



Healthy Aging in Neighborhoods of Diversity across the Life Span

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The Healthy Journey

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH • NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

HANDLS Wave 5

HANDLS is coming back to your neighborhood

HANDLS is a longitudinal (long-term) study designed to evaluate participants every 3 to 4 years to understand changes in health as you age. We have been in the neighborhoods of Baltimore city since 2004. Each time we start a new set of evaluations we call it a wave and with each new wave we invite you back for additional testing. Since becoming a HANDLS participant you should have had a household interview (at the very beginning of the study) and up to 3 examination visits to the MRV.

When we design a new wave, we consider what changes are necessary to the testing schedule, which tests to eliminate and what new areas we want to study. Both staff and participant feedback are critical to this process and we appreciate the comments and suggestions you provide (and have provided in the past) during MRV testing, and on the participant satisfaction survey you complete at the end of each visit. MRV staff are good at letting the investigators know if the participants do not like a procedure, or the way it is administered and always look for ways to improve the experience for our participants.

New for wave 5, your next visit to the MRVs, we have reduced the number of tests examining heart function and physical activity and shortened the number of questions on the Automated Computer Assisted Self Interview (ACASI) and the test of health literacy. Instead we will examine 3 new areas; skin and health disparities, sensory testing and environmental exposure.

Skin and Health Disparities. To examine skin and health disparities we will study skin microbiome (the mix of bacteria, yeasts, and parasites that live on your skin) and how they interact with age and chronic disease and influence wound healing. To do this we will collect a skin

microbiome sample by rubbing a cotton swab on the skin of your arm. There are no risks or discomforts from this procedure.

We will also ask you to participate in a skin color identification assessment where you will be asked to look at pictures of different skin tones and select the one that you think best matches yours. We want to see if there is a relationship between skin tone and discrimination. There are no risks for this procedure.

Sensory Testing. Sensory testing includes two smell tests and two vision tests. Some of you may have already had the smell tests since we gave them to a small group of wave 4 participants to get feedback about the best way to administer the test, and to see if one smell test was preferred to the other. We are still determining which test is preferred so for now we will continue to do both.

The two smell tests are called the Smell Identification Test (SIT) and Sniffin' Sticks

The purpose of the smell identification and Sniffin' Sticks tests is to see if we can find problems with the ability to identify smells. Sometimes problems with smell can be related to medical, psychological or brain conditions.

The SIT test is made up of 4 booklets with 10 scratch and sniff questions per book. You will be asked to scratch and sniff each item and to tell us what you smell.

The Sniffin Sticks system includes 3-6 smelling sticks that look like a pen. They are called odor pens. You will be asked to smell several odor pens and tell the examiner what you smell.

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If you know you have trouble smelling or if you cannot smell at all, you will not be given the smell identification tests. There are no known risks associated with either smell test. You may find some odors unpleasant but the smell will go away quickly.

Vision Testing. The first vision screening is completed with a special camera that takes a picture of your eye to see if you are at risk for macular degeneration, a serious eye condition that can lead to blindness. The second test is to check your vision. We will provide you a copy of your results that you can take to get a prescription for eye glasses. If you need follow-up, we will help you find a doctor and/or a place to get glasses.

Environmental Exposure. We will examine if you have been exposed to toxins or chemicals in the environment that might relate to your health and wellbeing. To study this, we will ask you for toenail clippings from the tips all 10 of your toenails. When clipping the toenails, there is a slight risk of minor injury to the nail cuticle with a risk for bleeding or infection.

We have a new truck

You will notice for wave 5 that we have a new MRV 2. MRV 2 is the medical research vehicle where you start your day with consenting and it is also where cognitive testing, the medical history update and dietary recall interview are conducted. We are currently reviewing the wave 5 procedures to see how best to design the day of testing that is most accommodating to our participants. The new vehicle has larger testing rooms and upgraded equipment and will be where the vision tests are conducted. Bridget and Allison will still be there to greet you and conduct the consenting process and you will also notice that Ms. Clare now has a room on MRV 2 to conduct the vision testing.

We look forward to seeing you for your Wave 5 MRV visit. It will take 3-5 years to complete wave 5 so don't worry if you don't hear from us right away about your appointment. As always, you will know it is time for your appointment when you receive our invitation letter asking you to call for an appointment.



It is very important that we have your correct contact information. Please be sure to let us know if you have moved since your last appointment.

Dinner makeover

by Megan Grimes MS, RD and Samantha Reilly MS

Try different cooking methods to ‘makeover’ your favorite meals.



Fried foods can have

- Higher calories
- More fat

You can save calories by switching from frying to baking.

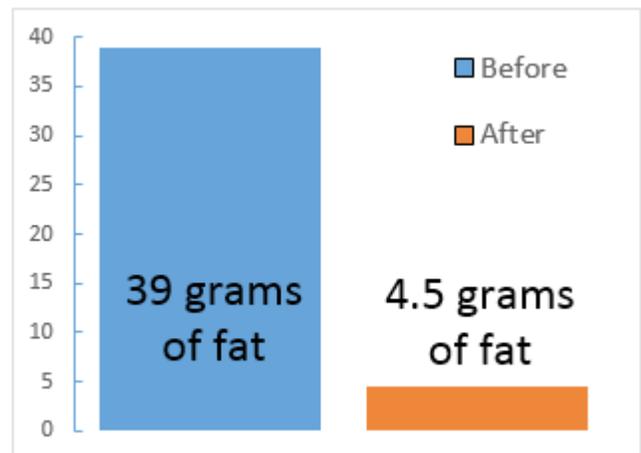
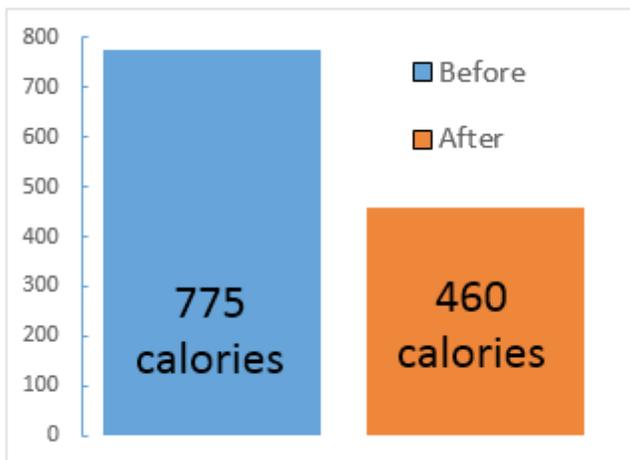
Ketchup has calories, too. Use it lightly.

Baked foods are healthier and easier to prepare.

Adding 2 tablespoons of cheddar cheese on the potato has lower calories than frying.

Cooking collards is fast and easy in a pan:

- Use cooking spray
- Add a dash of salt and pepper.
- Add a turkey neck for flavor!



Dinner meal makeovers:

The *before* meal is a fried chicken breast with a medium order of waffle fries and a packet of ketchup.

The *makeover* meal is a skinless chicken breast with pepper, a large baked potato with low fat cheddar cheese, and collard greens prepared with cooking spray and spices.



HANDLS
National Institute on Aging
5600 Nathan Shock Drive
Baltimore MD 21224-6825

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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***

