

CELEBRATION OF 30 YEARS

MACS/WIHS COMBINED COHORT STUDY

Winter 2024

MWCCS Newsletter

HAPPY NEW YEAR
2024

Happy New Year from the Principal Investigators

We hope that those of you who have had your visit already have noticed that it's shorter this time!!!

A team from across the country worked to decrease the number of questions and procedures so that we don't ask you any questions twice and your time with us is used as efficiently as possible. This shortening was done very carefully so that we continue to gather the most important information about your health and well-being. Please let us know how it is going and if you notice any issues.

As we start our 30th year (!), we want to thank you again for your loyalty and dedication to this study that has taught us so much about women's health. You have generously given your time, your energy, your blood (and some other bodily fluids) to move science forward in many ways. We are so grateful.

Happy, healthy 2024 to all of you.

Audrey, Mardge and Kathleen

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The ClinCard is Here!

By now many of you will have received your ClinCard prepaid Visa, a new way for MWCCS participants to be compensated. Funds will now be loaded onto the ClinCard.

Similar to prepaid cards like Chime or NetSpend, your ClinCard funds are available for use immediately and ClinCard is accepted anywhere Visa debit cards are accepted. You may use ClinCard for purchases in stores, online or over the phone.

Here's how it works:

- MWCCS staff will load funds onto your ClinCard Visa and give you the card.
- Each ClinCard has a preset Personal Identification Number (PIN). You can retrieve the PIN by calling ClinCard Customer Service.
- If you select debit when using the ClinCard, you'll need the PIN to make purchases. Or you can use the ClinCard as credit and sign for purchases.

These are some Frequently Asked Questions about ClinCard:

- How do I get cash from my ClinCard? You can get cash at ATMs with a Visa logo by selecting withdrawal **from checking** but you may be charged a fee. If you go to any **Fifth Third Bank** ATM you can make withdrawals and check balances without any fees. You can also go to Visa member banks (which display a Visa logo on the window) and request a "Visa manu

al cash disbursement" or cash advance.

This method does not incur any withdrawal fees but you will need your government ID and you may have to enter your card PIN. Cash back is also available with retail purchases where the service is offered.

- Can I transfer my ClinCard balance to my bank account? Yes! To transfer some or all of your funds to your bank account you must go to the cardholder website, www.myclincard.mycardplace.com, or use the My ClinCard mobile app.
- What should I do if my ClinCard is lost or stolen? Call us at 312-810-6091.
- Will my ClinCard affect my credit score? No. The ClinCard Prepaid Visa is a debit card and it does not have any effect on your credit score.
- What if what I want to purchase is more than the card balance? If the purchase amount is more than the funds available on the card, tell the cashier how much you wish to pay with the card. If the cashier attempts to process an amount higher than the available balance on the ClinCard, the transaction will be declined.



Here are some additional tips for using the ClinCard Pre-paid Visa Card:

There shouldn't be any fees for making purchases, getting cash back with purchases, calling customer service to speak with an agent or to check balances.

When paying for gas at the pump, the retailer might place a hold on your ClinCard for additional funds that takes several days to remove. It may be better to pay inside for gas to specify the purchase amount.

When using ClinCard at restaurants, make sure you have enough funds to potentially cover tips; they may verify if you have enough in your account for the bill.

You may pay for a rental car with your ClinCard Visa, but a credit card is usually necessary to reserve a rental car.

Store return policies may vary. Some stores offer returns in cash or store credit. For those who credit your account, it may take up to one week to process before it is available for use on your ClinCard.



A Fifth Third Bank Near YOU!

Looking for a Fifth Third Bank to retrieve your compensation in cash? Ask local MWCCS staff at the end of your visit and they will happy to assist you in finding a location that is convenient for you.

<https://www.53.com>

Breast Health: Breast Awareness Can Save Lives



There's a 1 in 8 chance a woman will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. That's a scary statistic. But cancer treatments are better than they've ever been. And early diagnosis can lead to the best outcomes.

Many doctors believe there is value in women knowing how their breasts normally look and feel. This familiarity can alert women to changes in their breasts that they can report to their healthcare provider. A number of women have reported that the first sign of their breast cancer was a new lump they discovered during a self-exam.

It is recommended that adult women conduct self-exams at least once a month. However, self-exams are **not** a substitute for regular screenings from your healthcare provider, including mammograms and ultrasound screenings.

Your healthcare provider can advise you of the best methods for performing self-exams. Here is an overview of what to expect.

Note: If you menstruate, it's best to wait a week after your period to perform an exam.

A visual examination of your breasts is the first step:

- Stand or sit topless in front of a mirror
- Look for puckering, dimpling or changes in the size or shape or symmetry of your breasts
- Check to see if your nipples are inverted, rather than sticking out
- Inspect your breasts while your hands are on your hips and while your arms are raised over your head
- Lift your breasts to see if they are symmetrical underneath

Next, examine your breasts with your hands:

- Lying down or in the shower are the preferred ways to perform a manual breast exam

Breast Health Cont'd

- Use the fleshy pads of your middle fingers rather than your fingertips
- If lying down, place your right arm behind your head and use your left hand to perform the exam
- Use gentle, medium and firm pressure when feeling the surface of the breasts. Be thorough and use each pressure level in every spot
- Find a pattern and stick with it. Make sure you cover the entire breast.
- Squeeze the nipple to check for any discharge
- Don't go too fast. Carefully examining your breasts may take several minutes

Contact your health care provider if you notice the following changes to your breasts:

- A hard lump or knot near your underarm
- Redness, warmth, swelling or pain
- Thickening or prominent fullness that is different from the surrounding tissue
- Dimples, puckers, bulges or ridges on your breasts
- Inverted nipples or bloody nipple discharge
- Itching, scales, sores or rashes

What happens if you find something?

