

Walk Your Heart To Health Intervention Results

Improving heart health one step at a time!



Walk Your Heart to Health was a study conducted by the Healthy Environments Partnership (HEP), a community-based participatory research partnership that has been working together since 2000 to understand and promote heart health in Detroit. HEP is an affiliated partnership of the Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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WHAT IS WALK YOUR HEART TO HEALTH ?

The *Walk Your Heart to Health (WYHH)* study was conducted between 2009-2012 **to increase physical activity and improve heart health in Detroit**. It was designed to test the efficacy of a community-health promoter-led walking group intervention.

Groups met 3 times a week for 8 months at community and faith based organizations throughout Detroit that served as host site. Each walking group participant received a pedometer to track steps. At three points over the 8 month period, participants received a health assessment which included blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, weight and several other health indicators.

The study was implemented using a community-based participatory research approach that actively engaged community residents, health service providers and academic researchers in the development, implementation and evaluation of the intervention.

The *WYHH* study was a community-designed intervention grounded in priorities that emerged from a two-year community planning process. It demonstrated that walking groups:

- ◆ **Caused a reduction in multiple indicators of cardiovascular risk; and**
- ◆ **Are a viable strategy for reducing racial, ethnic and socioeconomic inequities in cardiovascular mortality.**

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS



Chandler Park Conservancy | Detroit Health Department | Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation | Friends of Parkside
Henry Ford Health System | Institute for Population Health | Eastside Community Network |
University of Michigan School of Public Health | Community Members At-Large

ALMOST ANYONE CAN WALK!

- ◆ Walking is widely accessible. It poses low risk of injury, does not require formal training or special equipment and can be sustained by all age groups.
- ◆ WYHH walking groups offered peer support, and promoted leadership and group cohesion that helped increase adherence to the overall program and ultimately to cardiorespiratory fitness.

WYHH WALKING GROUPS INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- ◆ WYHH participants walked more steps per day on days they came to a walking group session compared to days when they did not walk with the group (See Figure 1).
- ◆ After joining the walking groups, walkers took, on average, more steps per day — even on days they did not come to a walking group (See Figure 1).
- ◆ Attending a greater number of sessions, or a greater number of weeks, was associated with greater increase in physical activity during the intervention and the maintenance period.

WYHH WALKING GROUPS REDUCE CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE RISK FACTORS

- ◆ On average, for each increase of 4000 steps walked per day during the 8 week intervention, a participant experienced:
 - A 19% reduction in the likelihood of having high blood pressure (OR= 0.81, p = 0.001);
 - A significant reduction in total cholesterol ($\beta = -1.84$, p=0.008);
 - A significant reduction in blood glucose ($\beta = -0.79$, p=0.116);
 - A reduction in weight of 2 lbs. ($\beta = -2.0$, p< 0.001).
- ◆ Reductions in CVD risk indicators attained during the 8 week intervention were largely maintained during the 24 week maintenance period (See Figure 2).

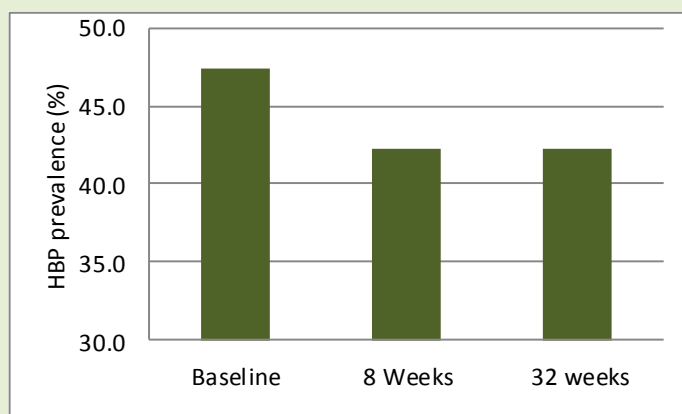


“I loved it! The people in the group and the Community Health Promoters, we became family...Everybody in my household walks, I changed my diet & lost weight. The program should never end...”

Figure 1: Mean Number of Daily Steps Walked by WYHH Participants



Figure 2: Adjusted High Blood Pressure Prevalence Estimates for WYHH Participants with an Average Increase of 4000 Steps per Day



“I am now off my two heart meds... my doctors are so impressed. They want to know how I did it, I told them I walked!”



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