

Viva Views

Summer 2020



Remote Visits: How You Can Make a Difference During This Time

In response to the COVID pandemic, Project Viva paused all in-person visits as of mid-March and swiftly reorganized the current visit to offer participants the opportunity to continue to contribute to important public health research even during this time of social distancing.

For those of you who have not yet completed our current Mid/Late Teen Visit, we are happy to invite you to do an abbreviated, remote version of this visit, consisting of the few visit components that can be completed **electronically** and **over the phone**.

As part of a remote visit, we would ask you and your teen to each complete an e-consent form, an online questionnaire, and web-based dietary recalls. Over the phone, a Research Assistant would work with you to update your contact information health care provider information and medical history. The remote visit would last approximately one hour, and you and your teen would each receive \$10 in Amazon gift cards for completing the questionnaires, and up to \$60 in Amazon gift cards for completing dietary recalls. Project Viva will gladly offer flexible scheduling options, including early morning, evening and weekend appointment times. We will still invite participants who complete a remote visit to come to our Fenway office to complete the in-person visit components when we resume normal operations (e.g. DXA scans, blood pressure, spirometry, etc.).

Here at Project Viva, we are extremely appreciative of the time you give to continue contributing to valuable public health research. We promise to make these remote visits as easy and accommodating as possible, so if you have availability and would like to conduct a phone-based, remote visit with us, please contact us to schedule. We look forward to hearing from you!

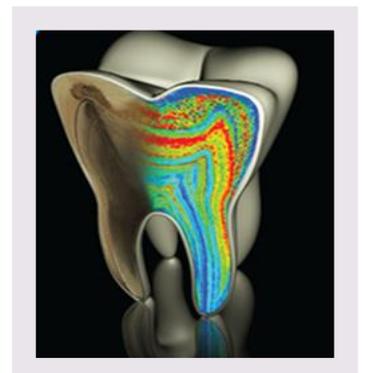
There's still time to complete your remote visit. We're just an email, call, or text away!

Email: project_viva@hphc.org | Call: 617-867-4251 | Text: 617-553-6698

The Truth Behind a Baby Tooth

What does the baby teeth component involve?

During the Mid-Teen visit, we ask participants to bring in, or mail, up to 5 of the Viva Teen's baby teeth that fell out during childhood. We ask that you bring in *baby* teeth that fell out on their own, and not adult or wisdom teeth removed by a dentist. Specifically, we prefer to collect incisors (the flat front teeth) rather than molars, and whole teeth rather than broken teeth. We also prefer to collect teeth that are confidently from the Project Viva teen. After collecting the baby teeth, we



ship them to our colleagues at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai who are experts in tooth content analyses.

Why are we asking to collect your teen's baby teeth?

Although this may seem like a strange request, it turns out that baby teeth are rich with scientific data. During prenatal life, teeth form in layers, like the rings in a tree trunk. Anything circulating in the blood during the development of the tooth becomes trapped inside the layers. We use the teeth to measure different pre- and post-natal exposures, such as exposure to potentially toxic metals in the environment. These environmental exposures have the potential to affect development, which can impact life-long health. For example, we are examining how levels of metals such as lead and mercury that are trapped within the teeth are related to fetal growth and child behaviors. By looking at tooth barium levels, we can better understand infant diet.



Stepping Up How We Measure Sleep and Physical Activity: From Actigraph to Fitbit

One new, exciting part of the Mid-Teen Visit is that we are giving our teenage participants a Fitbit device during the in-person visit. Participants put the Fitbit on during their visit and wear it for one full week of data collection.

The following data is collected from teen participants: number of steps walked, heart rate, calories burned, and sleep length. No GPS or other location information is collected. We are asking participants to sync their devices to a smartphone app or computer at least once per day. After the one-week period of data collection, Project Viva stops collecting data from the participant's device and the device is theirs to keep as a thank you for completing the study visit.

This is Project Viva's second time collecting data using an activity monitor. During the Early-Teen Visit, participants wore an Actigraph watch, which recorded data on steps and sleep and needed to be returned to the Viva staff at the end of the collection period. When our researchers analyzed the Actigraph sleep data, [they found that only 2.2% of adolescents met the lower bound of the National Sleep Foundation's recommended sleep duration \(8 hours for 14-17 year old's and 9 hours for 11-13 year old's\) and 31% slept less than 7 hours per day](#) (Cespedes 2018). This lack of sleep may set kids up for serious health issues later in life. When compared to well-rested kids, these sleep-deprived kids were found to have higher blood pressure, bigger waistlines, and lower levels of HDL cholesterol (less of the "good" cholesterol). This finding is one example of the many ways the data from an activity monitor can be useful. Project Viva is hoping to be able to analyze a wider range of data from the Fitbits.

These Fitbits are easier for us to use than the Actigraphs, because you don't have to mail them back to us after data collection is complete – they are yours to keep! Fitbit data helps us understand the full picture of a person's overall health and allows us to look at activity and sleep patterns over time.

Thank you for reading!



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