



SELF

STUDY OF
ENVIRONMENT,
LIFESTYLE & FIBROIDS

1-877-692-SELF (7353)

www.DetroitSELF.org

Fall 2013

Dear SELF Participant,

I hope you had a wonderful summer. It is with great enthusiasm that I send you the 2013 Fall SELF newsletter. We are now in the Follow-up 1 phase of the study and I appreciate the time and effort you dedicate to participating in SELF: the Study of Environment, Lifestyle & Fibroids. Your contribution today will make a difference for generations of women to come.

In this newsletter, we focus on highlights from another study of U.S. African American women—the Black Women's Health Study. We also include exciting SELF Study updates and important reminders to consider as you complete your follow-up activities.

Thank you for your continued participation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donna Baird
SELF Principal Investigator

Study Updates

As of October 31, 2013,

- 915 of the nearly 1700 women enrolled in SELF have completed all Follow-up 1 activities.
- 94.4% of all Early Life Questionnaires have been returned. If you did not return one and need another sent to you, please let us know.

Reminders

- You will receive an additional \$100 if you complete all currently planned study activities.
- Remember to return your Menstrual Form after each clinic visit.
- Let us know if any contact information changes for you or your secondary contacts.
- Visit www.DetroitSELF.org for future study updates and answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).

Any Questions?

Call us at
1-877-692-SELF (7353)

or send an email to
info@DetroitSELF.org





SELF Question Corner

Are there any new SELF findings?

We found that 22% of SELF participants already had at least one small fibroid when they enrolled in the study. As expected, older participants were more likely than younger participants to have already developed a fibroid. But the enrollment was just the first step. The key is the follow-up phase of SELF.

What are we 1700 SELFers like?

Education	
Less than High School	6 %
High School +	64 %
College +	30 %
Cigarette Smoking	
Never	74 %
Former	8 %
Current	18 %
Body Mass Index (BMI)	
<25 (normal)	20 %
25-29 (overweight)	20 %
30 or higher (obese)	60 %
Income	
Less than \$20,000/year	45 %
\$20,000 or more/year	55 %
Number of Births	
No children	40 %
1 child	26 %
More than 1 child	35 %
Age at First Period	
Early Menarche (≤ 10 years old)	19 %
11 years old	19 %
12 years old	27 %
13 years old	16 %
≥ 14 years old	19 %

Black Women's Health Study

The largest study in the United States of African American women and the one that has followed them for the longest time is the Black Women's Health Study (BWHS). The BWHS gathers information on many conditions that affect black women. The aim was to enroll a very large number of black women in the United States and follow them for decades. With a large sample even relatively rare diseases, like cancer, can eventually be studied as the participants grow older. Back in 1995 the study staff sent letters describing the goals of the study to several groups of black women including subscribers to Essence magazine. Over 60,000 women, 21 to 69 years old, volunteered to be part of the study. The BWHS continues to follow these volunteers. Every 2 years the participants complete a questionnaire to report on changes in their lives and new health problems that might have developed. Over 80% still continue actively participating in the study. New findings are continually being published. Here are some of the BWHS findings to date:

Breast cancer and the BWHS

Breast cancer has been a major focus of the BWHS. Black women in the United States have higher rates of premenopausal breast cancer than white women, and breast-cancer-related death rates are higher for black women. Premenopausal black women are more likely than their white counterparts to have "triple negative" type breast cancer (a type characterized by lack of three specific proteins) that is more aggressive than other types. Some of the breast cancer findings from the BWHS are highlighted on the next page.



Can I still participate in SELF if I have had a hysterectomy or other uterine surgery since my last clinic visit?

Yes, you can still continue with the study. When you are contacted to schedule your next clinic visit, the data collector will explain in detail how we will complete your follow-up study activities.

Induced abortion and breast cancer:

Some earlier studies showed a relationship between induced abortion and increased risk of breast cancer, but most studies have not supported this. The BWHS shows no increased risk of breast cancer associated with abortion history. Neither number of abortions nor age at first abortion mattered for African American women.

