



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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MRVs MOVING TO EAST BALTIMORE

Our next stop will be in Highlandtown. We will park the Mobile Research Vehicles in the parking lot behind Baltimore City Public School #237 on Gough Street and Fagley Street in the Highlandtown neighborhood. Our recruiters will visit selected homes in the Highlandtown, Greektown, Baltimore Highlands, Baltimore-Linwood, Ellwood Park, and Monument neighborhoods.

WHERE DID THE TRUCKS GO?

You may have noticed that we moved our trucks from Forest Park to our home base at the Gerontology Research Center in East Baltimore. We moved the trucks because we were concerned about participant and staff safety. There were a few incidents on the block where we parked the truck. Our security team in consultation with the Baltimore City Police suggested that it was best for us to provide transportation from the neighborhood to the trucks because there was a high risk of continuing incidents.

We monitor neighborhood safety every day when we are in a neighborhood. If the risk of a dangerous incident becomes too high, then we move the Medical Research Vehicles.



WHAT IS *THE HEALTHY JOURNEY*?

For our new readers, we want to take a moment to tell you about our newsletter *The Healthy Journey*. *The Healthy Journey* is our way of connecting with people who are participating in the HANDLS study.

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SPOTLIGHT ON A TEST

Pulse wave velocity

Pulse wave velocity measures the flexibility of your blood vessels. Over time, blood vessels become less flexible. This is called arterial stiffness. Arteries are blood vessels that carry blood away from your heart to the rest of your body. Increases in arterial stiffness are related to developing high blood pressure, also called hypertension.



Pulse wave velocity measures the time it takes blood to flow from the main arteries near the center of your body to the arteries farther away in the body such as your arms and legs. The speed with which the blood flows through these major arteries is critical in determining the stiffness of the blood vessels. The stiffness of the major arteries in the body is important in determining the risk of health problems such as heart attacks, heart failure, diabetes, and kid-

ney disease. The condition of the major arteries will help in the diagnosis and prevention of diseases related to heart and blood vessels.

How is the pulse wave velocity test performed?

We measure the stiffness of your blood vessels entirely non-invasively, without any needles. We ask you to lie flat on your back on an examination table. With a tape measure, we measure the distance from the upper side of your neck to the base of the neck, from the base of the neck to the top of your navel, and from the top of your navel to your groin area. We place a sensor over the artery in your neck (carotid artery), another sensor over the artery in your groin (femoral artery), and a third sensor over the artery in your wrist (radial artery). We then record the actual flow of blood through your arteries (the arterial waveform) and the speed with which these waves move along the major arteries. The exam is not stressful or painful. The technique used is similar to the one used by healthcare professionals use when they places their index fingers over an artery to feel your pulse.

How long does it take?

The length of time for the test depends on the anatomy of your arteries and on how relaxed you are during the test. Typically, the test takes around 15 to 20 minutes, but it may take up to one hour.

We do not perform the pulse wave velocity test if you are unable to lay flat or if your blood pressure is greater than 180/100 on the day of the exam. If you cannot complete the examination then we may ask you to reschedule your pulse wave velocity test for another time.

FOCUS ON THE HANDLS STAFF

Welcome Lt. Lewis

The HANDLS team welcomes Lieutenant Leroy Lewis as our head security officer. Lt. Lewis is a native of Baltimore City. He grew up in the Lexington Terrace projects and graduated from Southwestern Sr. High School. After graduation, Lt. Lewis joined the United States Navy and completed six years of service. During his service in the Navy, he was fortunate to travel to several



countries including Australia, China, and nations in the Persian Gulf. After completing his military service, Lt. Lewis returned home to pursue a career in security management.

Lt. Lewis said, “Being on the HANDLS team is a pleasure. I am fortunate to work in a family environment. I consider it a blessing to give back to the City of Baltimore.”

We are grateful that he has joined us. We hope that you will stop to welcome him to our team.

FOCUS ON HEALTH: BLOOD PRESSURE

The causes of high blood pressure are unknown, and the disease usually has no symptoms. In fact, many people have high blood pressure for years without knowing it. This can be dangerous, because the longer it’s left untreated, the more serious its complications can become. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart attack, stroke, heart failure and kidney failure. Because high blood pressure is so serious, early detection and treatment are very important. **The only way to find out if you have this disease is to have your blood pressure checked!** A blood pressure test can usually be done in a doctor’s office, hospital clinic, school, or at a health fair.

