

MESA Messenger

News from the MESA Project Office

By Cashell Jaquish, PhD, MESA Project Office, NHLBI, NIH

As with every newsletter, let us begin with our sincerest thanks. We hope you received your Certificate of Appreciation and MESA 25th Anniversary pin as an expression of our gratitude for you, our MESA participants. You are part of the MESA family and we are thankful you continue to answer our calls, update us on your health, and make this study possible. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) shares your long-term commitment to MESA.

We would like to share some changes planned for the next 10 years of MESA. The one you will notice immediately is that we will be contacting you every six months, rather than every year, to check in about your health. This enables us to learn about changes in your life that may influence your health and well-being. It is also an opportunity for you to ask questions and learn about new opportunities to participate in MESA. Planning for MESA Exam 8 will begin in October of this year, with an opportunity for in-person visits beginning in 2027. There is also the possibility of Exam 9 beginning in about 5 years and opportunities to participate in new ancillary studies that interest you.

Speaking of ancillary studies – the third MESA Mind visit, C, is complete. The fourth MESA Mind visit, D, has begun and will include opportunities for a physical exam, cognitive assessment, and brain MRI. MESA Amyloid ancillary study visits are concluding; we thank you for your help in learning more about the effect of amyloid proteins on the heart. Look for results and new information coming soon from these ancillary studies. The MESA world has been quite busy!



Please check out the MESA website (go to this address or follow the instructions on page 3):

<https://mesa-nhlbi.org/participants/welcome>

It contains everything you need to know about MESA, including frequently asked questions and contact information. In addition, all of the past Newsletters are available on the website. The website also contains links to general health information and MESA research discoveries. Let us know what you think or if you have questions. We always like to hear from the MESA family.

We are extremely grateful for your commitment to MESA. It is because of you that MESA continues to discover new ways to improve health and well-being. We hope you like reading the newsletter and are taking time to enjoy the important things in your life. Stay healthy and well; see you soon! ❤️

Questions? Contact your MESA Field Center at:

Wake Forest: Katy Melius - (336) 716-7407

Columbia: Vijay Nayudupalli - (212) 305-9932

Hopkins: Imene Benayache - (410) 614-2488

Minnesota: Jackie Muñoz - (612) 625-8560

Northwestern: Grace Ho - (312) 503-3298

UCLA: Sameh Tadros - (626) 979-4920

Our Shared Journey: 25 Years of MESA Discoveries

By *Norrina Bai Allen, PhD, Northwestern University*

Over the past 25 years, MESA has shaped how we understand heart – and more recently – brain health. At this key milestone, we are taking the opportunity to look back on our achievements.

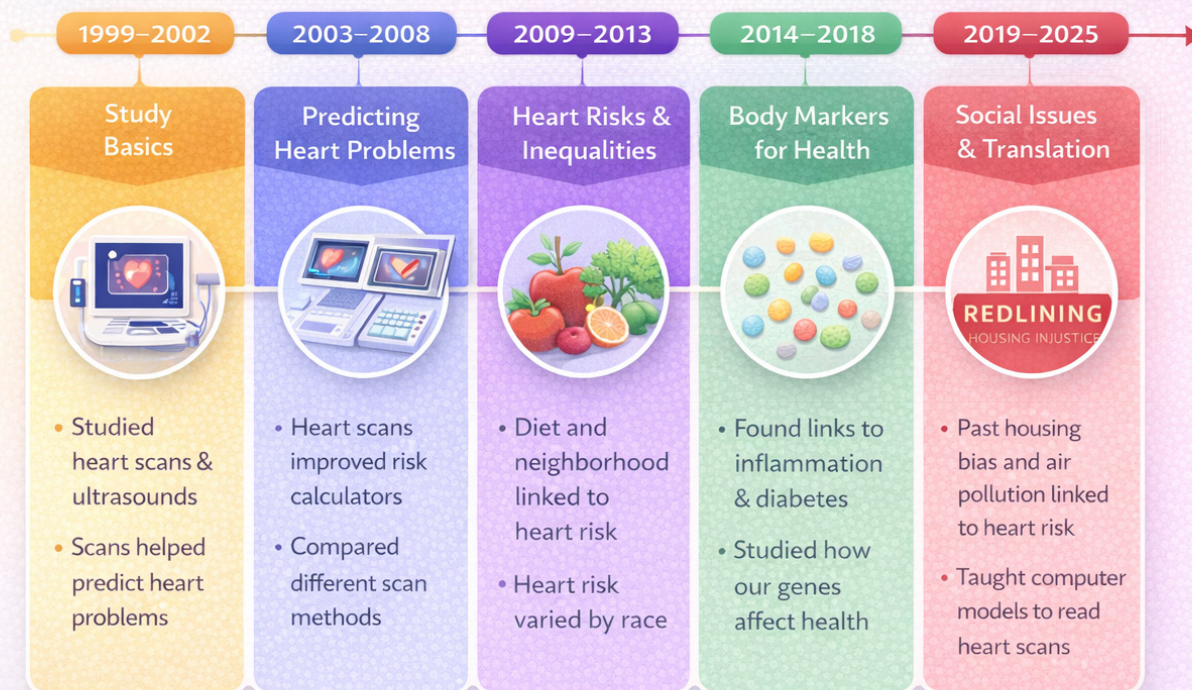
One key lesson MESA learned is that heart disease develops slowly over time. MESA has shown that early changes in heart and blood vessels can predict future heart attacks, strokes, and heart failure long before symptoms begin. For example, people with calcium buildup in their heart arteries are about twice as likely to have a heart attack or stroke compared with people with no calcium.