Palmer JR, Wise LA, Adams-Campbell LL, Rosenberg L. A prospective study of induced abortion and breast cancer in African-American women. *Cancer Causes Control* 15(2): 105–111, 2004.

Dietary patterns and breast cancer risk:

Diet is a challenge to study because people's diet can change so much day to day. There is no way to collect and analyze data on exactly what foods people eat every day for months and years. The usual approach is to ask study participants to complete a questionnaire that asks about how frequently they eat a long list of specific foods (like the Food Frequency Questionnaire that SELF participants completed at enrollment). The BWHS used food frequency data to categorize women by how frequently they ate foods typical of what the researchers called a "Prudent Diet" (whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and fish). The more women followed a Prudent Diet, the less they tended to develop breast cancer. This was seen especially clearly for premenopausal breast cancer. Those in the top 20% of Prudent Diet eaters were 30% less likely to develop premenopausal breast cancer than those in the bottom 20% of Prudent Diet eaters.

Agurs-Collins T, Rosenberg L, Makambi K, Palmer JR, Adams-Campbell L. Dietary patterns and breast cancer risk in women participating in the Black Women's Health Study. *Am J Clin Nutr* 90: 621–628, 2009.

Aspirin use and breast cancer risk:

Inflammation in breast tissue is likely to increase the risk of breast cancer. However, studies that have looked at whether or not medications that are known to be anti-inflammatory will protect women from breast cancer have shown mixed findings. The BWHS looked at this issue by asking participants about their use of aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen. They found that African American women who used aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs regularly were less likely to develop breast cancer. However, they also found a similar protective association for acetaminophen users, and acetaminophen does not have the same sort of anti-inflammatory effects as the other medications. More studies will need to be done to try to understand these findings.

Bosco JLF, Palmer JR, Boggs DA, Hatch EE, Rosenberg L. Regular aspirin use and breast cancer risk in US black women. *Cancer Causes Control* 22: 1553–1561, 2011.

Cardiometabolic factors and breast cancer risk:

African American women tend to have higher rates of obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol than their white counterparts. There has been concern that these factors may also increase their risk of breast cancer. The BWHS looked at this issue and found that there was increased risk of postmenopausal breast cancer, but not premenopausal breast cancer. Women who had 3 or 4 of the factors were 23% more likely to develop postmenopausal breast cancer than women with none of the factors, and women with all 4 factors were 63% more likely to develop postmenopausal breast cancer than women without any of the factors.

Bosco JLF, Palmer JR, Boggs DA, Hatch EE, Rosenberg L. Cardiometabolic factors and breast cancer risk in U.E. black women. *Breast Cancer Res Treat* 134: 1247–1256, 2012.



Why is the follow-up phase important?

The follow-up phase of SELF is the key to finding ways to prevent fibroids and find better treatments for the condition. The answers come from finding out if and when new fibroids develop and how fast they grow. This will be revealed with continuing participation during the next few years. The ultrasound examination at each of your visits is how new fibroids are identified and how fibroid growth is measured. SELF is one of the few studies in the United States that follow young African American women over years to help learn about when and how fibroids and other health problems develop.



SELF

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



How do I continue my participation in SELF?

All participants are asked to complete a total of three follow-up visits with additional surveys about every 20 months. Please keep your contact information up to date so that we may reach you when it is time for your next follow-up.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

Please call us at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) if your phone numbers, mailing address or email address changes.



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What SELF Participants are saying...

"My ultrasound tech was very compassionate about the process. She kept checking to see if I was handling things ok. My nurse provided the best service I experienced in a long time throughout the entire visit."

"All SELF team members are very knowledgeable and nice. It really makes me want to continue with the study."

"I appreciate flexibility of scheduling and all SELF representatives have been helpful and professional."

"Great study—love the newsletters!"

"I love SELF and hope they are successful in their research and helping women and I'm very proud of being a part of the research study. Thank You!"

"My clinic visit was awesome. Everyone was so nice and sweet. I love SELF!"

"The SELF staff is always great every time. Second year enrolled and I will continue the research. Thank You!"