



# STEPS Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What are chronic non-communicable diseases?

Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are diseases that are caused largely by our lifestyle choices rather than by infections. They include diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and chronic respiratory diseases. The STEPS Survey is a tool to determine risk factors for developing a non-communicable disease at the population level.

## 2. What are the risk factors that cause NCDs?

The risk factors for NCDs are grouped into modifiable risk factors and biological risk factors. NCDs share four common modifiable risk factors - physical inactivity, unhealthy diet, tobacco smoke and the harmful use of alcohol. The biological risk factors are high blood pressure, overweight/obesity, high blood glucose and high cholesterol.

## 3. Why is it important to study these risk factors?

Chronic non-communicable diseases are the leading cause of death in the country and account for more than 74% of all deaths in The Bahamas. They also demand a lion share of the national health budget to provide medications, health and rehabilitative services. Knowing the prevalence of risk factors helps to tailor policies, systems and interventions. Additionally they help Bahamians understand their risks and empower Bahamians to make healthier choices.

## 4. How can we better understand the impact of these risk factors in the Bahamas?

**STEPS** is a health survey similar to the national census. STEPS is important because it helps the Ministry of Health understand how much of the population has these risk factors. Information is collected on health habits / risk factors for chronic diseases (diseases not caused by infection).

## 5. Do you have to participate in STEPS?

Your participation is very important to the success of the survey. The survey is voluntary, and persons will be asked to sign a consent form to participate.

## 6. Why should you participate in STEPS?

Participating in STEPS is very important. It will help us collect the correct information that a. tell us about the health of our nation, b. forecast and plan for the future demands for health services related to NCDs (e.g. how many nurses, doctors and health centers we will need in the future), c. evaluate how effective their programmes are and to plan programmes and health services to prevent, reduce and control these diseases in our country. At the end of the day, all services, plans and programs are geared toward keeping all Bahamians well and healthy.

When you participate, you will have some of the important health screenings/checks done free of charge in the comfort of your home. You will have your blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol checked. Your height, weight, waist circumference will be measured and urine tested.

**7. What is the ideal number of people needed to participate in STEPS?**

**3,820** persons **18 – 69** years old will be randomly selected to participate in the survey. The survey will be conducted in **New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco, Eleuthera, Exuma, Cat Island and Inagua**. All 3,820 persons need to participate to ensure that the survey findings are of value and can be generalized to the entire population.

**8. How can we be sure the information is kept confidential?**

The Ministry of Health assures that protecting your privacy is very important. The information collected in the study will be kept confidential and no name or address will be used in any reports of the survey. All the information from everyone will be compiled together so no one person can be identified. Persons conducting the interview will be required to sign and adhere to a confidentiality agreement. Additionally, all interviewers signed a sworn oath of secrecy.

**9. What are the components of the STEPS Survey?**

The STEPS survey has 3 parts – STEP 1, 2 and 3. All persons selected will participate in STEP 1.

In STEP 1 the survey questionnaire is completed. The participant will be asked questions about their **age, education, and health habits - Tobacco use, alcohol consumption, physical activity, fruit and vegetable intake, and history of high blood pressure and or high blood glucose (sugar)**.

In STEP 2, the enumerator will take some simple measurements - height, weight, waist circumference and blood pressure.

In STEP 3, health professionals will take a small amount of blood to be tested for fats and sugar as well as a urine sample.

**10. When will STEPS be conducted?**

STEPS will be conducted January – March 2019.

**11. Where is STEPS done and how long does the process take?**

STEPS will be conducted in the community at the homes of those who participate. A team of enumerators/ interviewers from the Ministry of Health, Department of Statistics and University of the Bahamas will come to your home to complete the survey, collect the measurements, blood and urine sample. It takes **approximately 1 hour** to complete the survey and the measurements.

**12. Who gets the information from STEPS?**

The information is collected by a team of persons who were trained to collect the information. They are called Enumerators or interviewers from the Ministry of Health, Department of Statistics and University of the Bahamas. The results of the survey will be printed and presented to the nation by the Minister of Health as well as in research publications, fact sheets and reports. The information is compiled as a whole group for the country. Since the survey is also being conducted in other countries in the region, we will also be able to compare ourselves to other countries.

**13. Where can I get more information about STEPS?**

You can receive more information from the Ministry of Health by calling – 502-4856 or visiting [www.bahamas.gov/ministryofhealth](http://www.bahamas.gov/ministryofhealth) - STEPS