MESA also taught us that heart and brain health are closely linked. Our studies have found that problems in the heart and blood vessels – such as coronary artery calcification, high blood pressure and poor blood flow– are associated with faster cognitive decline and higher risk of dementia as people age. These findings are helping to show that protecting the heart may also help protect memory and thinking.

Another major insight is that aging is not the same for everyone. MESA research has highlighted how different factors, including stress, discrimination, neighborhood conditions, air pollution, and access to care shape both cardiovascular and cognitive aging. These factors help explain why some groups face higher risks than others.

Together, MESA's discoveries have shifted our focus to **prevention** earlier in life and a more complete view of the heart and brain across the life course. We are very proud of all MESA has learned in these past 25 years, and it has all been made possible by the incredible dedication of our participants. Thank you! ❤️

25 Years of MESA Publications Highlights



MESA: Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis

From Participation to Legacy: Helping Science Live On

By Deepa Gopal, MD, MS and Jessica Fetterman, PhD, Boston Medical Center

You may have been asked, or will be asked at your next MESA visit, to complete a short survey to understand how participants would feel about ‘biobanking’. The purpose of the survey is to help us learn how MESA participants feel about organ donation to create a **tissue biobank** for research. We would like to hear about the factors that may affect your interest in participating in organ donation for research after you pass away, and whether you may be interested in participating in an organ donation program for research in the future. We are only asking for your opinion.

This future tissue biobank could allow MESA to study heart, lung, and brain tissue donated from participants after they pass away. Thanks to the blood samples that MESA participants have already generously donated, we have learned a lot about heart, lung, and brain health. But a tissue biobank would allow MESA to study how diseases affect the heart, brain, and other organs, beyond what can be seen in blood samples alone. Studying actual organs

and tissues can deepen our understanding of why people develop heart, lung, and brain diseases, and how aging affects different organs and tissues. It can help us better understand how diseases affect people differently across varying factors.

Please understand that we are *not* asking you to agree to donate your organs or tissue right now; the survey will just help us learn if participants would be interested in a future biobank program. Your answers will help us plan a future study and are not a final decision or commitment for future participation in this program. Thank you for sharing your feedback with us! ❤️



Have You Talked to Your Friends & Family About MESA?

By Kayleen Williams, MPH, University of Washington

Your MESA study coordinator will often check to make sure your ‘backup contact person’ is correct. It’s important for you to let the friends and family who you choose as your backup contacts know that you’ve given us their names. Why? If we can’t reach you, we might call them to ask a few questions about your general health or how to contact you. They may worry about sharing this information if they don’t know that you want them to talk to us, so please give them a heads up. Also, your loved ones might be proud to hear that you’ve been part of MESA for over 25 years, helping us make great progress in cardiovascular health research!

Feel free to share this newsletter or the MESA website (right) with them so they can learn more. By keeping your friends and family in the loop, you help us stay connected and keep this important research going.

Thank you so much for your contributions to MESA!



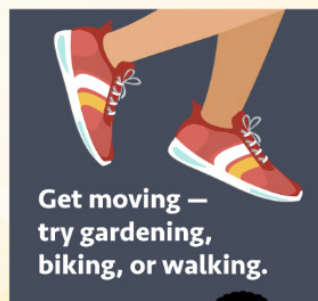
MESA Participant Website

The square above is a “QR code”. If you have a phone with a camera, open the camera and point it at the QR code. A button should display on the screen, asking if you want to open a webpage. This is a shortcut to visit the MESA website. Or, you can type the address:

<https://mesa-nhlbi.org/participants/welcome>

Tips To **BOOST** Your Health as You Age

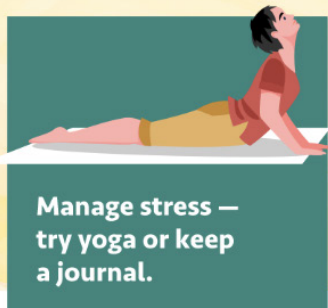
Did you know that making lifestyle changes can help you live longer and better? Try these tips to get started.



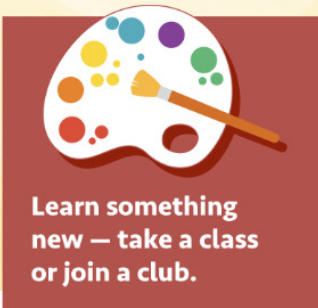
Get moving — try gardening, biking, or walking.



Choose healthy foods rich in nutrients.



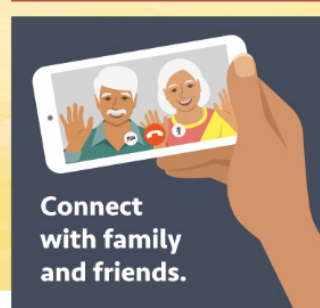
Manage stress — try yoga or keep a journal.



Learn something new — take a class or join a club.



Go to the doctor regularly.



Connect with family and friends.

Learn more about steps you can take to promote healthy aging at www.nia.nih.gov/healthy-aging.



MESA and the MESA Messenger newsletter are funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI).



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Seattle, WA
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MESA
Coordinating Center
University of Washington, Box 354922
6200 NE 74th St, Building 29, Suite 210
Seattle, WA 98115