



New Soul Study Frequently Asked Questions

What's the study about?

The Nutritious Eating with Soul (NEW Soul) study is a study comparing two different dietary patterns on how they impact cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk factors among African American adults. Specifically, this study is comparing the effects of a plant-based (i.e. vegan) diet and an omnivorous (i.e. contains animal products) diet on body weight, body fat percent, blood pressure, cholesterol and other CVD risk factors. The intervention will last two years and participants will be randomly assigned to a vegan diet or an omnivorous diet and receive cooking classes, recipes, and guidance for following their assigned diet based on culturally-tailored curriculum.

What will I get by participating?

Free cooking classes, recipes, a support system, and lab results at the end of the study. If you complete the study, you'll receive \$210.00.

How could participating help me?

You may lose weight and have improved biometric readings (i.e. better cholesterol or blood glucose levels) by being a part of this study. You will receive cooking classes and learn how to prepare healthy meals.

Who can participate in this program?

You must:

- Be between the ages of 18 – 65 years
- Self-identify as African American
- Have a body mass index (BMI) between 25–49.9 kg/m² (be overweight or obese)
- Be available to attend all study meetings over a two year period
- Be willing to be randomized to either diet group (this means you won't have a choice in which diet you are assigned to)

Is the study only for African Americans?

Yes. You must self-identify as an African American in order to qualify and participate.



How can I calculate my BMI to know if I qualify for the study?

You can calculate your BMI online with this online calculator:

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm

Can my spouse participate as well?

Only one person per household can participate in the study as a research participant, but we will offer several classes where you may bring a friend or family member.

What commitment is required of me?

This study will last two years and will therefore require an extensive commitment. You will be required to regularly come to the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health for classes, lab visits, and to complete a variety of surveys. You will be required to attend classes once a week for the first 6 months, biweekly from months 7-12, and then once a month for months 13-24. The classes are structured to be about an hour and fifteen minutes in the evening at the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health.

What will I have to do in the program?

You will attend group classes to learn more about your diet and receive the support you need to adopt healthier eating habits. The classes will include cooking skills, recipe ideas, and guidance for following your assigned diet.

You will have lab visits that involve height and weight measurements, body fat measurements, and a fasting blood draw. The lab visits will be at the following time points: baseline (before you begin the study), 6 months, 12 months and 24 months.

You will also be completing several questionnaires at each time point: Baseline, 3 months, 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months. You will complete the questionnaires at your classes and be required to complete online dietary recalls at home. The questionnaires will assess demographic information, psychosocial variables (such as self-efficacy), and dietary acceptance. The dietary recalls are online surveys that ask you to recall all the meals and beverages you had in the previous 24-hours. You will be directed to an online database that allows you to enter in the foods and drinks you had for the day.



Can I pick what diet group I belong in or what diet I get to eat?

No. Because this study is using random assignment, participants will be randomly assigned to each diet group. You must be willing to be assigned to either diet.

Where are the study meetings located?

Classes will be held at the Discovery I Building at the Arnold School of Public Health on the first floor. The address is 915 Greene Street, Columbia SC 29201. It is right across the street from the Colonial Life Arena.

Can I bring my spouse or a friend to class?

Yes. We will have several classes where we will encourage all participants to bring spouses or friends with them to class.

What happens if I can't attend a class?

One of our study coordinators will contact you to set up a make-up class. This can either be in-person or over the phone. If a make-up class is being offered that week, we will ask you to attend it. It is important that you do not miss too many classes since this study requires a 2 year commitment.

What do I do during lab assessments?

You will have your blood drawn by an phlebotomist at USC's Prevention Research Center. Therefore, you must be fasting to ensure accurate readings. You will have your body weight and blood pressure measured. You will have your body fat scanned from by dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DEXA), which is a special type of x-ray that measures bone density and body fat levels. You may also have to complete some surveys.

What if I am interested in participating in the study?

If you are interested in participating, please fill out this contact form and we will contact you once we have our screening questionnaire online.