

STUDY BRIEFING:

CHARM is Springing into Action



On behalf of all of us at CHARM, we would like to wish a happy spring to all of our hard-working moms out there! It has been more than a year since we had the opportunity to expand and it would not have been possible without your help and dedication. To remind you, our ARCH moms are the original participants who we continue to contact, and our MARCH moms are the moms newly recruited to this study.

One goal of our expansion is to be part of a nationwide effort that tries to answer questions about how the environment, diet, genes, and other factors play a role in health problems like asthma, obesity, and child development. ARCH and MARCH are two of the 84 projects that are a part of that nationwide effort called ECHO!

Because of our participation in the ECHO program, both ARCH and MARCH teams are working tirelessly to keep up current participant activities and to recruit new participants to the MARCH statewide project.

Expecting mothers are now being recruited to the MARCH study in four hospitals across Michigan! The project is active at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, and Hutzel Women's Hospital and Sinai-Grace Hospital in Detroit. We have recruited about 100 women to the MARCH project from these sites! We will also launch the project at a few more hospitals across the state this spring. To our MARCH moms, because of participants like you, we get closer to meeting our goal of 1000 mothers enrolled in MARCH every day!

ARCH is also making changes now that we have joined forces with the national ECHO project. Because of this new partnership, we are working to tell all ARCH moms about the new pieces of the project to see if they are interested in continuing with the program. We can do this over the phone and are hard at work calling each and every ARCH family. **ARCH moms, if you have not yet heard about the new pieces of ARCH or have had a change in contact information, please feel free to call the ARCH office at 1-866-925-8758.**

CHARM participants, our research successes, both here in the State of Michigan and nationally, would not be possible without you!

INVESTIGATOR SPOTLIGHT:

Dr. Kerver: A Key Ingredient to CHARM Success

Jean Kerver, PhD, has been a fixture on the CHARM team for over a decade, so much so, her name has become synonymous with various CHARM projects. Dr. Kerver is a nutritional epidemiologist and a registered dietitian who studies the ways that early life nutrition can impact health outcomes including brain development and obesity. According to Dr. Kerver, "The best advice we have about diet is to focus on adding healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains instead of trying to deprive yourself."

Dr. Kerver got her start at Michigan State University, earning a Bachelor's degree in Dietetics before moving to Chicago to study and work at Rush University and the University of Chicago. Later returning to MSU, she went on to earn a PhD in Human Nutrition and a Master of Science in Epidemiology. She now resides in Northern Michigan and her appetite for continued learning, coupled with her dedication to reducing health disparities through nutritional interventions, makes her stand out in the field of maternal-infant health. *[continued..]*



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INVESTIGATOR SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED:

Over the years, Dr. Kerver has been involved in both the ARCH and MARCH projects. She was the primary investigator for the ARCH Child Development Study, which brought ARCH mothers and their children to the MSU campus to learn more about some of our ARCH families. When she moved to Northern Michigan, she spearheaded efforts to bring ARCH to the Traverse City area where we were able to have more than 100 expecting mothers join the project! In addition, MARCH is now underway at Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, and CHARM has Dr. Kerver and her team to thank for their persistence and dedication to making MARCH a reality in Northern Michigan. CHARM is lucky to work so closely with someone who shares in the vision of keeping Michigan moms and infants healthy through research.

TIPS FOR MOMS AND DADS:

Making Fruits and Veggies Fun



While it can be a battle, eating fruits and veggies is important for growing kids! Not only are these foods good for your child's current health, but eating them now can help promote healthy eating habits for a lifetime to come.

Getting your kids to eat their fruits and vegetables can seem like the challenge of the century but incorporating these healthy foods in to their diet doesn't have to be so hard. We have some tips and tricks that be helpful for you!

Letting your children get creative with their fruits and veggies can help them have fun while eating healthy. Set up a station for your kids to make comical characters with their food. Try putting peanut butter and raisins on a piece of celery to make ants on a log. You can also try giving fruits and veggies silly names. You can rename carrots to "X-ray vision makers". This will help kids learn the vision benefits that come from eating carrots while making them think these healthy foods have superhero powers.

If giving veggies funny names doesn't work or if the kids just aren't buying it, try substituting certain fruits and veggies for other yummy foods. For instance, zucchini can easily be shredded into what looks like pasta. Simply add some parmesan cheese and spaghetti sauce and the kids will never taste the difference! And of course, there is the age old trick of simply sneaking fruits and veggies directly into other foods they love. For example, try sneaking some pureed butternut squash or sweet potato into macaroni and cheese or ground spinach into ground beef. Sometimes all it takes to get your kids eating healthy is some fun and creativity!