



Why does the Health Department want to know about my ancestry and race when I have a baby?

The Health Department issues more than 120,000 birth certificates every year. We use the information on birth certificates to learn about the health of mothers and babies of different races and ethnicities. Thanks to this information, we know, for example, that rate of deaths among Black babies has decreased since 2000. Knowing this helps us create ways to provide better care for all babies in New York City.

After you give birth, the hospital will ask you to answer some questions about your *ancestry* and *race*. The information you provide will appear on your baby's birth certificate, which the Health Department will then file. By law, this information is completely confidential. We will **not** share it with anyone and it **cannot** be used to determine your immigration status in any way.

Here is some information that will help you answer the questions about your ancestry and race:

What does *ancestry* mean?

Ancestry refers to the **country** where you or your *ancestors* (your parents, grandparents or great-grandparents) were born. If you were born in the U.S., but have ancestors that were born in different countries, all of those places may be part of your ancestry.

You will be given two ways to answer this question: **Hispanic** or **not Hispanic**. *Hispanic* here means someone who was born (or whose ancestors were born) in a country where most people speak Spanish. Examples of countries are provided for each option. You will have the opportunity to say which country. If your ancestors came from more than one country, answer thinking of the country that you identify with the most. Remember that *ancestry* is different from *religion* or *faith*: we would like to know about the **country** you identify with most, so please don't write your faith.

What does *race* mean?

Race is a way to group people who come from similar countries and who share cultural practices or physical characteristics. We will ask you to tell us about your race, by choosing which of the following you identify with: White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Other Asian, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, and Other Pacific Islander. If these choices look familiar, it is because they also appear on the U.S. Census.

You can **choose as many races as you wish**. For example, you can choose White, Black and Asian Indian, if you think this is what best describes you. If none of these choices describes you, you can choose "Other" and write your own description. Please do **not** write *Hispanic*, *Latina* or a country—we used these before to describe your ancestry.

Thank you for answering our questions when the time comes!

You will receive a copy of your baby's birth certificate from the Health Department about one month after you give birth. The information you give us will help improve the health of babies and children all over New York City. We wish you and your baby the very best!

If you have any questions or would like to get more information, please email vitalQI@health.nyc.gov.



You have the right to services in your language. These services are free at all New York City Health Department offices and clinics.