First, don't panic. Changes, even lumps, can be normal in breasts.

Remember, there is no substitute for a clinical exam from your healthcare provider.

But becoming more aware of the natural look and feel of your breasts can help you to become a better advocate for yourself.



Vaccine Update

Take the Shots or Not?

It's the chilly time of year. That used to mean two things, warm clothes and flu season. But now there are other virus-based respiratory diseases to worry about; Covid-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) - a common respiratory virus that causes cold-like symptoms. There are new highly recommended vaccines available for the flu, Covid and RSV. At this point you and your provider may have already discussed seasonal vaccines or you may have received them. However if you are unaware, or still on the fence, here are some frequently asked questions about each one to help you make the best decision for your health.

- Won't the flu vaccine give me the flu? No. The flu shot does contain inactivated virus or a single protein from the virus,

in order to stimulate an immune response. Neither substance can give you the flu. Some people experience mild side effects, such as low-grade fever and muscle aches after they take the vaccine. But those only last 1 or 2 days.

- Can I still get the Covid vaccine for free? The cost of the vaccine is covered by all insurance plans and is also free for the uninsured. To find a free Covid booster, go to [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)—put in your zip code and select Bridge Access Program. Local Bridge Access Partners, such as participating Walgreens and CVS stores, may ask if you have insurance. But if you don't, you can still get the vaccine.

Vaccine Update Cont'd

- Who should get the RSV vaccine? If you're 60 or older, your healthcare provider might recommend RSV vaccination for you, especially if you have a weakened immune system from illness or from medications or if you have chronic medical conditions. If any of those apply to you, you might be at higher risk of severe RSV disease.
- If I get the vaccine, can I still get sick? The flu vaccine is typically about 40% to 60% effective. The current Covid boosters are formulated to fight the latest variants. According to the FDA the RSV vaccines are more than 80% effective at reducing the risk of lower respiratory tract disease. You can still get sick, but all of the vaccines greatly reduce the chances of serious illness.

Bottom line, cases of the flu, Covid-19 and RSV are on the rise in Illinois. Fight back by scheduling your seasonal vaccines today.

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FLU, RSV, COVID-19, AND THE COMMON COLD				
Common symptoms may include cough, headaches, sneezing, runny nose, and congestion. Different symptoms may include:				
			Rarely Sometimes Often	
	COLD	FLU	COVID-19	RSV
ACHES				
DIFFICULTY BREATHING				
FATIGUE				
FEVER				
LOSS OF TASTE OR SMELL				
SORE THROAT				
WHEEZING				

Retrieved from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

Visit 104 New and Returning Sub Studies

There are new and returning sub studies for visit 104.

Those who participated in the first wave of the Carotid Ultrasound Study (CIMT) are now eligible for their follow-up visit. The CIMT is a study that involves taking an ultrasound of the arteries in the neck. The test allows us to see how well the arteries (connected to the heart) in the neck are functioning. A small probe will be used to scan images of the carotid artery in the neck. It does not require any bloodwork or an interview.

The CIMT sub study takes place at Stroger Hospital. If we discover any abnormal results, we will provide them to the participant and, if they chose, their healthcare provider.

A newer sub study for visit 104 is the dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (DEXA) scan. A DEXA scan is a routine, painless x-ray procedure during which the amount of bone mineral per area at the spine, wrist and hip and amount of fat and muscle in the entire body will be measured. The purpose of this study is to examine risk factors for low bone mineral density (osteoporosis) in women. Eligible participants will be screened within one month of their main MWCCS visit.

The DEXA scan sub study will be done at Rush University Medical Center. If we discover that a participant has osteoporosis, we will provide this information to them and, with permission, to their primary care provider.

Participants will be modestly compensated for participation in the CIMT and DEXA scan sub studies.

Raise Your Voice

Have you ever wondered what your fellow MWCCS participants think of the study? Visit 103 ran from fall 2022 through September 2023. As part of your Core visits, study staff asked for your feedback. We've compiled your answers to our questions about your study experiences during V103.

When asked what you liked most about the MWCCS study, many of you were kind enough to cite interacting with our friendly staff as your favorite perk. When asked what you liked least, we were heartened to hear that a lot of you had no complaints. These are the questions we asked and your top answers.

What do you like *best* about your study visit?

Staff 37.1%
Informative 13.8%
Free healthcare 8.7%

What do you like *least* about your study visit?

Nothing 42.2%
Length of visit 17%
Sample collection/bloodwork 10.3%

What could we do to *improve* your study visit?

Nothing/don't know 65.6%
Timing/length of visit 7.3%

We've already addressed some of your concerns in Visit 104 by offering phone interviews, which shortens the overall Core visit. And we've eliminated more than a hundred questions, in response to the 7.4% who complained of question redundancy. We will continue to elicit your feedback going forward. We now ask what topics you would like to learn more about. As we compile your answers, you can be assured that you have a voice in your research study.

Community Advisory Board Update

Our newly constructed Chicago MWCCS Community Advisory Board (CAB) had its Winter meeting for 2023. We advanced an interesting agenda and ideas for 2024.

Topics included:

New Bi-Laws for the local CAB groups
Regular calendar CAB meetings scheduled
Rotation of National CAB (NCAB) Alternates
30th anniversary celebration ideas

The local CAB members are comprised of MWCCS participants from each Chicago site. There are currently 11 active members. Local CAB meets 4 time a year.

