

Please join us as  
**MIDUS**  
Goes Forward



*Of all the self-fulfilling prophecies in our culture, the assumption that aging means decline and poor health is probably the deadliest.*

✎ Marilyn Ferguson



**MIDUS**

Midlife in the United States

A National Study of Health & Well-Being

*Thank you so much for your contributions to MIDUS!*

*Before the MIDUS study, mid-life in America was largely uncharted territory, even though it is the longest segment of our life span. With your help, MIDUS has been finding answers to two important questions about mid-life:*

- *How well are Americans doing during mid-life?*
- *Why are some facing the challenges of aging better than others?*

*We're happy to report that the National Institute on Aging has made it possible for us to continue this important national study into its third decade.*

*Soon we'll be contacting you about participating in the next round of interviews. I hope you can continue with MIDUS 3, to help us understand even more about mid-life & older age. Your participation is essential to what we will discover.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carol D. Ryff".

Carol D. Ryff, Director  
MIDUS National Study  
of Health & Well-Being



MIDLIFE IN THE UNITED STATES: A NATIONAL STUDY OF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING  
**MIDUS Goes Forward**  
FUNDED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING



**MIDUS** has broadened our understanding of what it means to be **HEALTHY**, by showing that psychological & social factors work together with physical health to promote overall **WELL-BEING**.

## You Have Helped MIDUS Discover What Mid-Life is About:

### 1 • Mid-Life Has Its Challenges:



- Health issues (cancer, heart disease, physical disabilities)
- Financial strain
- Providing care for others (children, parents)
- Experiencing loss (of spouse, of job, etc.)
- Balancing the demands of work and family life

### 2 • Mid-Life Challenges Can Affect Health:

- People with more stress are more likely to gain weight.
- Caregivers show higher levels of stress hormones.
- People who are disadvantaged (educationally, economically) are more likely to have biological risk factors (more inflammation, high blood pressure) that can lead to ill health.



### 3 • But Some are Resilient

Declines are not inevitable as we age. In the face of mid-life challenges, many show resilience— the ability to maintain mental and physical health in the face of difficult challenges.

- Caregivers who report more positive emotions show reduced biological risk factors.
- People who are disadvantaged but who have a strong sense of purpose and good relationships have lower levels of inflammation that are associated with better health.
- Volunteering in later life promotes better mental health, even in the face of declining physical health.
- Good social ties across time helps reduce mental declines that some experience with aging.



Scientists using **MIDUS** data have published over **450 articles on diverse topics:**

- Aging • Alcohol & Drugs
- Cancer • Childhood • Discrimination • Education • Emotions • Employment
- Exercise • Finances • Family • Gender • Genetics • Life Satisfaction • Marriage
- Menopause • Mental Health • Neighborhoods • Obesity • Parenting • Personality • Race • Relationships • Religion • Sexuality
- and many more...



# Where is MIDUS going?

Your participation  
in MIDUS 3 will  
help us:



## 1. Understand Transitions

Many of you are making the transition from early adulthood to mid-life, or from mid-life to old age.

Interviews from MIDUS 3 will help us better understand the challenges and triumphs of these transitions.

## 2 • Study the Role of the US Recession

MIDUS 3 will include questions about the economic recession that began in 2008. Its financial setbacks (loss of employment, savings, or home) may effect the well-being of Americans well into the future.



MIDUS 3 will allow us to study how such historical change influences Americans on an individual level.

## 3 • Find Out Why We Change

We can't know how or why people change unless we know what has occurred in lives over time. For example, people who feel older than they are may have poorer health, but which came first? Did poor health cause them to feel old, or did feeling old lead to poor self-care (not exercising enough, not eating wisely), which undermined health?



MIDUS 3 will examine changes across two decades of adult life, giving us a clearer picture of why improvements or decline occurred. We will be able to see how later life is influenced by events earlier in adulthood.

**MIDUS** shows that positive aging is the ability to remain actively engaged in life, even in the face of age-related challenges, rather than the commonly held belief that only disease-free individuals age well.





# *We Hope You Will Continue to Participate as MIDUS goes into its 3<sup>rd</sup> Decade*



*We would like to see how you are doing and how your life has changed since we began interviewing you almost 20 years ago. We'll be inviting all past participants to join us again for MIDUS 3.*



**MIDUS** results have appeared in many news sources, such as:

- ***The Wall Street Journal:***  
*Is Happiness Overrated?*
- ***The New York Times:***  
*A Sharper Mind,  
Middle Age & Beyond*
- ***TIME Magazine:***  
*Our Personalities are  
Constantly Changing,  
Even if We Think They're Not*

## **Do We Have Your Current Contact Information?**



**It's very important** that we be able to reach you when we begin interviews for MIDUS 3.

Please send us any updates in your: address, phone(s), and/or email(s).

**SEND TO: MIDUS—Midlife in the United States**

**ADDRESS:** University of Wisconsin Survey Center  
475 N. Charter St., Room B607  
Madison, WI 53706-1507

**PHONE:** 1-866-271-2378 (toll free)

**EMAIL:** vlein@wisc.edu

**MIDUS**  
Midlife in the United States  
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**website: MIDUS.wisc.edu**