You can reduce your risk for hypertension by:

- Maintaining a healthy weight, or losing weight, if needed
- Following a healthy eating plan such as the DASH diet described below
- Limiting salt intake to 1,500 milligrams (about $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt) per day
- Engaging in regular physical activity
- Drinking alcoholic beverages in moderation
- Quitting smoking
- Taking medications as directed can help prevent the development of hypertension and other diseases.

Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Eating Plan

DASH is a healthy eating plan that is high in fruits, vegetables, low fat dairy and low fat protein foods. These foods are important in providing your body with heart healthy nutrients like potassium, magnesium, calcium, fiber and protein. The DASH eating plan is proven to be effective in preventing and reducing high blood pressure. In fact, blood pressure can be **lowered within 2 weeks** of following the DASH eating plan *and* reducing sodium consumption.

DASH Recommended Food Groups and Serving Sizes (Based on 2,000 calories)

Tips for making the switch to the DASH eating plan:

- Eat a piece of fruit for dessert
- Eat a salad with dinner
- Enjoy baked chicken instead of fried chicken
- Use low fat salad dressing
- Eat smaller portions of food
- Eat whole wheat bread and whole grains like oatmeal or corn
- Try a baked potato instead of french fries
- Drink water or no calorie beverages
- Snack on raw vegetables, fruit, or unbuttered and unsalted popcorn
- Use lean meats instead of sausage
- Add beans to soups and salads

To Reduce Your Sodium Intake:

- Use fresh, frozen, or low sodium canned vegetables
- Use reduced sodium or no salt added canned soups
- Select microwave meals and frozen dinners low in salt (less than 500 mg of sodium on the label)
- Use Mrs. Dash seasoning instead of salt
- Choose reduced sodium deli meats and cheeses
- Limit your intake of chips, pretzels, and other snack foods
- Limit your intake of fast foods

How Much Physical Activity is Recommended?

Studies that combine the DASH eating plan with physical activity have shown reductions in blood pressure in people under and over the age of 50. The following are physical activity recommendations published in the 2005 Dietary

Guidelines for Americans:

- To reduce the risk of chronic disease: Engage in at least **30 minutes** of physical activity most days of the week
- To help manage body weight and prevent weight gain: Engage in **60 minutes** of physical activity most days of the week

What is Moderate Alcohol Consumption?

Those who choose to drink alcohol should do so in moderation. This means up to 2 alcoholic beverages a day for men and 1 alcoholic beverage a day for women. One alcoholic beverage is defined as:

- 12 ounces of beer, or
- 5 ounces of wine, or
- 1.5 ounces of liquor

Resources

NHLBI Health Information Center
PO Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824-0105
Phone: (301) 592-8573
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

American Heart Association
415 N. Charles St
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 685-7074
www.americanheart.org

National Institutes on Aging- High Blood Pressure
www.niapublications.org/engagepages/hiblood.asp

Food Guide Pyramid
www.mypyramid.gov

American Institute for Cancer Research (Recipes)
www.aicr.org/information/recipes

5-A-Day (Recipes)
www.5aday.com

Healthy Journey, from Page 1

Four times a year we assemble information that we think will interest our participants. We tell you what neighborhoods we are visiting, feature HANDLS staff and participants, and pass along helpful health tips. Some of the topics we have covered already include high blood pressure, diabetes, and depression.

You have made an investment by taking the time to be part of our study. One way we want to express our gratitude is to provide additional information to you about health issues. Look for us at neighborhood association meetings, health fairs, and other community gatherings.

In this issue, we introduce two new features. Our nutritionist, Marie Kuczarski, contributes a seasonal recipe. She promises that the recipe is both simple to make, uses easy to find ingredients, tastes good, and is healthy to eat. What more could we ask?

We also introduce a regular column highlighting one of the tests on the Mobile Medical Research Vehicle. This month, we feature the pulse wave velocity test by explaining what we measure, its importance for your health, and what we do with the information.

PATRICIA JULIEN-WILLIAMS

We regret to announce the departure of Patricia Julien-Williams our Nurse Practitioner. Miss Pat joined the HANDLS staff in 2001. She established many of the referral connections we maintain with community clinics and physicians' offices. Among Miss Pat's duties, she assisted the HANDLS physicians in recording medical histories, managing the blood collection, explaining the significance of test results. We will miss her enthusiasm and her expertise. We are grateful for the contributions she made to HANDLS.

