

Newsletter

Winter 2025



Study Navigators Create a Positive HBCD Experience

The HBCD Study is fortunate to have dedicated teams at each of our 27 study sites working together to support participants and their families and help them have a positive HBCD experience. This includes our Study Navigators, who play a key role in this important work!

What is a Study Navigator?

A Study Navigator is one of many members of the research team who works to provide support to families participating in the HBCD Study. Their job is to connect with families, guide them through the study process, and offer assistance as needed. Study Navigators come from a variety of backgrounds, including social work, case management, counseling, and birth or doula work. Some Study Navigators are Certified Peer Recovery Specialists, who use their own experience with substance use and/or mental disorders to support participants facing similar challenges.

What do Study Navigators do?

Whether it's helping with questions about the study, offering guidance, or simply being there when needed, Study Navigators play a crucial role in offering personalized support for participants in the HBCD Study. Study Navigators serve as role models, mentors, educators, and advocates, ensuring that participants feel heard and supported every step of the way.

Study Navigators take on a variety of roles in the study. You might meet them during community outreach or recruitment, or as they assist with intake or during study



HBCD Study Navigators, along with other members of the research team, at a group training in May 2024.

visits, while others may be involved in assessments or other parts of the study. No matter the task, the goal of Study Navigation is always the same: to help guide you through the HBCD experience and provide support whenever you need it.

We're here for you, every step of the way!

[Read this article featuring one of our very own Study Navigators!](#)

This piece highlights Virginia Tech's Study Navigator, Julie Peck (Certified Birth and Bereavement Doula, Certified Peer



Recovery Specialist), and the powerful advocacy and expertise that individuals with lived experience provide to support and build connections with their local communities!



What are HBCD Study Navigators saying?

“ To me, this study navigator role gives moms and families that participate in this study a voice, a confidant, and somebody that they know they can rely on. ”

“ {We are} Somebody that understands you and understands what you’re going through and what your needs are, it’s very important. ”

“ I’m just a consistent point of contact, and somebody who they know. It doesn’t have to be strictly all the time about the study. ”

“ It’s being a face, a friend, a friendly face, where people will be able to talk to you. ”

Welcome to the CAB Corner!

Community Advisory Boards, or CABs, are groups of community members who advocate for their community and those participating in a research study. CABs at each study site discuss resources available to participants, provide suggestions for participant outreach, and weigh in on important study topics.

This quarter, we connected with our CABs and got their feedback about future study visits. We learned that study visit length is an important consideration. We also learned that parents are hoping to learn more about child development in future visits. The HBCD team deeply values the responses we’ve received.

Curious about CABs?

Read more about their role in HBCD in our Spring 2024 newsletter!



We are on social media!

Follow us to keep up with all things HBCD!




@HBCDStudy



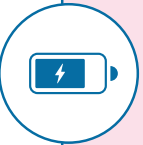
Getting ready to use at-home wearable sensors with your baby

One of the goals of the HBCD Study is to understand how your baby's sleep and physical activity change in the first months of life because these changes might shape their brain development. To do this, we use tools called sensors to collect information on your baby's heart rate, breathing rate, and leg movements at home. This information tells us when your baby is asleep and active throughout the day and night.


The wearable sensors are designed with your baby in mind! They are placed on your baby with an arm band that looks like a very small smartwatch and legwarmers that fit your baby. To help you and your baby get ready, we have answered some common questions about the wearable sensors and daily sensor surveys.



How long will your baby wear them?
72 - 96
HOURS



Do they need to be recharged?
The arm band will need to be charged everyday for about an hour. A good time to do this is right after your baby wakes up. Simply plug it into the charging pouch until the light stops blinking. Legwarmers do not need to be charged.



When will I receive my activity surveys?
We will send you daily surveys by text or email on the days your baby is wearing the sensors. These surveys ask you about your baby's activities the day before.

Tips for using the wearable sensors with your baby

Remember to place the wearable sensors back on your baby after bathtime

The only time you need to take the wearable sensors off your baby is when your baby goes in water, like during bathtime or swimming.

Forgot how to place the wearable sensors on your baby? Reach out to your HBCD Study team or check your wearable sensor information packet provided to you during your visit.

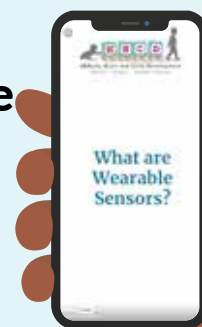
Don't forget to complete your activity surveys!

Each morning, on the days your baby wears the wearable sensors, the HBCD Study team will send you a short survey via text or email. It should only take you a few short minutes to complete these surveys—your responses help us better understand the wearable sensor information we collect from your baby.

How to return the wearable sensors

Each study site offers different solutions for returning the wearable sensors, this could include mailing the wearable sensors back to an HBCD Study team or having an HBCD Study staff member pick the wearable sensors up from you. Please ask your HBCD Study team about the wearable sensor return options available to you at your study site.

Watch our YouTube Short on Wearable Sensors!





Site Spotlights



Cedars-Sinai Medical Center

The [Cedars-Sinai Medical Center](#) is proud to be one of 27 locations leading the HBCD Study. Our HBCD team, led by Dr. Wei Gao and Dr. Kimberly Gregory, includes qualified members from many different backgrounds. They include clinical research coordinators, research assistants, post-doctoral staff, phlebotomists, and pediatricians, among others. Our team is passionate about providing new parents and parents-to-be with excellent care.

Our main offices are located at the Pacific Theater Offices at Cedars-Sinai. Our neuroimaging team is located at the Semel Institute at UCLA.

Welcome to all the families who have joined the HBCD Study!



The University of Alabama

The [University of Alabama \(UA\)](#) is excited to be a part of the HBCD Study. Our team is helping to improve health in Alabama's rural communities.

Led by Dr. Lea Yerby and Dr. Sharlene Newman, our talented team strives for excellence in everything we do. We have backgrounds in many fields, including family medicine, obstetrics & gynecology, pediatrics, business healthcare management, social work, psychology, public health, human development, neuroscience, and others.

We're excited to continue building trust in our rural communities and working closely with our participants for the entire HBCD Study.



University of Wisconsin-Madison

The [University of Wisconsin - Madison](#) is one of 27 institutions nationwide that will recruit families to participate in the HBCD Study. Led by Dr. Doug Dean and Dr. Julie Poehlmann, our team has studied infant and child brain development for more than 25 years.

Our team includes developmental neuroscientists, obstetricians, lawyers, psychologists, child behavior scientists, and outreach specialists. It also includes three Study Navigators, who can guide families throughout the study and help them access community resources.

Our team members have worked with parents and children from different backgrounds, including parents who have experienced depression, anxiety, and/or substance use. We're grateful to all the families who join the HBCD Study and will provide a comfortable, welcoming experience every time they visit.



For more information, please visit HBCDStudy.org
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