davidson County specific results.

5. Where can I get data for places other than Nashville/Davidson County?

Data for areas outside Davidson County may be obtained from the locations of interest, from TDH, or from some national organizations such as the U.S. Census, which can mine information down to specific locations.

6. Where can I find out how many people have a specific chronic disease?

Chronic disease data are some of the most difficult data to access, particularly at the local level. Some self-reported chronic disease information is available from the BRFSS, but the list of diseases covered on this survey in any given year is limited. Various disease registries exist at the state and national level, which may address certain diseases. Other national surveys like the National Health and Nutrition Survey (NHANES) may also be helpful. Finally, you may need to consult national organizations such as the American Diabetes Association or various centers and institutes that make up the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

7. Where can I find out how many people have a specific infectious disease?

Local information regarding infectious disease can be obtained from various locales within MPHD.

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) HIV/AIDS, Justin Gatebuke, 615-340-5331

All other Notifiable Diseases, Carolyn Haynie, 615-340-5632

8. Where can I get a copy of a birth certificate or death certificate?

Contact Vital Records at MPHD

Birth Certificates 615-340-5611

Death Certificates 615-340-5612

9. Where can I get information about the Women, Infants, and Children's (WIC) program?

Contact the WIC program at MPHD at 615-340-7793.

10. Where can I get information about environmental air issues?

Contact the Air Pollution/Quality Program at MPHD at 615-340-5653.

11. Where can I get information about immunizations/shot records?

Contact the Immunization Program at MPHD at 615-340-5667.

12. Where can I get information about restaurant scores?

Contact the Food Protection Services at MPHD at 615-340-5620.

13. Where can I get information about pest control (rodents, mosquitos)?

Contact Pest Management Services at MPHD at 615-340-5668.

14. Where can I get information about vehicle inspections?

Contact Emission Testing Services at MPHD at 615-340-5653.

15. Where can I get information about swimming pools?

Contact Public Facilities at MPHD at 615-340-5630.

16. Where can I get information about septic systems?

Contact the Septic and Sewage Disposal Systems Program at MPHD at 615-340-5604.

17. Where can I get information about drug and alcohol services?

Contact Behavioral Health Services at MPHD at 615-340-2172.

18. Where can I get information about family planning, pregnancy, and pregnancy terminations?

Contact the Family Planning Clinic at MPHD at 615-340-5607.

19. Where can I learn more about emergency preparedness?

Contact Public Health Emergency Preparedness at MPHD at 615-340-5683.

20. What other sources might have local data I can use?

You may also find some local data at the following websites:

Metro Action Commission

<http://www.nashville.gov/Metro-Action-Commission.aspx>

Metro Planning Department

<http://www.nashville.gov/Planning-Department.aspx>

Nashville Promise Neighborhoods

<http://www.nashvillepromise.org/>

NashVitality

<http://www.nashvitality.org/>

Healthy Nashville

<http://www.healthynashville.org/>

Health Information Tennessee (HIT)

<http://hit.state.tn.us/index.shtml>

U.S. Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov/>

Kids Count

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>

Men's Health Report Card

<http://medicineandpublichealth.vanderbilt.edu/imph.php?userid=599505477&id=22365068>

Women's Health Report Card

<http://medicineandpublichealth.vanderbilt.edu/center.php?userid=1570845&id=49072982>