



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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Why are differences in aging important?

The *Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span* (HANDLS) study is a community-based, long-term study. HANDLS examines whether race and household income effect the development of health conditions related to age. Areas of health studied by HANDLS include nutrition, memory and thinking, body composition and bone quality, physical function and performance, feelings and attitudes, neighborhood environment, and heart disease.

HANDLS is also a study of health disparities, which means that we study how different groups of people – women and men, African Americans and whites – differ in health. Health disparities have been described many different ways, depending on the context in which it is used. In December 2010 the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) introduced an initiative called Healthy People 2020 where they announced their vision, goals and objectives for health promotion and disease prevention in the United States over the next 10 years. Examining and understanding the causes of health disparities is one of their goals for improving health equity. They address the concept of health disparities on their website, in part they say,

Although the term disparities is often interpreted to mean racial or ethnic disparities, many dimensions of disparity exist in the United States, particularly in health. If a health outcome is seen to a greater or lesser extent between populations, there is disparity. Race or

ethnicity, sex, sexual identity, age, disability, socioeconomic status, and geographic location all contribute to an individual's ability to achieve good health.

Healthy People 2020 specifically define a health disparity as

a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory, or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

Furthermore, Healthy People 2020 defines health equity as the

attainment of the highest level of health for all people. Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with focused and ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and health care disparities.

We use the information we collect from HANDLS participants to try to understand some of the underlying factors that could explain persistent black-white health disparities in overall longevity (how long people live), cardiovascular (heart) disease, and cognitive (memory



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and thinking) decline. The HANDLS study is designed to gain a better understanding of how to eliminate and prevent health disparities.

The HANDLS participants who have returned for their MRV visits every few years have provided us with valuable health information for over 10 years. As you know, this information allows us to better understand some of diseases related to aging. This information also helps explain why there are differences in how and when people develop certain diseases. Your continued participation is crucial to the success of our study. The longer you participate in HANDLS by returning to the MRV for your appointments the more we can learn about health disparities. The Principal Investigators, Drs. Michele Evans and Alan Zonderman extend their heartfelt thank you to all our participants. We value your continued participation and we are grateful for your support of the study.

To learn more about how the Department of Health and Human Services is addressing health disparities you can visit the Healthy People 2020 webpage here: <http://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/about/foundation-health-measures/Disparities>

Study update

HANDLS is a 20-year, long-term study. Every time we start a new round of examination visits, we start a new *wave*. We are currently about halfway through wave 4. Here's what we've done so far.

HANDLS recruited 3720 Baltimore City residents from August 2004 through November 2009 as Wave 1. Wave 2 was a follow-up telephone interview approximately 18 months after Wave 1. Wave 3 was the first follow-up examination and participants' second visit to our mobile Medical Research Vehicles (MRVs). We're now in Wave 4, the third follow-up visit to the MRVs. We also started our Home Visit Program (HHVP) for participants unable to visit our MRVs.

Since beginning the study we have published over 100 articles in medical journals on topics including nutrition, chronic kidney disease, vitamin D, cognitive functioning, mental health, and cardiovascular disease, just to name a few. In May of 2015 we held a full-day conference at the National Institute on Aging with about 15 speakers, all of whom presented findings from the HANDLS study. For a full listing of HANDLS publications please visit our website (<http://handls.nih.gov>).

Allison Udris

Meet one of the newest HANDLS team members, Allison Udris.



Allison works for the HANDLS research study completing psychological assessments, psychosocial inventories, brief solution-focused counseling based on elevated symptom of depression scores and suicidality risk assessments. You may recognize her as the tester who administers the questionnaire on the iPad.

Allison graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Spanish from Cabrini College in Wayne, PA and then obtained her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Loyola University of Maryland. She is a licensed graduate professional counselor and is currently working towards obtaining her credentials to become a licensed clinical professional counselor.



Off hours, Allison enjoys running. You may have seen her running in the Broad Street Run or the Baltimore Running Festival. Currently she is training to complete a full marathon.

Root vegetables: Healthy, delicious, affordable

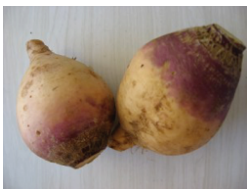
Emily Stave

Eating enough fruits and vegetables every day is necessary for good health. Experts about nutrition recommend you should fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables at every meal. Fruits and vegetables may prevent many illnesses such as heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer. They can also protect vision, and aid digestion.



Although fruits and vegetables provide great health benefits, it is not always easy to find enough to eat every day. In wintertime, your favorite fruits and vegetables may be out of season

so they become pricy and less available. Luckily, root vegetables grow well during the winter. These include carrots, beets, parsnips, radishes, sweet potatoes, and turnips. These vegetables are rich in nutrients, are low in fat and calories, and packed with vitamins such as beta-carotene, vitamin C, folate, and minerals like potassium.



Root vegetables can be used in many dishes. Here are some delicious ideas that will help you get enough vegetables even during the winter months!

- Carrots, daikon, beets, and jicama can be shredded and added to a salad or a sandwich giving a nice crunch!
- Try vegetables grilled or roasted. Peel and slice them, brush them with oil, and throw them on the grill or in the oven at 400°.
- Root vegetables are a great addition to any stir fry. Just remember to sauté the root vegetables first; they take longer to cook than other vegetables.
- Roasting root vegetables makes for a delicious meal. Try these Balsamic Roasted Root Vegetables for dinner.

Balsamic Roasted Root Vegetables*Ingredients*

- 1 rutabaga, peeled and chopped into ½" cubes
- 1 turnip, chopped into ½" cubes
- 1 medium-sized sweet potato, chopped into ½" cubes
- 1 medium-sized yam, chopped into ½" cubes
- 4 carrots, peeled and chopped into ¼" rounds
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons grated ginger
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 teaspoon salt (or to taste)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Put all chopped veggies into a large, deep casserole dish.

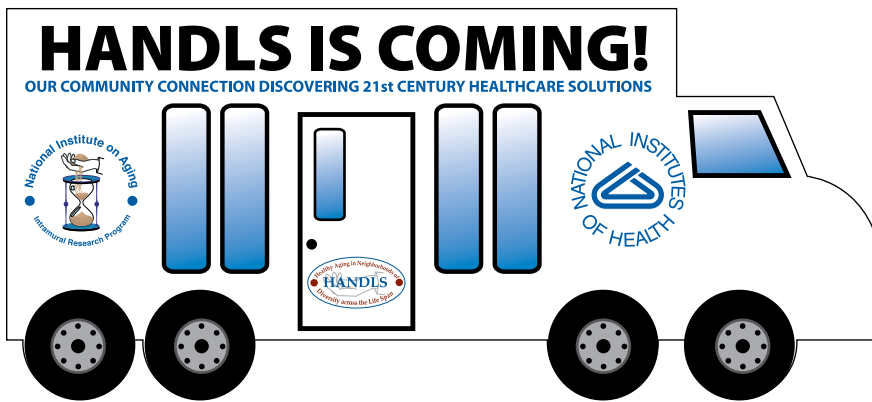
Whisk together the olive oil, balsamic vinegar and grated ginger. Pour over the vegetables and mix.

Sprinkle the salt, cayenne pepper and cumin over the veggies and mix again.

Bake 25 minutes and then remove casserole dish from oven to stir the vegetables well.

Increase heat to 415 degrees, place vegetables back in the oven and bake an additional 20 minutes until the sweet potato is softened but not mushy.

<http://www.theroastedroot.net/>



HANDLS

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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 effects 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 1-877-677-9538
or visit our website *hands.nih.gov***

