



New Soul Study Frequently Asked Questions

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What's the study about?

The Nutritious Eating with Soul (NEW Soul) study at Rare Variety Café is a study to learn about ways to offer the program in community settings. Specifically, this study will have a member of the local community to lead the delivery of the program. We will also examine the impact of adopting a plant-based (i.e. vegan) diet on body weight. The intervention will last 9 months with 3 months of weekly online classes, followed by another assessment visit 6 months later to examine the longer term benefits of following a plant-based diet. You will observe cooking demonstrations of plant-based food dishes, receive recipes and a weekly meal voucher for Rare Variety Café, and be provided with guidance for following a plant-based diet through a culturally-tailored curriculum.

What will I get by participating?

Free cooking classes, recipes, food samples from Rare Variety Café, and a support system,. If you complete the study, you'll receive \$50.00.

How could participating help me?

You may lose weight and improve your nutrition intake by being a part of this study. You will receive cooking classes and learn how to prepare healthy meals.

Who can participate in this program?

You must:

- Be between the ages of 18 – 65 years
- Self-identify as African American
- Have a [body mass index \(BMI\)](#) between 25–49.9 kg/m² (be overweight or obese)
- Have reliable Internet connection to attend all 12 online meetings
- Complete assessments at baseline, 3-months, and 9-months
- Able to visit Rare Variety Café each week to redeem a weekly meal voucher

Is the study only for African Americans?

Yes. You must self-identify as an African American in order to qualify and participate.

How can I calculate my BMI to know if I qualify for the study?



You can calculate your BMI online with this online calculator:

https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/lose_wt/BMI/bmicalc.htm

Can my spouse participate as well?

Only one person per household can participate in the study as a research participant, but we will offer opportunities during classes where you may bring a friend or family member. You are welcome to identify a support partner in your household who could sit next to you on the Zoom calls.

What commitment is required of me?

This study will last 9 months and will therefore require an extensive commitment. You will be required to regularly log-on to the online weekly classes for 12 weeks, come to Rare Variety Café to redeem your weekly meal voucher, and complete 3 study assessments visits (also at Rare Variety Café). The classes are structured to be about an hour and fifteen minutes in the evening online on Tuesday evenings from 6:00-7:30pm.

What will I have to do in the program?

You will attend group classes online to learn more about a soul food, plant-based diet and receive the support you need to adopt healthier eating habits. The classes will include cooking demonstrations, recipe ideas, and guidance for following a plant-based diet.

You will have assessment visits that involve weight measurements and questionnaires to be completed online. The visits will be at the following time points: baseline (before you begin the study), 3 months (after classes end), and 9 months.

You will also be completing several questionnaires at each time point: Baseline, 3 months, and 9 months. You will be asked to complete weekly evaluation questionnaires at the end of your classes. The questionnaires will assess demographic information, psychosocial variables (such as self-efficacy), and dietary behaviors.

Do I have to follow a vegan diet during the study?

While we cannot make anyone do anything 😊, if you are unwilling to try and follow an entirely plant-based diet for 12 weeks, we would encourage you not to join this study. We can let you know about other studies that are happening at the University of South Carolina that you may be interested in that can help your nutrition.

Where are the study meetings located?

Classes will be held online via Zoom. A reliable Internet connection and basic video conferencing skills are needed. We can provide some training and will host a one-on-one session with you and our



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orientation via Zoom to ensure you have the necessary internet capabilities. Visits to Rare Variety Café for meal vouchers and assessments will be at 4622 N. Main Street, Columbia, SC.

Can I bring my spouse or a friend to class?

Yes. We will have opportunities during class where we will encourage participants to bring spouses or friends with them to class.

What happens if I can't attend a class?

Please let the study coordinator know as soon as possible if you know you will miss a class. While we cannot offer a make-up class, we will try to provide you materials and a summary from the class. There are only 12 classes. It is important you prioritize attending each week.

What do I do during assessments?

You will have your weight measured at Rare Variety Café. Research and restaurant staff will follow proper hygiene protocol, wear masks, and maintain at least 6 feet of distance between each other. We ask you to do the same. You may also have to complete some surveys. Research staff will be available to assist with completing online surveys.

What if I am interested in participating in the study?

If you are interested in enrolling in this study, we will ask you to fill out an online screening questionnaire (https://is.gd/NEWSoul_RareVariety)

Who can I contact if I have more questions?

Feel free to get in contact with someone from the study team by calling (803-470-3859) or emailing one of the study coordinators at the following email addresses: (newsoul@sc.edu).