

A Healthier You



These Help Us Discover Heroes participated in clinical research to help develop new treatments and approaches that can help patients like you. Visit www.yalestudies.org to learn more.

Your well-being depends on both your physical and mental health. Poor physical health (if you have a chronic disease, for example) puts you at increased risk of developing mental health problems. Poor mental health (if you're depressed or anxious, for example) can have a negative impact on physical health. That's why it's important to be aware of potential health issues and take steps to treat them early on. Yale doctors treat diseases that can take a toll on your health and are at the forefront of research to improve the lives of you and your family.



Preventing and Treating Diabetes and Obesity

Both type 1 and type 2 diabetes can be treated and managed with healthy eating, physical activity, and taking medications such as insulin to control blood glucose levels.

When you take care of your diabetes, you'll feel better. You'll reduce your risk for problems with your kidneys, eyes, nerves, feet and legs, and teeth. You'll also lower your risk for a heart attack or a stroke. If you have diabetes, your doctor may prescribe medication. However, there are other ways to take care of yourself that will help control your diabetes.

Learning what to eat, how much to eat, and when to eat plays an important role in taking good care of yourself if you have diabetes. Making wise food choices can help keep your blood glucose – also called blood sugar – under control, help you lose weight if you need to, and lower your risk for heart disease, stroke, and other problems associated with diabetes.

Until recently, the most common type of diabetes in children and teens was type 1, in which the pancreas does not produce insulin. But increasing numbers of younger people are now getting type 2 diabetes due to soaring rates of obesity. In type 2 diabetes, the body does not make or use insulin well.

(continued on page 2)

“I wanted to help other children like me not to get diabetes and also maybe find a cure for people who already have diabetes.”

– Clinical Trial Volunteer, **Claire Wirt** with mom, **Correne**, and grandmother



“We need to start answering questions about diabetes today for a better future tomorrow.”

–Eda Cengiz, MD, MHS,
Assistant Professor of Pediatrics (Endocrinology)



“Clinical studies can be an opportunity to find out and learn about yourself.”

– Clinical Trial Volunteer, **Curtis Patton**

(continued) Preventing and Treating Diabetes and Obesity

Being physically active can help you or your child lower your blood glucose, improve your body’s ability to use insulin, lower your risk for heart disease and stroke, and help you lose weight. Physical activity also plays an important part in preventing type 2 diabetes. Research shows that even modest weight loss of five to seven percent – for example, 10 to 15 pounds for a 200-pound person – can delay and possibly prevent type 2 diabetes.

One way to incorporate physical activity into your lifestyle is by being more active in your daily life. Try walking around while you talk on the phone, parking at the far end of parking lots, or stretching and walking around instead of taking a coffee break and eating. If you think about it, there are lots of small steps you and your family can take to lead a more active life.

Courtesy of NIDDK

Reducing Risk Factors for Heart Disease

Heart disease is a leading cause of death in men and women in the United States. Your risk for heart disease increases with the number of risk factors you have. Although you can’t control such risk factors as older age or a family history of early heart disease, you should try to control the risk factors that you have if you want to reduce your risk of heart disease:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet

If you’re at risk of developing or have heart disease, your doctor may prescribe medication, a medical procedure, or surgery. You can also make healthy lifestyle changes such as:

- Heart-healthy eating that limits red meat and sugary foods and beverages and includes fat-free or low-fat dairy products such as fish, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains.
- Maintaining a healthy weight, aiming for a body mass index of less than 25. Losing just 3 percent to 5 percent of your current weight can help lower several risk factors; if you lose more, it will have an even more positive impact.
- Managing stress through physical activity or meditation.
- Increasing your physical activity through moderate-intensity aerobic exercise. The more active you are, the more you will benefit.

Courtesy of NHLBI



Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Everyone occasionally feels blue. It's common to feel sad or discouraged after a heart attack, for example, or if you're trying to manage a chronic condition. You may be facing new limits on what you can do and feel anxious about how effective your treatment will be. It may be hard to cope with the changes and ongoing treatment that come with your diagnosis.

