

Lifeways Newsletter Autumn 2013



Survey of Adults in the Lifeways families including impact of the recession

In the most recent follow-up we asked all adults, both parents and grandparents, to complete a short health questionnaire with 1587 respondents in 593 families, 53.9% of the original birth cohort families. **Thank you to everyone who has participated to date!**

General Practice Surveys: Utilisation patterns of Adults and Children over time

We looked at how often, and for what reasons adults and children in the Lifeways Study visit their General Practitioner.

Adults who reported that their household has more difficulty getting by financially since the recession seemed to visit their GP less often. For those adults who hold a medical card, the recession did not seem to impact the frequency of visits to their GP.

For children, those who were diagnosed with asthma over the last 10 years of the study were more likely to visit their family GP. Interestingly, if the mother in the family attended her GP more often, her child was also more likely to attend the GP more often. Similarly as with the adults, children who held a medical card over the 10 year follow-up in the study also attended their family GP more frequently.



Health Examinations for Adults in the Greater Dublin area

This year in Lifeways, we have had a special focus on grandparents! If you are a grandparent who returned our most recent questionnaire, and you live in the Eastern half of Ireland, you will have been, or will shortly be, invited to come for a health check in St Vincent's University Hospital Dublin. At this appointment, we are carrying out measurements including height, weight, waist and hip circumference, and taking fasting blood samples to measure the levels of fats and sugar in your blood. The results of these measurements and blood tests are being sent to your GPs, and we hope they will be of benefit to you in that way. From a Lifeways point of view, recent results of the study have found interesting relationships between these measurements, when they were done previously (approximately 10 years ago) and the birthweight of Lifeways children.

We are hoping to expand that research by examining as many grandparents as we can, and linking this in with the examinations of the grandchildren that were done last year. To even further help us look at these relationships, we are also collecting samples of blood, hair and saliva that are being stored for future analysis of DNA, and which can be linked in with the samples of hair and saliva that the children gave.

If you are a grandparent who could come to Dublin for this appointment but have yet to reply, or if your child was not examined as part of this last year, and they would like to take part, please call or email us anytime, we would be delighted to have as many Lifeways families as possible participating in this exciting phase of the study!

About the Department of Preventive Medicine and Health Promotion at St Vincent's University Hospital (pictured above)

The Dublin-based grandparents are being examined through this department, which has a long history dating back to the 1970s, where it was one of the first in the world to advocate smoking cessation, exercise and dietary changes to prevent heart disease. There is a special relationship with UCD and Professor Cecily Kelleher is both a consultant and head of department at the hospital. In this year's newsletter we will be including some recent articles of interest first published in Healthwise, the hospital's newsletter for staff and patients. We hope you enjoy these tips for healthy living!

Children's examination data and BMI charts over time

During 2012 we conducted examinations through their GPs of height, weight and waist circumference of children and their mothers and took salivary and hair samples for future analysis of DNA. 302 were successfully completed and 76 of these, mainly Dublin-based children also had blood samples taken for fat profile. Anthropometric measurements at birth, when children were aged 5 and aged 9 are summarized in table and figures below. BMI is Body Mass Index, which is a measure of body fat based on height and weight.

	At birth	At 5-years old	At 9-years old
Average height	20in 51cm	3ft 8in 112cm	4ft 7in 139cm
Average weight	7lb 11oz 3480g	3st 4lb 21kg	5st 9lb 36kg
Average waist circumference	-	22in 56cm	25in 64cm
Average BMI (kg/m²)	-	16.6	18.3

Table Above: Average measurements of a subsample of Lifeways children at birth, 5-years, and 9-years (n = 222)

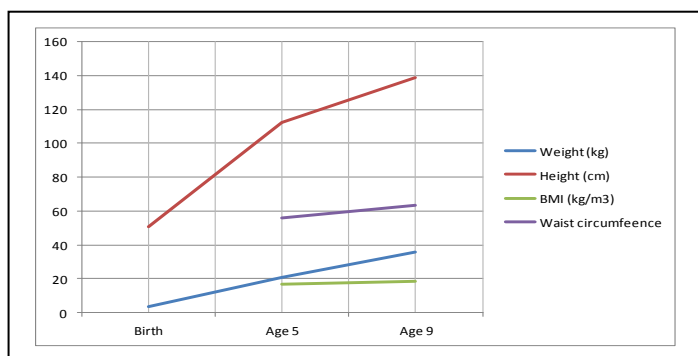
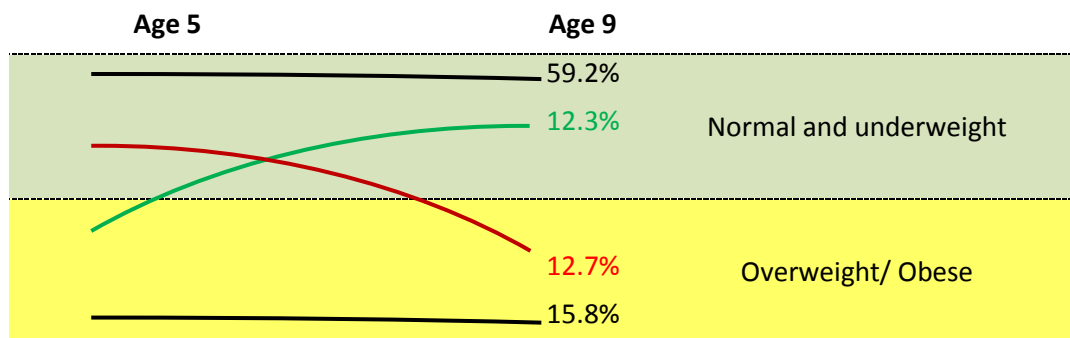


Chart above: average growth of Lifeways children

Figure below : Summary of BMI change in Lifeways children from age 5 and 9



Stayed the same _____
 Gained Weight _____
 Lost weight _____

Mothers' Diet and Lifestyle During Pregnancy and Children's Growth and Development to the age of 5 years

An area of particular interest in the Lifeways Study is how nutrition through a child's life can influence their health. Research has identified that pregnancy may be one of the most influential periods for the long term health of the child. The Lifeways mothers provided invaluable information on their diet while they were pregnant and also when their child was aged five years. We looked at this information to see whether it was related to certain risk factors that are known to lead to poor health. One of these factors is childhood weight, which we measured at the age of five years.

We found that diets which were higher in sugar during pregnancy were more likely to lead to children with higher weights. Those who had a diet continuously high in saturated fat during pregnancy and five years later, were also more likely to lead to higher weights in their children. The research suggests that sugar consumed during pregnancy may specifically have an effect on a child's body size. Other nutrients, like saturated fat, may have a role during pregnancy but can also influence body size if the child is consuming a diet high in saturated fat similar to mum. Saturated fat is found in several foods but high amounts are found in products like butter, cheese, crisps, sausages, and fried foods.

Murrin C, Shrivastava, A, Kelleher C. Childhood weight status aged five and associations with maternal macronutrient intake during pregnancy and five years postpartum. European Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2013; 67(6): 670-679.

CONTACT US

Lo-call: 1 890 202 502
 Email: lifeways@ucd.ie
 Freepost: Lifeways Study
 Woodview House, UCD,
 Belfield, Dublin 4
www.facebook.com/Lifeways.CrossGeneration.Cohort.Study