

Women's
 Health Study

Update

WHS Study of Movement Patterns During the Day: A Progress Report

In our last newsletter, we reported that we have begun an ancillary study, funded by the National Institutes of Health, which measures daily, physical movements by the wearing of an accelerometer (physical activity monitor). The goal is to eventually relate this objective measure of daily movements to health. We are pleased to report that the study is progressing well—to date, we have invited over 15,000 WHS members from 31 states and Washington D.C. to participate. More than 11,000 women have returned their invitations, with almost 9,000 women saying “yes” to participating in this ancillary study. Currently, over 7,600 women have worn and returned the accelerometer (and we continue to receive additional monitors daily).

If you have not yet received an invitation to participate, you will in due time. Invitations are mailed by geographic region and on a rolling basis. A detailed description of the study is included in the letter of invitation. In brief, you will be asked to wear the activity monitor around your hip for 7 days. Each monitor is individually programmed, and we have only a limited supply of monitors. Thus, it is important that you wear the monitor IMMEDIATELY, according to study instructions, and then return it to us so we can download your data and prepare the monitor for the next participant. As with all WHS ancillary studies, participation is of course strictly optional.

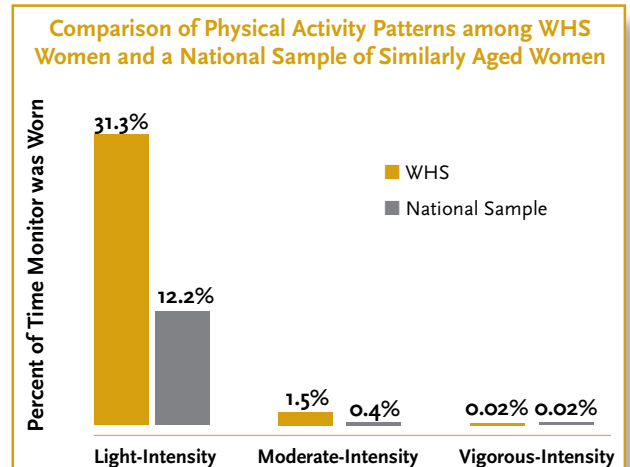
If you have returned the invitation form and agreed to participate, but have not yet received your activity monitor, please do not worry. You will receive one within the next 2 months.

We compared our preliminary WHS data from the first approximately 7,600 women returning their monitors with a national sample of women in a similar age group. If you look at the chart, our data shows that daily wearing of the activity monitor resulted in the following activity patterns: On AVERAGE, WHS participants spend 4.5 hours per day (31.3% of the time that the monitor was worn) in light-intensity physical activities (e.g. self-care, household tasks such as dusting or washing dishes, grocery shopping, preparing meals, or walking at a leisurely pace). An average of 12.8 minutes per day was spent in moderate-intensity activities (e.g. brisk walking, gardening, dancing, or bowling). On AVERAGE, women spend little time in vigorous-intensity activities (e.g. running, skiing, or tennis). Compared to the national sample, WHS women tend to be more active than women of the same age, spending a greater percentage of their day in light- and moderate-intensity physical activities (see chart).

Please remember that the activity monitor does not capture all types of

physical activity. The monitor is not waterproof, therefore activities such as water aerobics and swimming are not recorded since we ask that you remove the monitor when participating in these activities or when showering. Bicycling is another activity that is not well measured by the monitor, since the hip may not move much during bike riding.

This ancillary study will look at all levels of daily movement and their impact on health. In particular, the data will be especially useful to examine the relation between light-intensity physical activity and health and well-being. Currently, there are almost no data available on this topic and consequently, there are no guidelines for how much light-intensity physical activity should be carried out for health. The data that you provide on this topic will be crucial for closing this gap in knowledge. Thank you for your continued dedication to the WHS and participation in this ancillary study!



WHS – Snapshots and Stories

WHS Celebrates its 20TH Year!

1992 (Sept)

Invitational mailings begin. In all, 1.38 million female health professionals are invited to join the Women's Health Study (WHS), testing aspirin, vitamin E and beta-carotene in the primary prevention of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

1992 (Nov)

The first enrollee is mailed her study calendar packs.

1993

Enrollees are asked to provide an optional blood sample by mail. More than 70% agree.

1995

Enrollment is completed. 39,876 health professionals are "randomized" (assigned by chance) to their treatment group.

1999

The Journal of the National Cancer Institute publishes the results paper for the beta-carotene component of the trial.

2004

End of the WHS randomized clinical trial.

2005

The New England Journal of Medicine publishes the results papers for both the vitamin E and aspirin components of the trial.

2005

37,500 trial participants, known to be alive, are invited to participate in the extended observational follow-up of the WHS. 33,796 return their first "observational" questionnaire and agree to participate.

2012

Collection of data on the eighth annual observational questionnaire.

Kathleen Balthazar-Heitzmann, of Climax, New York writes, " I competed in the track & field events at the 2011 Empire State Senior Games, coming home with four gold medals. In the 100 meter dash, I inched out the second place winner by milliseconds! I competed against the same challenger in the high jump and won by five centimeters on my last jump. I earned two more golds, one for shot put and one for the discus throw. I am currently the cross country and boys track coach at Coxsackie-Athens High School."

Kathleen has been a member of the Women's Health Study since 1995.



WHS by the Numbers

Currently,
number
of active
participants:
30,512

Recent response to
"In general, how is
your health?"

Excellent	19%
Very good	44%
Good	30%
Fair	6%
Poor	1%

Currently,
average age of
participants:
72.5 years

Current age
range:
60 to 100 years

A call for photos

We always welcome your photos and stories and believe that WHS participants enjoy learning about each other. Although we are not able to publish all photos that we receive, we plan to continue featuring as many of our dedicated participants as possible in future newsletters. Please send a high-quality film or electronic photo, along with a brief note describing where the photo was taken, to:

Women's Health Study
900 Commonwealth Avenue East
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
Telephone: 1-800-633-6911
e-mail: whs@rics.bwh.harvard.edu

And don't forget to visit the WHS website at <http://whs.bwh.harvard.edu>