Chronic stress in childhood in the form of severe poverty, exposure to violence, living in a home with substance-abusing adults, or other stressful situations can lead to illness and increase the risk of physical and mental problems when children grow into adulthood. Early stress also impacts how adults care for their children when they become parents, which in turn affects the next generation.

If feelings of sadness don't pass within a couple of weeks, you may have depression, a common but serious illness. Depression interferes with daily life and causes pain for both you and those who care about you. Many people with a depressive illness never seek treatment. But the majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment. Medications, psychotherapies, and other methods can effectively treat people with depression.

“We see the crippling effects of mental illness and addiction every day. Research is the only way to develop innovative new treatments for these diseases.”

– John Krystal, MD, Chair, Department of Psychiatry;
Robert Malison, MD, Professor of Psychiatry; Stephanie O'Malley,
Professor of Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine

If you have depression, you may feel exhausted, helpless, and hopeless. It may be extremely difficult to take any action to help yourself. But as you begin to recognize your depression and begin treatment, you'll start to feel better.

- Don't wait too long to get evaluated or treated. Treatment options include medication, psychotherapy, and brain stimulation therapies.
- Try to be active and exercise.
- Try to spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative.
- Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately.

Just as you may sometimes feel sad, occasional anxiety is a normal part of life. You might feel anxious when faced with a problem at work, before taking a test, or making an important decision. But anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the anxiety doesn't go away and can get worse over time. The feelings can interfere with daily activities such as job performance, school work, and relationships.

There are several different types of anxiety disorders that include generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety disorder. Some physical health conditions, such as an overactive thyroid or low blood sugar, as well as taking certain medications, can imitate or worsen an anxiety disorder. Anxiety disorders often occur with other related conditions, such as depression or obsessive-compulsive disorder. Anxiety disorders are generally treated with medication, psychotherapy, or both. Some people might benefit from joining a self-help or support group, while others use stress management techniques and meditation.

Courtesy of NIMH

Volunteer Online with MyChart

The physicians at Yale are using a state-of-the-art electronic medical record (EMR) that allows patients to access their personal health information through a product called MyChart. Patients using MyChart have access to information including appointment information, immunizations, lab results, medications and more, all conveniently accessed online over a highly secure connection designed to protect personal health information.

Create a volunteer profile in MyChart. Creating a volunteer profile allows you to express interest in study categories, which helps our recruitment team match you to trials for which you may be eligible. It indicates that you're interested in volunteering for a study but it's not a commitment to do so. If you have questions or concerns please contact us at helpusdiscover@yale.edu or call 1-877-y-studies (97883437).



Why Research Matters

Clinical trials look at new ways to prevent, detect, or treat diseases and conditions that affect your physical and mental health. Yale has a strong tradition of research in a host of diseases that has led to promising new treatments.

The insulin pump used to treat diabetes was developed at Yale, while other research has led to a program aimed at reducing obesity by teaching kids about healthy eating and exercise. Yale doctors developed the first artificial heart pump in the United States. Today, they continue to pioneer new heart treatments that have the potential to help millions of patients.

Yale mental health experts are studying depression with the aim of understanding the causes of this disease and how it affects the brain. Their work has led to potential new treatments that target the pathways of a different neurotransmitter than existing medications. Yale doctors are also studying resilience and recovery in children and families who have successfully navigated traumatic events and stress to examine protective factors that might be helpful. They're developing and testing approaches to help parents cope with the stress of raising a family, which helps contribute to healthy communities.

These and other treatments would never be available to you and your family without volunteers who are willing take part in clinical research. **You can play an important role in advancing medical discoveries and new ways of treating disease by participating in a clinical trial.**

**To learn more about clinical research or to find a study that's right for you,
open the Research tab on MyChart, call 1-877-y-studies (97883437) or
visit www.yalestudies.org**

Yale Center for Clinical Investigation
2 Church Street South, Suite 114
New Haven, Connecticut 06519