RECIPE: LOW FAT PUMPKIN OATMEAL COOKIES

by Michelle Jones (courtesy of AllHomemadeCookies.com)

These low-fat pumpkin cookies are great for the fall and winter holidays. They make a healthy after school snack for children, too. Try them. You won't believe how good they are until you do!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup pumpkin
- 2 egg whites, whipped
- 1 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1½ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cloves
- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup raisins

Directions:

Spray baking sheet with cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine pumpkin and egg whites. In a separate, combine sugar, flour, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, oats, and raisins. Batter will be dry at first. Mix ingredients together just until moistened.

Drop cookies by tablespoons onto prepared baking sheet, 2" apart. You can leave the cookies in the shape of a ball if you want the baked cookies to be balls. Or, you can flatten them with the bottom of a glass.

Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

TIPS FOR BETTER DENTAL HEALTH

- To get a balanced diet, eat a variety of foods. Choose foods from each of the five major food groups:
 - » breads, cereals and other grain products
 - » fruits
 - » vegetables
 - » meat, poultry and fish
 - » milk, cheese and yogurt
- Limit the number of snacks that you eat. Each time you eat food that contains sugars or starches, the teeth are attacked by acids for 20 minutes or more.
- If you do snack, choose nutritious foods, such as cheese, raw vegetables, plain yogurt, or a piece of fruit.
- Foods that are eaten as part of a meal cause less harm. More saliva is released during a meal, which helps wash foods from the mouth and helps lessen the effects of acids.
- Brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste that has the *American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance*.
- Clean between your teeth daily with floss or interdental cleaners.
- Visit your dentist regularly. Your dentist can help prevent problems from occurring and catch those that do occur while they are easy to treat.

How do I choose foods wisely?

Some foods that you would least expect contain sugars or starches. Some examples are fruits, milk, bread, cereals and even vegetables.

The key to choosing foods wisely is not to avoid these foods, but to think before you eat. Not only what you eat but when you eat makes a big difference in your dental health. Eat a balanced diet and limit between-meal snacks. If you are on a special diet, keep your physician's advice in mind when choosing foods. For good dental

health, keep these tips in mind when choosing your meals and snacks.

How does the food you eat cause tooth decay?

When you eat, food passes through your mouth. Here it meets the germs, or bacteria, that live in your mouth. You may have heard your dentist talk about plaque. Plaque is a sticky film of bacteria.

These bacteria love sugars and starches found in many foods. When you don't clean your teeth after eating, plaque bacteria use the sugar and starch to produce acids that can destroy the hard surface of the tooth, called enamel. After a while, tooth decay occurs. The more often you eat and the longer foods are in your mouth, the more damage occurs.

HANDLS WILL BE BACK SOONER THAN YOU THOUGHT

We invite you to take part in a second research study called *The association of personality and socioeconomic status with health status – An Interim HANDLS Follow-up Study*. This is a follow up study separate from the main HANDLS study. It is designed to occur between your first and second visits to the mobile Medical Research Vehicles.

About 1½ years after your first HANDLS visit, we will contact you by mail or phone. We will do this study in two parts. We may select you to participate in the first part only or both parts. Participation is optional. It will not affect your participation in the main HANDLS study. We will perform the study in your home or in a telephone interview. We will ask you to complete a few questionnaires. The entire study should take about an hour. The questionnaires will ask you about your personality and about any significant illnesses you had since your first examination on the Mobile Research Vehicle.

For the second part of this study, we will randomly select a smaller number of people who participated in the home interview. We will conduct the second part of the study only over the phone. We will ask you to complete a dietary recall questionnaire that asks you to remember what you ate and drank in the last 24 hours. We will use pictures to help you give us information about how much food and drink you had in the last 24 hours. You may remember the dietary recall interview from your first home visit or your visit to the Mobile Research Vehicles. The difference for this study is that we will conduct the interview over the phone.

