

West Midlands ActiVe lifestyle and healthy Eating in School children study (WAVES)

Who we are: We are a team of researchers at the University of Birmingham. We are undertaking an exciting new study about health in primary schools in the West Midlands area. Your child's school is one of those taking part.

What we aim to do: Our aim is to test out a programme of activities that is designed to help children keep their weight at a healthy level by encouraging healthy eating and physical activity.

How we will achieve this: We are asking primary schools across the West Midlands to take part in the study. We will ask all children in year 1 and their parents to take part, and then in half of the schools, the programme of activities will be run. We will then be able to compare the schools that have received the programme with those who have not.

What we ask parents and children to do: Parents of children from year 1 will be asked if their child can take part in the WAVES study.

- Children who take part will have their height, weight, waist circumference, skinfold thickness, body fat and blood pressure measured.
- Children will also wear a physical activity monitor for 5 days.
- Children will be asked some simple questions about how they see themselves and their life in general.
- Parents of children taking part will be asked to help fill in a simple 24 hour food questionnaire for their child and a questionnaire asking about lifestyles of family members and other aspects of family life.
- Children and parents in half of the schools in the study will be invited to take part in several activities related to health.
- We will repeat the measurements and questionnaires at further points in the study.

What happens if I change my mind about my child taking part: If you agree for your child to take part and you change your mind during the study, you can write to us or telephone us at any time to let us know you no longer want your child to take part.

What to do next: Please read the attached sheet for further information and return the form to your child's school. If you would like further information, or if you would like copies of any of our information in another language. Please contact a member of the study research team on 0121 414 3921 or 0121 414 8434.

PARENT/CARER INFORMATION LETTER

The West Midlands Active lifestyle and healthy Eating in School children study (WAVES)

The school that your child attends is one of several schools in the West Midlands that is taking part in the WAVES study. The aim of the study is to test the success of a programme that has been designed to encourage children and families to lead a healthy lifestyle and be a healthy weight.

The programme that will be tested will be delivered through schools and consists of several elements:

- Activities to increase the amount of physical activity children do in school
- Healthy cooking sessions for parents and children
- A healthy eating and physical activity course run by Aston Villa football club
- Information and ideas on local leisure activities for families.

We are inviting year 1 children and their parents to take part in the study, which will last 5 years. Only some of the schools taking part will receive the programme we are testing. This will enable us to compare schools who receive the programme with those who do not. We will not know which schools will receive the programme until after the start of the study.

We would like to invite your child to take part in the WAVES study.

1. What is the purpose of this study?

The number of children in this country who are overweight is rising. This can lead to several health problems both in childhood and as an adult. So far, ways of preventing children becoming overweight that have been tried have not been successful. The programme that we are testing in this study has been developed in a previous study in Birmingham, and the initial results show that the programme may reduce the likelihood of children becoming overweight. This larger study will enable us to assess more accurately the success of the programme in helping children to keep their weight at a healthy level.

2. What will my child and I have to do?

If you agree for your child to take part in the study, he/she will have several measurements taken at the start, and again at three points throughout the study. These are necessary to properly assess the effects of the programme. All these measurements will be done by research staff from the University of Birmingham, who have had special training, and by using methods that have been well tested in children of this age group. We will measure your child's height, weight, waist circumference, and blood pressure. We will also measure the thickness of the skin (at the waist, on the arm, on the thigh and on the upper back), and proportion of body fat (this involves your child standing on a special type of weighing scales). Your child will not have to undress fully for these measurements, but may be asked to remove shoes, and heavy outer clothing.

During these measurements, we will also attach a very small monitor to your child's chest that measures the amount of physical activity that he/she does. The monitor will be attached by two small sticky pads and worn continuously for 5 days (it does NOT have to be removed when swimming or in the bath). If these sticky pads fall off during the 5 days, we would ask you to replace them with new sticky pads that would be provided.

We will also ask your child some simple questions about how they view themselves, and their well being.

In addition we will arrange for a simple tick-list diary to be completed of what your child has eaten in school on one day. We would ask you to complete this simple food tick-list at home for the remainder of the day. We will also ask you to complete a questionnaire including questions about you, your child and your family.

If you agree for your child to take part, we will ask you for a contact telephone number so that if needed, members of the research team can telephone to ensure that we have understood your responses to the food tick-list and questionnaire.

Alongside this information we will be asking the school to provide us with details of your child's date of birth, ethnic group and postcode.

Later in the study you may be contacted to ask if you would be happy to participate in an interview or focus group but it will be your choice as to whether or not you agree to take part in this.

3. What are the benefits of taking part in this study?

While there are no direct benefits to your child by taking part in this study, the results will help us to assess the success of a programme to prevent children becoming overweight, and therefore prevent them from having health problems that are related to obesity. If this study shows that the programme is successful, it can be introduced in schools across the country.

4. What are the risks of taking part in this study?

All the measurements are completely safe. There is a very small risk of a mild skin reaction to the sticky pads that are used to attach the physical activity monitor. In the unlikely event that this happens, the monitor and sticky pads can be removed and it will clear up on its own.

5. What if I do not want my child to take part?

Your child does not have to take part in the measurements and questions if you do not want him/her to. Your child will take part in all other school activities as usual, he/she will just not be measured, observed or asked questions by our research team.

6. What happens to my child's information?

All the information will be kept confidentially on a database at the University of Birmingham. The information will have your child's name and address removed from it so that he/she cannot be recognised from the information. Only members of the research team will have

access to your child's individual information. The information from the study will be used in several reports but your child will not be identifiable as an individual in any of these reports.

7. Who else is taking part?

There will be approximately 50 schools in the West Midlands taking part in the study, and children from year 1 in all schools will be invited to take part.

8. What happens at the end of the study?

A final report will be written at the end of the study and you will have the option of receiving a summary of this. The results of the study will also be published in scientific journals and presented at scientific conferences and meetings.

9. What if I have more questions or do not understand something?

You can contact members of the research team at the University of Birmingham (contact details given below) to discuss any questions or concerns you may have.

10. What happens now if I decide my child can take part?

If you decide that your child can take part in this study, please complete the consent form attached and return it to your child's school. Your child will take part in the measures and interviews in the Summer term this year, and three further times during the 5 year study.

11. What happens if I change my mind during the study?

If at any time during the study, you no longer want your child to take part, you can write to us or telephone us (contact details below) to let us know.

12. Contact names, addresses and telephone numbers

Contact address:

WAVES Study
Public Health Building
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

Contact names (telephone number)

Emma Parkes / Nicola Tyler (0121 414
8434/0121 414 3921)
Project Administrators

Emma Lancashire (0121 414 3999)
Trial Coordinator

Thank you for considering allowing your child to take part in our study.