

Delaware Survey of Children's Health Shows Progress in Some Areas, Yet Disparities Remain

Encouraging changes in physical activity, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, and breastfeeding initiation; opportunities remain to address obesity and overweight

Nemours Health & Prevention Services (NHPS) released the findings of the latest Delaware Survey of Children's Health (DSCH). The DSCH is one of the most comprehensive health surveillance instruments for Delaware children ages birth through 17 years. Using parent-reported data collected in 2014-15, the DSCH provides a wealth of valuable information regarding multiple aspects of children's health, including overall health & health care, weight status, healthy living, and the family & neighborhood environment.

Delaware's children are generally reported as being healthy, with more than 85% of children reported by their parents to be in excellent or very good health. And even better, 95% of Delaware children (ages 0-17) were reported to have visited a health care professional for preventive care during the past 12 months. Breastfeeding is also on the rise, with 90 percent of children ages 0-23 months having ever been breastfed, an increase from 74 percent in 2011.

More than half of Delaware children (54%) ages 2-17 consume the recommended 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables, and the percentage of Delaware children ages 2-17 consuming more than 2 cups of sugar-sweetened beverages per week declined from 43 percent in 2011 to 37 percent in 2014. Survey results all show improvements in levels of physical activity, with the percentage of Delaware children ages 2-17 that were physically active for 60 minutes or more every day increasing from 47 percent in 2011 to 55 percent in 2014.

But it's not all good news. Weight status continues to be a problem, with 36% of Delaware children being reported as overweight or obese. Unfortunately, parents don't always see it that way, with 53% of children who are obese (ages 2-17) considered by their parents to be "normal weight." Asthma affects 17% of kids in the First State, and only half of all families with children who have asthma report being counseled by their child's physicians to make changes in their home, the child's school, or some other environment where the child spends his/her time. Disparities also exist depending on a child's age, race/ethnicity, and where he/she lives.

Key Facts About The DSCH

- [See attached Key Findings brief for highlights from the 2014-15 Survey](#)
- Nemours has conducted the DSCH in 2006, 2008, 2011, and most recently in 2014.
- The 2014 DSCH was conducted from July 2014 to May 2015 by telephone, including cell phones.
- The final data set contains data for 2,657 Delaware households with children.
- The following data were collected: household demographics; parent-reported children's healthy eating and physical activity, screen time, beverage consumption behaviors; special medical needs; medical care; neighborhood characteristics; family functioning (parent-child relationship); and parents' recall of Nemours' 5-2-1-Almost None healthy lifestyle message.
- The statewide sample was specifically designed to allow for the analysis and comparison of children living in five geographic locations: New Castle County, the City of Wilmington, New Castle County excluding the City of Wilmington, Kent County, and Sussex County.
- The sample also supports comparisons among children of various age groups (0-5 years, 6-11 years, and 12-17 years), and racial and ethnic groups (Hispanic, non-Hispanic Blacks, non-Hispanic Whites, and non-Hispanic Others).
- Nemours established an online Datacenter to allow for further comparison, download, and visualization of the DSCH data. (<http://datacenter.nemours.org/>)

Quotes

"Nemours has made a promise to protect the health of children not only through care delivery but through innovative programs and initiatives. The Delaware Survey of Children's Health provides critical data that can be used to inform program development, guide children's health initiatives, and monitor key health indicators."

--Mary Kate Mouser, Operational Vice President, Nemours Health & Prevention Services

"The State of Delaware and the Delaware Division of Public Health appreciates Nemours' commitment and

contribution to our shared goal of protecting and improving the health of children. At Public Health, we often emphasize the importance of community factors that can impact a child's health. It is encouraging to see that 91 percent of respondents say that it is easy to get to a place where fruits and vegetables are available. There are also clear opportunities for improvement around safe and walkable neighborhoods given that only 59 percent of parents say they live in a neighborhood where it is definitely safe to play outside and only 65 percent say they live in a neighborhood described as a very pleasant place to walk."

--Dr. Karyl Rattay, Director, Delaware Division of Public Health

"The Delaware Survey of Children's Health data points to an opportunity for health care providers to partner with parents to support children in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. It takes health care providers having these conversations with families; it takes schools, state and community organizations engaging in initiatives to help combat overweight and obesity; it takes families incorporating healthy habits into their everyday lives; it takes all of us, working together to make a difference."

--Dr. Colleen Witherell, Pediatrician, Nemours duPont Pediatrics, Jessup Street

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Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the [Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children](#) in Wilmington, Del., and [Nemours Children's Hospital](#) in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in six states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours CareConnect.

Established as [The Nemours Foundation](#) through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, Nemours provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to families in the communities it serves.

<https://nemours.mediaroom.com/news-releases?item=122410>