



Dear SELF Participant,

Happy Spring!

We are excited that over 67% of you have already completed your 3rd Follow up. We are moving closer to our goal and together **we can do it!** Remember that **every woman is important**, and every single participant counts! Even if you missed a previous follow up, you can still complete this one!

Many thanks to all of you that have already completed or scheduled your 3rd follow-up. We'll call you when it is time to schedule. If you have recently changed your number or moved to a different address, please let us know by calling 1-877-692-SELF (7353) or email us changes at questions@DetroitSELF.org.

We are very pleased to announce that due to the enthusiastic response, appointment dates are filling quickly. This may mean a slight wait time, but our schedulers will find a date and time to accommodate you!

If you have moved out of state, and are back for even a short visit, we'll squeeze you in so you can participate!

In this newsletter, our health article focuses on the effects of stress, and strategies to cope with stress. We also include exciting study updates, important reminders to consider as you complete your follow-up activities, and a look to Spring.

Thank you for your continued participation in SELF: the Study of Environment, Lifestyle & Fibroids.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donna Baird
SELF Principal Investigator

Study Update

As of April 11, 2017:

- 1129 (67%) participants have completed all **Follow-Up 3** activities.
 - 53 participants that missed **Follow-Up 2** returned to complete **Follow-Up 3**
 - 15 participants that missed both **Follow-Up 1 & 2** returned to complete **Follow-Up 3**
- 96% of all distributed **Early Life Questionnaires** have been returned. If you did not return one and need another sent to you, please let us know.

Reminders

- If an unforeseen circumstance should arise, and you are no longer able to make your scheduled appointment, please give us a call as soon as you are able. We may be able to offer that appointment slot to another participant.
- If your appointment is within 7 days and you have not received your clinic visit packet, please contact us at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) so that we have time to get another kit sent to you before your appointment.
- Please make sure to fill out all the forms in your packet prior to your appointment. Even if you have completed the phone and computer surveys prior to your clinic appointment, these forms still need to be completed.

Any Questions?

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

or send an email to
[**info@DetroitSELF.org**](mailto:info@DetroitSELF.org)

Spring Fashion Trends

*The SELF Team is talking about...
Spring 2017 Fashion Trends!*

Spring is finally here, and fashion is in the air! This season is all about florals, florals, and more florals! There is no better way to say "goodbye" to winter, than by incorporating bright, vibrant, floral patterns into your clothing and accessories. The SELF Study team have selected a few items that demonstrate the various ways that you can incorporate the floral trend into your spring attire! Create and style your own look by combining different pieces together, or wear them separately! The options for this trend are endless!



Headband



Sneakers



Clutch



Purse



Dress



Health in the News!

Stress

Stress is a common occurrence. A person may feel stress as a result of tension or pressure from a variety of demanding situations. Some of these pressures change daily and can stem from jobs, relationships, commuting, and the economy, to name a few.

These situations cause the body to produce a stress response, which is a natural reaction that results in high levels of a hormone called cortisol. Cortisol changes a number of bodily functions to prepare us for stressful situations. In combination with other hormones like adrenaline, cortisol helps the body focus on the situation so that the problem can be resolved and the body can return to normal. Imagine trying to get home from work in heavy traffic, moving to a new area, or meeting a challenging work deadline. Cortisol and adrenaline rise during the event to help us focus and persevere and then fall to normal levels after the event is over.

Everyday stressors come and go, but when stress lasts for a long time, it becomes chronic and can be harmful. Chronic stress keeps cortisol and adrenaline levels high, which can disrupt how the body works. Some health risks of chronic stress include

anxiety, weight gain, depression, memory and concentration problems, and sleep difficulties. In a study by the American Psychological Association, 40% of adults say they have trouble sleeping at night because of stress. The immune system can also suffer from chronic stress and increase a person's risk of getting sick. For women, high levels of stress can be especially problematic for the reproductive system.

Chronic stress can increase premenstrual or menopause symptoms. Stress can also change the production of reproductive hormones which can result in menstrual cycle irregularities and changes in sexual desire. These stress-related changes in a woman's body can lead to serious consequences. For example, the Black Women's Health Study found evidence supporting a link between stress from social discrimination and uterine fibroids. However, women in that study who had good coping skills did not have as much increase in risk of fibroids as those without those coping mechanisms.

There are many ways to cope with stress to stay physically and mentally healthy. Learning the cause of stress can be helpful for finding ways to stop or reduce it. For example, stress from a hectic work commute can be decreased by finding a different route to work. Stress from upcoming deadlines may be alleviated by asking one's supervisor or coworkers for help, or by focusing on activities to let off steam and de-stress. Activities such as walking, meditation, yoga, dancing, listening to music, and reading can help clear the mind. Eating healthy food, reducing time spent on social media, and increasing the amount and quality of sleep are other ways to feel less overwhelmed. Spending time with family and friends can increase a person's social support by having someone to talk to, listen, and help with some of the burden. Stress is unavoidable, but coping activities can help!

Sources:

American Psychological Association (APA). Stress in America. Feb 2017. <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/index.aspx>

Wise LA, & Laughlin-Tommaso SK. (2016). Epidemiology of Uterine Fibroids – From Menarche to Menopause. Clin Obstet Gynecol. 59(1): 20-24.



The Beauty of Belle Isle Park

The spring season is the perfect time to discover the beauty of Belle Isle Park! Rich with charm and history, Belle Isle Park is known as the "Jewel of Detroit" and is Michigan's 102nd state park. The 987-acre island park features a nature zoo, conservatory, golf practice facility, maritime museum, an aquarium, picnic areas and much more. The park also includes three lakes, 150 acres of wooded area and spectacular views of the Detroit skyline.



What is the significance of knowing birth address information, as it relates to the study?

More and more research shows that early-life factors can influence adult health. This includes early-life exposure to pollution. Historical data on detailed air and water pollution are available for many parts of the country and have been used to study other conditions. We would like to see if we can do that in SELF.



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I have moved out of the Detroit area. Can I still participate in SELF?



YES! We really appreciate all that you have already contributed to this one-of-a-kind research study, and we do not want you to miss your chance to complete your follow-up activities. If at any time you plan to be in the Detroit area, even if only for a short visit, feel free to give us a call at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) or email us at questions@DetroitSELF.org. We can send your study kit to your current address and if you take advantage of completing surveys ahead of time, the clinic visit will only last a couple of hours. Staff will work hard to secure a clinic appointment just for you.

LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!

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



What SELF Participants are saying...

"The experience was good. Everyone was always helpful friendly and organized. I've learned much from the experience and was glad to be a part of something that can save and improve lives."

"Each and every visit, the staff was absolutely remarkable. You guys are doing a fantastic job. Keep up the good work."

"The SELF employees are very helpful and explain everything in detail. The staff makes you feel like you are at home with family and friends."

"I've learned a lot about my family's medical history because of this study. I have also been able to share information with others. Overall it has been beneficial and I am happy to be a participant."