

## Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire Finding your ACE Score

The **CDC**—Kaiser Permanente ACE study questionnaire assesses childhood experiences in two dimensions (abuse/neglect and household stressors).

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often ... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often ... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
4. Did you often feel that ...No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family did not look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
5. Did you often feel that ...You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
7. Was your mother or stepmother: Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs? **Yes or No - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_**

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide? **Yes or No** If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

10. Did a household member go to prison? **Yes or No** - If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Now add up your "Yes" answers: \_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score.**

Citations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/cestudy/index.html>

The original ACE study/questionnaire, article published online in American Journal of Preventive Medicine: [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(98\)00017-8/fulltext#Defining%20Childhood%20Exposures](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(98)00017-8/fulltext#Defining%20Childhood%20Exposures).

### **Now that you have got your ACE score, what does it mean?**

[The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study -- the largest, most important public health study you never heard of -- began in an obesity clinic.](#)

The CDC's Adverse Childhood Experiences Study ([ACE Study](#)) [uncovered](#) a stunning link between childhood trauma and the chronic diseases people develop as adults, as well as social and emotional problems. This [includes](#) heart disease, lung cancer, diabetes and many autoimmune diseases, as well as depression, violence, being a victim of violence, and suicide.

The first research results [were published in 1998, followed by nearly 70 other publications through 2015](#). They showed that:

- childhood trauma was very common, even in employed white middle-class, college-educated people with great health insurance.
- there was a direct link between childhood trauma and adult onset of chronic disease, as well as depression, suicide, being violent and a victim of violence.
- more types of trauma increased the risk of health, social and emotional problems.
- people usually experience more than one type of trauma – rarely is it only sex abuse or only verbal abuse.

A whopping two thirds of the 17,000 people in the ACE Study had an ACE score of at least one -- [87 percent of those](#) had more than one. Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia have done their own ACE surveys; their results are similar to the CDC's ACE Study.

Number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Score)	Women	Men	Total
0	34.5	38.0	36.1
1	24.5	27.9	26.0
2	15.5	16.4	15.9
3	10.3	8.6	9.5
4 or more	15.2	9.2	12.5

The study's researchers came up with an ACE score to explain a person's risk for chronic disease. Think of it as a cholesterol score for childhood toxic stress. You get one point for each type of trauma. The higher your ACE score, the higher your risk of health and social problems. (Of course, other types of trauma exist that could contribute to an ACE score, so it is conceivable that people could have ACE scores higher than 10; however, the ACE Study measured only 10 types.)

As your ACE score increases, so does the risk of disease, social and emotional problems. With an ACE score of 4 or more, things start getting serious. The likelihood of chronic pulmonary lung disease [increases](#) 390 percent; hepatitis, 240 percent; depression 460 percent; suicide, 1,220 percent.

(By the way, lest you think that the ACE Study was yet another involving inner-city poor people of color, take note: The study's participants were 17,000 mostly white, middle and upper-middle class college-educated San Diegans with good jobs and great health care - they all belonged to the Kaiser Permanente health maintenance organization.)

Citations: <https://www.acesconnection.com/blog/got-your-ace-resilience-scores>