

## FAQs

- **I received a letter from Statbel regarding the Health Interview Survey. What is this about ?**

It is about a survey organized jointly by the Scientific Institute of Public Health, which is responsible for the content of the survey, the analysis and the reporting of the results, and by Statbel which is responsible for the sampling (based on the National Register), the fieldwork (data collection) and the coding of the data.

- **What is the purpose of the Health Interview Survey?**

The purpose of this survey is to assess the general health state of the population, and the lifestyle characteristics and behavior that may affect it. The results of this survey are used to identify priorities in this area and to enable the authorities to implement a proactive health policy adapted to the real needs of the population.

- **How will this survey be used?**

The health interview survey covers the following areas: health status, lifestyles that can influence health, preventive measures, use of health care services and health and society.

It is important to have quantified indicators to improve public health and access to care, to invest in priority needs and to conduct policies for health promotion and disease prevention.

The different questionnaires used in the survey are also developed in order to enable international comparisons and comparisons with the results obtained in previous Health Interview Surveys. You can find the reports of the previous surveys on the website <http://www.healthsurvey.be>

- **Why organize a survey? Many surveys were organized and not much has changed...**

The time frame between conducting a survey and making decisions based on its results may be very long. But accurate health information is important for improving public health and access to health care, for investing in priority needs, and for conducting policies for health promotion and disease prevention.

- **When will the results be available?**

The data collection for the 11,300 interviews will be completed by the end of 2018. The data will still have to be checked and numerous analyzes will be undertaken. The first results will be published and appear in the media by the end of 2019. You can find the reports from the previous health surveys on the following website: <http://www.healthsurvey.be>

- **How/why my household was selected?**

First, 158 municipalities in Belgium were randomly selected to conduct interviews. Then, households living in in these municipalities were randomly selected from the National Register of the Population. The aim is to invite approximately 6,000 households to participate in 2018 in order to interview 11,300 individuals (up to 4 people per household). Such a number allows to reach a representative sample of the general population in Belgium.

- **I received a letter from Statbel regarding the Health Interview Survey. What does this concretely imply?**

As announced in the introduction letter, an interviewer from Statbel will contact you in order to conduct an interview. There are two questionnaires involved. First, a questionnaire that will be completed by the interviewer - using a PC - with every selected member of your household (maximum of four persons per household). This questionnaire can, in exceptional circumstances, be completed by another member of the household. Questions related to the household must be completed only by the reference person or his / her partner. Second, an auto-questionnaire that will be self-completed by each participant aged 15 years or older.

- **How long does such an interview last?**

An interview can take between 20 minutes to one hour per person, depending on the age and health status of the respondent.

- **Who should answer the questions?**

All selected persons living at the same address (maximum 4 persons per household). In some exceptional cases, another person (whether or not a member of the household) is allowed to reply "in the name of" the selected person. This is called "answers by proxy".

- **Can we do the interview over the telephone?**

No, doing the interview over the phone would be very complicated. The interviewers are legally bound to undertake the interview face to face with the respondents. It is not possible to deviate from this rule.

- **I have already participated in a number of surveys. Should I still participate in this one as well?**

11,300 people were randomly selected on the basis of the National Register to participate in the Health Interview Survey in 2018. It is true that Statbel organizes several surveys each year. It is therefore possible that your household was selected for multiple surveys, but this is rather rare. Statbel is currently developing a system to ensure that a household is invited only once every five years to participate in a survey.

- **I'm going to give birth soon/ I will soon be admitted to a hospital / I'm seriously ill. Can I be exempted from participation?**

This is not a compulsory survey, but to guarantee the quality of the results, it is very important that all the selected households participate. However, we understand your situation and we are aware that it is difficult for you to participate. We suggest, therefore, that another member of your household (aged 18 years and older) answers the question 'in your name'.

- **I'm moving soon. What do I have to do?**

The invitation letter was sent to the address as mentioned in the National Register, and we assume that you are still living at this address for the interviewer's visit. If you do not live at this address anymore, we would appreciate if you could inform us about the new address via the phone number 0800/12033. If you have moved within the municipality, the interviewer will try

to contact you at this new address, if you have moved outside the municipality, you don't have to participate in the Health Interview Survey anymore.

- **I'm not ill. Does it make sense to participate in this survey?**

It is important to interview not only people who have health problems but also people who are in good health as the aim of the survey is to assess the health status of the entire population in Belgium.

- **I'm very ill. Does it make sense to participate in this survey?**

It is important to interview not only people who have health problems but also people who are in good health as the aim of the survey is to assess the health status of the entire population in Belgium.

- **I am too old to participate in this survey ...**

The survey is geared towards the entire population in Belgium, from the youngest to the oldest. If you wish, one of your relatives or friends can attend or assist you during the interview.

- **Is participation in the survey compulsory?**

No, your participation is voluntary. However, we sincerely hope that you will participate in this study because your answers are important to guide health policy. You can withdraw your participation at any time during the interview.

- **Is my privacy sufficiently protected?**

Yes, any information given to us will be treated in the strictest confidence. The survey has been approved by the Privacy Commission and the Ethics Committee of Ghent University Hospital. The interviewers are legally bound to absolute secrecy in relation to the information you provide. Also, the data are made anonymous for data analysis, which means no person's name or address is connected to the answers they give. Finally, results are only ever presented as statistics, not in a form that can reveal the respondent's identity.

- **Will I be paid for participating in the survey?**

No, there is no provision for compensation.

- **How will I know that the person contacting me is really an interviewer?**

The interviewers of Stabel must always show an accreditation card with a photo, a logo of Statbel and a signature of the director of Statbel. Usually, the interviewers also have a copy of the invitation letter addressed to you and they have always a laptop with them. If you still have doubts, it is advisable to contact our services via the phone number 0800/12033.

- **What if an interviewer comes and nobody is at home?**

The interviewers are asked to contact the households selected for the Health Interview Survey several times. During a home visit, the interviewers will leave a business card with the date on which they will contact you again.

- **I am not available for the appointment proposed by the interviewer.**

To make an appointment that suits you better, you can always contact the interviewer if you have his/her phone number (usually you can find this number

at the bottom of the business card). If not, you can contact the number 0800/12033.

- **Do I have to be present at the moment mentioned by the interviewer on the business card?**

Our interviewers have a full quarter to contact the selected households and to interview them. If a household is absent, the interviewers can leave a business card in the mailbox with a new appointment and phone number. If you cannot attend the proposed appointment, it is sufficient to contact the interviewer and to make a new appointment - according to your availability.

- **I want to participate in the survey, but with another interviewer.**

Our interviewers are bound to behave in a correct and polite manner. If this was not the case, we apologize and ask you to report any incident by sending us a message to the following e-mail address: [his@wiv-isp.be](mailto:his@wiv-isp.be), so that we can take the adequate measures. However, it is not possible to send another interviewer.

- **I received an invitation letter weeks ago, but no interviewer has shown up yet.**

We strongly urge our interviewers to contact the selected households as quickly as possible, but sometimes things do not go as planned. If you have already received the invitation letter some time ago, but no interviewer has contacted you, we would appreciate if you let us know via the phone number 0800/12033.