

Information about the Health 2011 survey

Dear Health 2011 participant,

Your participation in the survey is voluntary but very important.

You have been randomly selected to represent Finnish adults in a national survey called Health 2011 on the basis of data contained in the Finnish Population Information System. The objective of the survey is to produce accurate information about the health of Finnish citizens and the underlying factors. Your participation in the survey is very important in order for the survey to produce comprehensive information about the health and healthcare of the entire population. A total of 10,000 individuals representing different age groups will be invited to take part in the survey. Participation in the survey is voluntary.

The Health 2011 survey has been designed by a team of our country's most senior experts. The experts represent the National Institute for Health and Welfare, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the Finnish Centre for Pensions, and various universities. The survey is coordinated by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, and the leading researcher is Professor Seppo Koskinen. The survey will be conducted across the country from August 2011 onwards, and it will conclude at the beginning of 2012.

Employer organisations recommend that employers provide an opportunity for their employees to participate in the survey. You can present the enclosed letter to your employer, if you believe that it can have a positive impact on your ability to take part in the survey. You will also be able to obtain a certificate of attendance at the examination site, if necessary.

Format of the survey

Your contribution to the survey will be based on a questionnaire which you have been sent by post or which you can fill in online. The questionnaire includes questions about your health, your physical fitness, and services that you use, as well as associated factors.

Data contained in public registers

Your results will be combined with data contained in various registers such as those held by the National Institute for Health and Welfare (e.g. hospital discharge and cancer records), the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (e.g. sickness insurance and pension records), Statistics Finland, the Finnish Centre for Pensions, the Finnish Tax Administration, the Population Register Centre, and the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Information will be requested from the registers on a case-by-case basis. Identification of individuals will not be possible from the information disclosed to the researchers.

Significance of the survey

The survey will represent the first set of data on the development of the health and physical fitness of the entire population of Finland. Without this information, public healthcare services cannot be planned and developed effectively. Data on factors that affect the health and illnesses of the entire population are extremely important for promoting health and well-being among all citizens.

Data processing and privacy of personal information

The data will be used in public health research aimed at analysing the development and current status of health and physical fitness as well as the significance of underlying factors. To this end, the information provided by you, your results, and data pooled from public registers will be used together.

The information provided by you and all samples will be stored in a safe location so that third parties are unable to access them. Your personal data, results, and records pooled from public registers will remain confidential in the computers of the National Institute for Health and Welfare. The computers cannot be accessed from the outside. In addition to researchers employed by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, the data will be processed by researchers at the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the Social Insurance Institution of Finland (Kela), the Finnish Centre for Pensions, and certain universities. All data disclosed by the National Institute for Health and Welfare will be submitted without personal identification numbers, and identification of individuals will not be possible. When the data are processed at the National Institute for Health and Welfare, your personal information will be kept separate from your results. No researcher will therefore be able to identify you. All employees of the National Institute for Health and Welfare and the other participating organisations have also signed a non-disclosure agreement.

The data will be controlled by the National Institute for Health and Welfare, they will be carefully archived according to legislation and good research practice, and they will only be used in scientific studies concerning public health.

Further information

Further information is available from the National Institute for Health and Welfare, from the field study coordinator Mr Tomi Mäkinen on 020 610 8690 and the leading researcher Prof. MD Seppo Koskinen on 020 610 8762.

Your participation is very important!