



University of California, San Francisco
Northwestern University
New York University

MASALA PULSE

The Official Newsletter of the MASALA Study

<http://www.masalastudy.org>

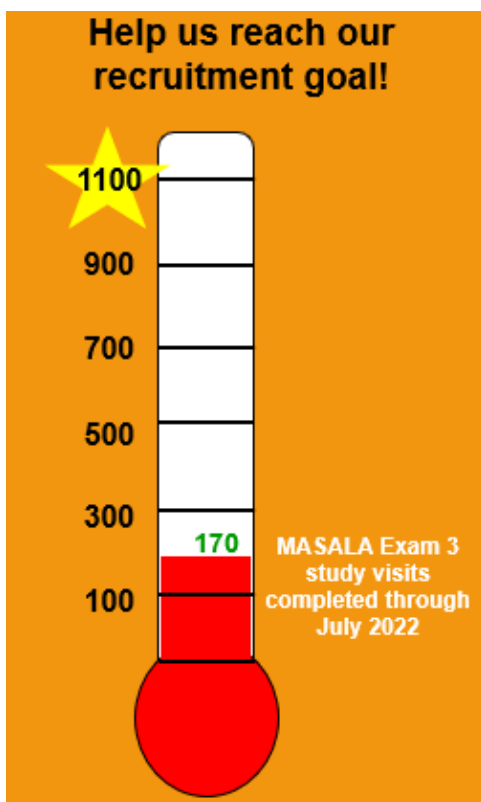
We Look Forward to Seeing You Soon for Exam 3!

Dear MASALA participants:

MASALA Exam 3 visits are off to a great start at UCSF and Northwestern University! Since November 2021, we have invited 20 participants per month to come in for a 3-4 hour clinical exam. We have already seen more than 170 people in the past 8 months. **We hope that all 1,150 people who are part of our pioneering study will participate in Exam 3.**

Exam 3 is focused on understanding heart and blood vessel function in South Asians. When you come for the visit, you will have new tests we have not done before, including an echocardiogram (ultrasound) of the heart, and two research tests to measure stiffness and dilation of blood vessels. We also ask participants to walk at their usual pace for 6 minutes to measure their fitness level.

These tests are important to understand why



South Asians experience more heart disease and trouble with heart function as they get older.

Your long-term participation in the MASALA study is very important to improve knowledge about the health of the South Asian community. Our staff will help you coordinate your trip to the hospital for these tests. We can provide transportation for people who are not able to drive or take public transportation to the hospital. If you have moved out of the SF Bay Area or Chicagoland area, we will try to coordinate a time when you can travel back for a day for these tests and cover your travel expense.

A recent Exam 3 participant at the Northwestern site commented: **"Very well organized and everything was streamlined. The day met my expectations, which were explained to me in detail in advance."** Please answer our calls or emails promptly. If you have not yet received an email, letter, or phone call inviting you for this new Exam visit, please be patient. You will hear from us in the future. We will be conducting this Exam through June 2024 and hope to see you in person soon!

With warm wishes,
Alka Kanaya and Namratha Kandula

Attention Northwestern University Participants!
The MASALA Study Team has a new phone number. Please add **(872) 256-2155** to your contacts so you don't miss our call!

The MASALA 2nd Generation (MASALA-2G) program in Chicago invites your children to join!

By Nilay Shah, MD
MASALA 2G Investigator

Young adulthood is an important time to maintain good heart health, especially for South Asians. Yet, we do not know enough about strategies to promote health for 2nd Generation South Asian adults. The MASALA-2G (2nd Generation) study is an exciting new heart health program for young adult South Asian Americans. This program is for adults age 18+ years, who are the children of original MASALA study participants from the Chicago site!

This new program aims to answer three questions:

1. What is the current heart health of 2nd generation South Asian American adults?
2. What are the unique social and cultural factors that influence the heart health of 2nd generation South Asian American adults?
3. How is the health of South Asian parents in the United States related to the health of their 2nd generation children?

MASALA^{2G}

Participants in the 2nd Generation program will get blood tests, a vital signs check, and a heart CT scan, and results will be provided. For now, the program is available only at the Chicago MASALA site. But, we plan to expand to the San Francisco MASALA site in the future!

How can your children participate?

1. Your children can submit the MASALA-2G participation form at www.MASALA2G.org/join
2. You or your children can send their name, phone number, and email address to us at MASALA2G@northwestern.edu, or call (312) 503-5470 to provide this information

More information is at www.MASALA2G.org. The MASALA-2G program is led by Dr. Nilay Shah, Cardiologist and Assistant Professor at Northwestern University in Chicago.



- **Please call us if you have a major change in your health status.** If you were recently in the hospital, if you underwent a serious outpatient medical test, or have any new diagnoses.
- **Please call us if you have a new address, phone number, or email address.**
- **Please take part in our phone interviews.** If we leave a message for you, please call us back. We need to update your information each year.
- We sometimes send you forms asking you to give MASALA permission to collect your medical records from hospitals and doctors' offices. **Please return these forms quickly**, so we can get the records.

