



Lifeways

Cross-Generation Cohort Study
10 Years of Commitment to Irish Family Health



Newsletter Summer 2011

Looking back

Thank you for being part of the Lifeways Study. We are starting a new and exciting phase now that the Lifeways children are reaching age 8-9.

Just to remind you, the study began when your baby was born in the Coombe Hospital Dublin or the University College Hospital Galway in 2001-2003. The aim of the Lifeways Study is to research patterns of health and illness across three generations of the same family—children, parents and grandparents.

Our goal is to make Ireland a healthier place to live for both adults and children by identifying many different factors that affect health and by proposing measures to improve health and well-being, especially for children. We have recruited 1,124 mothers and children, almost 1,000 fathers, and more than 2,500 grandparents. We have since analysed data from the 5 year follow-up questionnaires, GP visits and home visits.

Your participation in Lifeways is entirely voluntary. Information about an individual is never used—it is the overall pattern of health and illness in Ireland that is being investigated, and confidentiality is guaranteed by the study.

Many thanks to all of you for sending in your questionnaires, and participating in GP visits and home visits. The success of the Lifeways Study depends on your continued cooperation and without it there could be no study.

Sincerely,

Professor Cecily Kelleher, MD
Principal Investigator



Prof Cecily Kelleher with some of the Lifeways Children



Interesting findings

Do weight patterns run in families?

You may remember the last time we contacted you some of our researchers measured you and your child's height and weight. Using this information we discovered that children's body weight is not only very closely related to their parent's body weight but it is particularly influenced by their mother's and her mother's (maternal grandmother's) body weight. We also found children's dietary habits were similar to that of their parents, particularly that of their mothers.

Murrin et al. Submitted to BMC Public Health May 2011.

Occupational factors associated with your baby's birth weight outcomes.

We looked at various aspects of the expecting mother's working conditions, and compared these with the weight of her baby on delivery and also whether the baby was delivered early or not.

Longer working hours and shift work tended to be associated with lighter birth weights. These findings suggest that pregnancy outcomes might be improved by changing some work conditions of pregnant women.

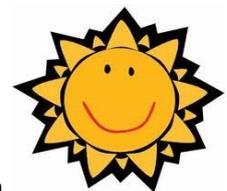
Niedhammer et al. Occupational predictors of pregnancy outcomes in Irish working women in the Lifeways cohort. BJOG 2009;116:943-952

Asthma at age 3yrs is associated with the mother's diet in pregnancy.

We found that plenty of fruit, vegetables and oily fish intake in pregnant women were associated with a lower rate of wheeziness in their children at age 3.

Fitzsimon et al. Mother's Dietary Patterns during Pregnancy and the Risk of Asthma Symptoms in Children at 3 years. IMJ 2007;100(8):27-32

We are currently preparing our questionnaire for the next phase of Lifeways, which you should be receiving in the next couple of months. This questionnaire will be shorter than the previous two questionnaires, and will have questions about your health, work and the effect the change in the economy has had on you and your family.



Publication of study findings

Since the study started, a series of research papers from the Lifeways Study has been published in the Irish Medical Journal (2007). This was launched by President Mary McAleese.



President Mary McAleese with some of the Lifeways Children

Some more findings

Factors influencing immunisation rates

Many social factors influence immunisation rates. Interestingly, boys are less likely to have had their MMR vaccine.

Jessop et al. Socio-demographic and health-related predictors of uptake for first MMR immunisation in the Lifeways Cohort Study. Vaccine (2010), doi:10.1016/j.vaccine.2010.06.095

Also, children who live in the West of Ireland seem to have lower rates of immunisation compared to those living in the East.

Jessop et al. The Lifeways Cohort Steering Group. Determinants of partial or no primary immunisations. Arch Dis Child 2010;95:603-605

Education is important

Mothers whose parents left school early reported poorer health in pregnancy.

Segonds-Pichon et al. Socio-Demographic, Lifestyle and Cross-Generation Predictors of Self-Rated Health in Mothers during Pregnancy. IMJ 2007; 100(8):7-12

What are the factors that influence visiting the GP when children are young?

On average, families made 6 visits to the GP by the time their child is 3. Children of parents with full general medical services eligibility tend to visit their GP more often, and some have higher rates of asthma.

Fallon et al. Primary Care Utilisation Rates in Pre-School Children. IMJ 2007;100(8):23-27

The Lifeways study is funded by the
Health Research Board
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Scientific Steering Group



Summer holidays are here!!

Are you doing anything special this summer holiday?? Whether you are going away on vacation, or staying at home, let us know what you are up to!

We would love to see some pictures of your summer holiday!

On the next page there are some **Summer Fun** activities to enjoy, or you can make a Summer Strawberry Smoothie!



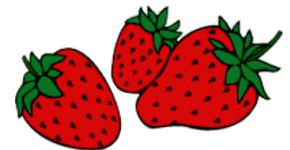
Summer Strawberry Smoothie

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: none

What you will need:

- 100gram strawberries
- 300ml milk
- 1 small pot (125-150g) of yoghurt



Method:

1. Remove the stalks from the strawberries and rinse them under the cold tap
2. Cut the strawberries into slices
3. Put the strawberries into a blender
4. Add the milk and yoghurt to the blender
5. Put the lid on the blender and blend for 10-15 seconds until the mixture is smooth
6. Pour into two glasses to serve

If you do not like strawberries, use another type of fruit, such as bananas, peaches or mangoes!



We will be in contact soon with our new questionnaire and information of what this next exciting phase of the study will involve

We are always happy to receive an update from you about your family and Lifeways Child's health and development.

Any recent news on school, sport, cultural milestones or rewards? Please let us know, and pictures are always welcome!

Contact us:

- Lo-call John or Karien on: **1 890 202 502 (lo-call)**
- Email us at lifeways@ucd.ie
- Find us on **Facebook**
www.facebook.com/Lifeways.CrossGeneration.Cohort.Study
- Postal address:
FREEPOST F3724
Lifeways Cross-Generation Cohort Study
Woodview House, UCD, Belfield, Dublin 4