



September 2013

## Welcome and Thank You!

Welcome to this edition of *NHATS & you*, a newsletter designed especially for NHATS participants.

NHATS is only beginning to provide new and important information about older adults in the United States. The data from our first and second round of interviews with participants are starting to show for the first time how daily life changes with age. We are also looking forward to the data from our third round of interviews.

It is only through research studies like NHATS that we will learn how to improve life for all of us as we get older. Thanks to you and more than 8,000 others like you who joined us in this important research study, we are working to understand trends in aging in the U.S.

## New Research Findings

Researchers already have begun to use information gathered during the first NHATS interview.

NHATS data are being used by researchers at some of the top research institutions in the country, including the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the University of Michigan, and Yale University.

Research topics have been far-reaching and include areas such as sleep, pain, and the role of technology in everyday life. With NHATS, researchers can also look at the role of family members in providing care and support, along with the places where older adults live and the services they receive.



Early results from NHATS show that:

- Older adults are getting online more than ever before: 4 out of 10 older adults use email or send text messages and 43 percent use the Internet.
- Half of all older adults report being pain free, and half report sleeping well at night, and these qualities are linked to better functioning.
- Family members play an important role in the medical care of older adults: 1 in 4 older adults is accompanied on doctor visits.
- 55 percent of older adults are fully able to carry out daily activities without assistance or difficulty. About half of this group stays active and independent by using assistive devices such as a cane, grab bar, or other aid.
- Stairs at the entrance to a home can sometimes make it difficult to get outside. This finding suggests that making changes to homes might help many older adults get outside on their own.

## Older Adults' Favorite Activities

In the NHATS Round 1 interview, participants were asked about their favorite activities. The responses were varied and ranged from doing active things outdoors to less active things like reading and watching television. The table below shows the top 10 activities.

Walking is older adults' favorite pastime, followed by gardening and related outdoor chores, and then reading.

Other favorites suggest that older adults enjoy being physically active and include working out and participating in sports such as golf, bowling, and tennis. Artistic experiences such as arts and crafts, sewing, and making music also made the top 10 list.

### Older Adults' Top 10 Favorite Activities

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Walking  |
| 2  | Gardening and doing other outdoor chores   |
| 3  | Reading  |
| 4  | Exercising, swimming, and dancing  |
| 5  | Participating in sports such as golf, bowling, and tennis                              |
| 6  | Watching television  |
| 7  | Playing games and doing number and word puzzles, such as crossword puzzles             |
| 8  | Participating in outdoor activities such as biking, fishing, and boating               |
| 9  | Participating in artistic activities such as arts and crafts, sewing, and making music |
| 10 | Socializing with family and friends  |



Not surprisingly, favorite activities differ between men and women and with age.

Before age 85, most men prefer participating in active sports such as golf, bowling, and tennis whereas, once they reach age 85, the most popular activity is reading.

For women ages 65-74, walking is the most popular pastime, whereas women ages 75-84 enjoy reading most and, by 85, games and puzzles are number one.

### Coming Soon...

We will continue to keep you informed of exciting new research that uses NHATS data. As findings are published, we will make these results available in future newsletters.

Thank you for your continued participation in NHATS!

[www.mynehats.org](http://www.mynehats.org) 1-888-364-8271



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