

Participants Needed for UC San Diego Study to Help Reduce Breast Cancer Risk

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Researchers at the Moores UCSD Cancer Center are recruiting participants for an innovative diet and exercise program that aims to reduce postmenopausal breast cancer risk through lifestyle change. The Healthy Eating & Living Program for Weight Control (HELP) study uses an innovative, Internet-enhanced telephone counseling intervention program to help women improve their lifestyle habits.

John P. Pierce, PhD, Sam M. Walton Professor of Cancer Research in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and director of the Population Sciences Division in the Moores UCSD Cancer Center, will lead the study. Participants randomized to the intervention will receive individualized support and guidance from a team of experienced telephone counselors under the direction of dietitian Vicky Newman, MS, RD.

"Being overweight or having a sedentary lifestyle can increase breast cancer risk in both pre- and postmenopausal women," Pierce said. "New strategies to help women lose excess weight and exercise are a critical area of research." The HELP study is a randomized, controlled trial that tracks participants' weight, health habits, physical activity, diet and quality of life over the course of 12 weeks. Participants will fill out questionnaires, keeping physical activity logs and food records, and attend two clinical visits at Moores UCSD Cancer Center in La Jolla.

Women from the greater San Diego area are encouraged to participate in the HELP study. Eligible women must be between the ages of 45 to 70, be overweight or obese, want to increase their physical activity and improve their diet, and have high-speed Internet access.

"Previous telephone counseling programs have helped women adopt healthy eating and exercise habits that can greatly reduce breast cancer risk," said co-investigator Ruth Patterson, PhD, professor in the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine at the UCSD School of Medicine. "But behavioral cancer-prevention interventions are expensive to conduct and are often impractical for use in large-scale studies or community efforts."

"If we could shift some of the activities from the telephone to the Internet, staff time may be reduced and lower the cost of executing these programs," Pierce added. "We hope to deliver a reduced-cost intervention that is effective for dietary improvement, physical activity, and weight loss."

For more information on participating in the HELP study, call 858-822-2895 or 800-820-9435 ext. 22895, e-mail healthyeating@ucsd.edu or visit <http://www.healthyeatingucsd.org>.

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