To contact the UCSF clinic, call 415-236-2725
NEW Phone Number for the Northwestern clinic:
(872) 256-2155

For study news, events, and publications:



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We gratefully accept donations to support our work. To donate, visit our study website at www.masalastudy.org and click on the "Support Us" link at the bottom of the "About the Study" page.

The Positive Impact of Healthy Plant-Based Diets

By Avantika Rastogi
UCSF MASALA Intern

The plant-based diet has been around for over 2000 years. One of the earliest records of vegetarianism was from the Jain population in India in 500 BCE. Vegetarianism is being practiced in many cultures and regions now, possibly due to the ethical and environmental implications of consuming meat products. Recent studies have shown there are many other health benefits of consuming a plant-based diet.

Researchers at Harvard recently published an article with our MASALA Study data that determined the impact of both a healthful and an unhealthful plant-based diets on disease risk. They measured how closely participants followed a healthy plant-based diet or unhealthy plant-based diet. They evaluated the relationship of plant-based diets with several risk factors and future risk of diabetes.

Healthy plant based diets include foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, daal, or beans. Unhealthy plant foods include fruit juices, refined grains, potatoes, sugar sweetened beverages, sweets, and desserts.



The researchers found that people who ate healthy plant-based diets were likely to have lower fasting glucose, lower cholesterol levels, lower weight, less fatty liver, and lower hemoglobin A1c levels, compared with people who ate unhealthy plant-based diets. Moreover, the individuals who ate a healthy plant-based diet were less likely to develop diabetes after 5 years of follow-up. It's never too late to start adding healthier plant-based foods to your diet!

Healthy Plant-Based Papdi Chaat

Here's a quick chaat recipe that you can customize based on your preferences or what you have in your fridge. Here are some healthier alternatives:

- Use avocado instead of potato; this is a great way to include healthy monounsaturated fats in your diet, as well as potassium, fiber, and folate.
- Substitute the typical deep fried papdi with some baked whole wheat crackers; papdi has around 3 times MORE calories than whole wheat crackers.
- Switch the packaged chaat masala, which is high in salt, with an easy homemade recipe with 6 key ingredients (2 tablespoons dry mango powder, 2 tsp roasted cumin seeds, 1 tsp dried pomegranate seeds, 1 teaspoon black salt, ½ tsp red chili powder, ¼ tsp black peppercorns all ground together)
- Switch your typical dahi with a plant-based yogurt--we like cashew yogurt. Cashew yogurt is a healthy source of unsaturated fats and protein that tastes quite similar to the dairy yogurt we are used to.



Ingredients:

- Around 30 whole wheat crackers (e.g., Carrs, Triscuit, or low-salt Wheat Thins, etc.)
- 1 cup cashew yogurt
- 1 avocado (cubed)
- ¼ cup canned or cooked chickpeas
- ¼ cup mung bean sprouts (optional)
- ¼ cup onion
- 1 tomato
- ¼ cup fresh pomegranate seeds

- ¼ cup mint chutney
- ¼ cup tamarind chutney
- Lemon juice to taste
- Chaat masala to taste (check the easy recipe above)
- Chopped cilantro for garnish

Directions:

1. Cube avocado into bite size pieces, dice onion, tomato, and coriander.
2. Arrange crackers on a large, shallow, platter.
3. Mix together cubed avocado, chickpeas, mung bean sprouts, onion, tomato, and chaat masala. Add a spoonful of this mixture on top of each cracker.
4. Whisk the cashew yogurt and add on top of the papdi and avocado mixture.
5. Top with some mint and tamarind chutney to your taste.
6. Top with extra ground cumin, cilantro, fresh pomegranate seeds, and a dash of lemon juice.
7. Enjoy!

UCSF and Northwestern University
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Meditation- A simple and effective way to manage stress

By Richa Jain
UCSF Clinical Research Coordinator

At some point in life, many of us have experienced a feeling of being overwhelmed and stressed. Prolonged state of stress can have a serious effect on our health, relationships, and the quality of life. We all know that we should stay calm and peaceful and not react to unfavorable situations, but we all struggle with how to do it. Just consciously taking few deep breaths can help us feel better in the moment and can help restore calm and inner peace. Meditation has been practiced for thousands of years in different forms - Mantra, Mindfulness, Qigong, Tai Chi, Yoga, Vipassana, and the list can go on.

I have been practicing a triad of Twin Hearts Meditation, Forgiveness and Gratitude for over 5 years and it has made a massive difference in my life. Twin Heart Meditation is guided, easy to follow, and helps spread love, and peace among family, friends, and the entire community.

The Twin Hearts refer to the heart and crown chakras which are the centers of emotional and divine love. It is based on the principle that some of the major chakras are entry points to certain levels of consciousness. When a person does Meditation on Twin Hearts, energy flows down to the practitioner filling him/her with divine light, love, and power. Meditation is an effective stress management tool. We encourage you to give it a try!



Watch this video for more information:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N884jNJpGc>