All of the questionnaires collect information about our research. They are not designed to

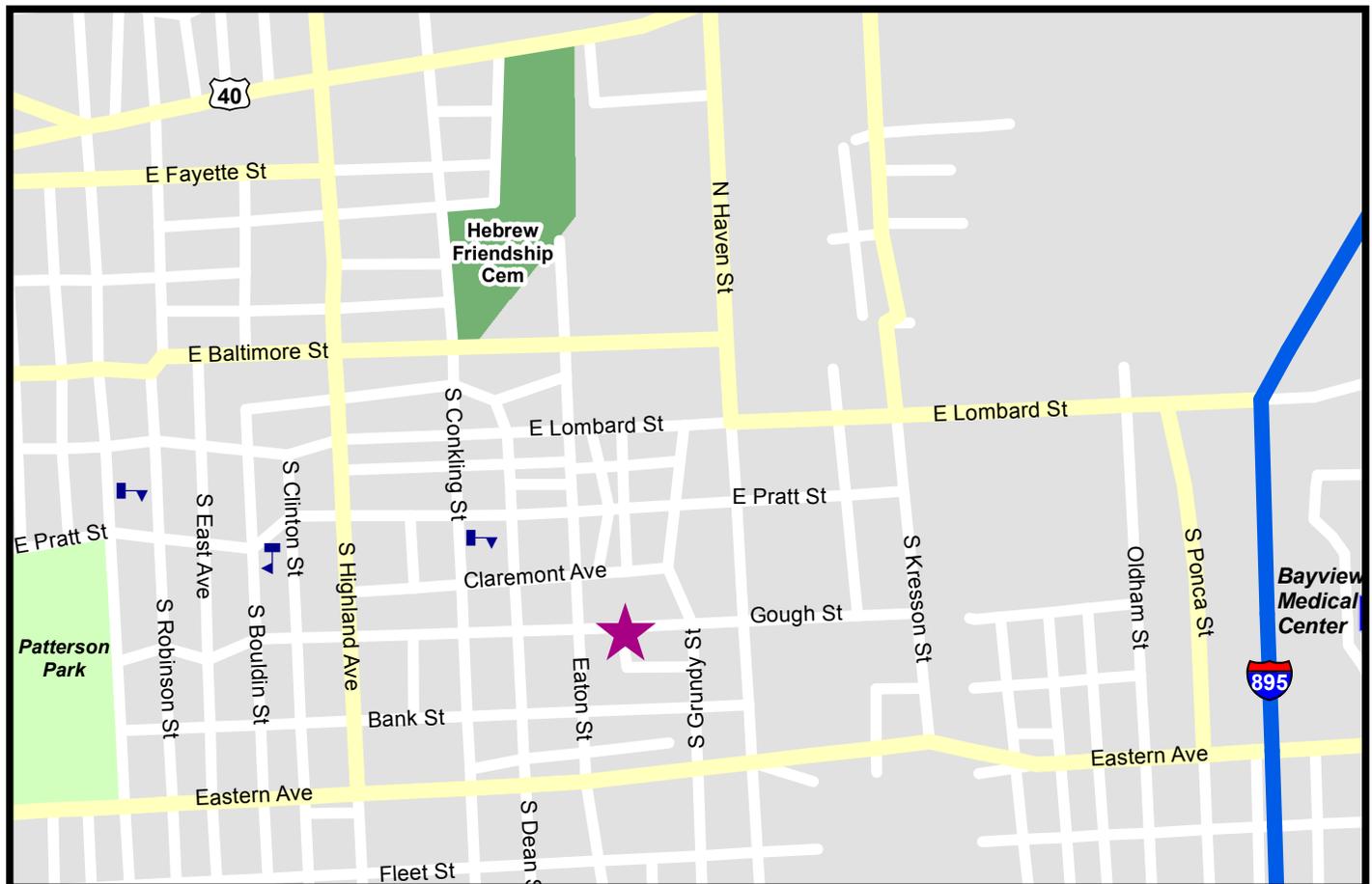
improve your current health. We perform these questionnaires free of charge and we will pay participants.

Participant Contact Information Update

It is very important for us to have the most current contact information (address and phone number) for you so that we will be able to invite you to participate in this study and so that we may be able to send you information about your next Mobile Research Vehicle appointment. If you have moved or have a new phone number since your last visit, please call Jennifer Norbeck at 410-558-8622 to update your contact information.

OUR NEXT MOVE

Our next move will be to the parking lot behind Baltimore City Public School #237 on Gough Street and Fagley Street



The Quarterly Newsletter for the HANDLS Community Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

The purpose of this study is to learn about changes in health over time. Using our medical research vehicles, we want to study as many people with different backgrounds as we can. We want this study to help us understand healthy aging by examining the affects of different backgrounds on changes in health over time. The information that we gather will help improve health and prevent disabilities. We want to do this for people from all backgrounds, particularly those in poor and minority communities.

For information about our study call 1-866-207-8363
or visit our website hands.nih.gov



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Baltimore MD 21224-6825