

WELCOME BACK!

**THE STUDY OF WOMEN'S HEALTH ACROSS THE NATION (SWAN)
IS PLEASED TO WELCOME YOU BACK!**

Putting the Pieces of the Puzzle Together in SWAN IV

We will expect to begin to see you again for your next SWAN visit in **September 2009**. There will be two more visits over the next 5 years so please join us in your continued contribution to SWAN and to our growing knowledge of women's health.

The National Institutes of Health has awarded SWAN funds to continue the 13th year of the study because they are convinced that SWAN has the unique ability to answer important questions related to aging and menopause especially among various ethnic groups, but we cannot do it without YOU! You are the key to putting the puzzle pieces together. You each play a vital role to this study because you are irreplaceable to SWAN.

Did you know that 2196 women participated in the 11th followup visit? We want all of you to return for your next visit!

We are delighted to be able to continue the study of our diverse group of women (African-American, Caucasian, Chinese, Hispanic, and Japanese) from seven cities across the United States (Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Ann Arbor/Inkster, MI; Jersey City, NJ; Los Angeles, CA; Pittsburgh, PA and Oakland, CA).

Why We Are Still Calling You

You signed up for a study of aging and menopause. You may have already experienced the menopause, that is the final menstrual period. You have participated in many clinic exams. What more is there to learn? *You may be wondering why we are still calling you.*

Did you know that 84% of SWAN women are post-menopause and that 14% of SWAN women have not experienced their final menstrual period?

The next phase of SWAN asks if the effect of menopause on women's lives is short term or long term. It may be that the transition is difficult but once it is over, there are no lasting effects on health. For example, perhaps during the transition some women have sleep difficulties but once the transition is complete, the sleep difficulties decrease a lot. On the other hand, perhaps menopause has a longer term effect on sleep, such that sleep problems not only increase during the transition but continue afterward. The next phase of SWAN also asks about whether mid-life aging is related to who is diagnosed with illnesses, like heart disease, osteoporosis, and physical disability later in life. We continue to contact you so we can find out information about your health status. You might think that if health status is all we need, couldn't you just give us your health records? SWAN's definition of health is a broad one – it includes emotional, social, and physical well being, which is the World's Health Organization's definition of quality of life. If we focused solely on diagnosed diseases we would miss out on the many important aspects that contribute to a high quality of life for women. SWAN's mission is to acquire new knowledge relevant to preventing diseases that can reduce quality of life and cause early death. We need you to help us understand how to promote successful aging in mid-life and beyond.

Did you know that the age range of SWAN women is currently 51 years to 63 years of age?

Let's Keep SWAN in the Forefront of Women's Health Research

Sherry Sherman, PhD, Program Officer, SWAN, National Institutes of Health

"The National Institute of Aging has focused on the determinants of successful aging among older women. Over 10 years ago, we decided to sponsor a national study on mid-life aging in women because the changes that take place during mid-life set the stage for later disease, disability, and quality of life and little is known about the experience and effects of menopause. SWAN is a pioneering study and is the first comprehensive study of mid-life aging and menopause in women of different ethnic backgrounds. The National Institute of Aging believes that SWAN is and will continue to be an invaluable source of health information for women currently in mid-life and for generations of mid-life women to come."

Susan Johnson, MD, SWAN Study Chair

"I have been privileged to be a part of this extraordinary study of menopause for the past seven years. As an obstetrician/gynecologist, I know well the limited knowledge doctors and their patients have had about what happens to hormones during menopause, what symptoms are common and how long they last. With SWAN IV about to begin, we will continue to study women's health not only through the menopausal transition but after menopause as well. Most important, I am impressed with the ongoing commitment to SWAN of the women across the country who have made the study possible. On behalf of all the SWAN investigators and staff, I thank you!"

Did you know that SWAN Investigators have published 169 papers in scientific journals that present data provided by YOU?

What's New with SWAN and What Stays the Same

You will find a number of familiar activities such as interviews and questionnaires, physical measurements, and blood work at your next SWAN visit. We have added new questions, several measures of physical functioning, additional cognitive measures, and have brought back the bioimpedance procedure. Most SWAN sites will offer the bone density procedure as well as a study of carotid arteries, the arteries in your neck. Some sites will perform a knee x-ray and an emotional well-being interview.

You will be provided with more information from your SWAN site explaining the components of your next visit and the results you will receive.

Did you know that you already have been active in SWAN for 12 years! Your first visit (00) was a "baseline" visit. Since then you have completed 11 follow-up visits. Just two more visits to go for a lifetime contribution to SWAN.

Space for sites to add information that is specific to their site and possibly a welcome from the site PI.