



National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES): MEC Laboratory Procedures Manual

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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The laboratory component of NHANES includes the collection, processing, storage, and shipping of blood, urine, and other biological and environmental specimens. Collectively, these specimens provide data about the health status of the U.S. population. The blood collection (venipuncture) procedure consists of (1) administering a questionnaire to screen for conditions that exclude the participant from the blood draw; (2) determining fasting status; and (3) performing a blood draw. The phlebotomist also collects one additional blood tube from SPs selected for the VOC (volatile organic compounds) special study on consenting SPs aged 20 years and older. They may administer a dextrose solution (Trutol®) to, and will collect an additional 2-mL gray-top tube from, SPs selected for the oral glucose tolerance (OGTT) component. The purpose of urine collection and processing is to collect sufficient urine from participants aged 6 years and older to be able to (1) perform a pregnancy test on selected females aged 8 to 17 years and all females aged 18 to 59 years to exclude pregnant participants from other components that could put the participant at risk; (2) allocate urine into vessels for storage and transport to multiple government and contract laboratories for analysis; (3) calculate a urine flow rate; and (4) allocate urine into a vessel for future studies. The purpose of blood processing is to (1) perform a complete blood count (CBC); (2) allocate blood (whole blood, plasma, and serum) into vessels for transport to multiple government and contract laboratories for analysis; (3) allocate serum into vessels for future studies; and (4) process serum for environmental testing. The purpose of collecting and processing a vaginal swab and a penile swab is to be able to store and transport the samples to a laboratory for HPV (human papilloma virus) analysis. The purpose of performing a complete blood count on blood specimens is to provide a study of blood cells and coagulation. The purpose of pregnancy testing is to exclude pregnant women aged 8 to 59 years from participating in the dual-energy x-ray absorptiometry (DXA) section of the body composition component of the MEC exam. The purpose of conducting the special volatile organic compounds (VOCs) study is to collect blood to determine the prevalence of exposures to certain chemicals. The purpose of collecting and processing an oral rinse for HPV is to be able to store and transport the samples to a laboratory for HPV (human papilloma virus) analysis. This sample is used to determine the prevalence and type of distribution of infection and to investigate the demographic and behavioral factors associated with infection.

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