

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SONIC STUDY

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#### **What is this study about?**

**SONIC** is the first study of its kind that aims to learn how moles on the skin change over time with the goal of preventing skin cancer.

This is a continuation of a study begun in 2004, that follows changes in selected moles in fifth graders (Class of 2012) in Framingham through 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Participating students had pictures taken (SONIC screenings) by medical photographers of selected moles on their backs and legs, and had the photographs repeated in grade 9. The students and parents filled out surveys about sun protection and sun exposure each year of the study. Participating families had the opportunity for their student to give saliva samples for studying genes aligning with mole changes.

A Framingham school nurse is the project nurse, and all screenings are chaperoned and monitored by SONIC staff.

This study will follow the same design. Study activities will occur in grade 8 and grade 11, during the course of the school day at the student's middle school.

#### **Who approved the study?**

The study has been approved by the National Institutes of Health, Harvard University School of Public Health, the Framingham Superintendent of Schools and all the principals and nurses in the Framingham schools.

#### **Has it ever been done before?**

In 2001 and 2002, a small study examined 50 children from Walsh middle school. The study that began in 2004 is ongoing, and will end in grade 11 with the class of 2012. More than 500 Framingham families have participated so far. Otherwise, no other community in the US is taking part in this very unique study.

#### **Why is this study being done?**

We want to figure out ways to reduce the number of skin cancers and learn more about how moles change.

#### **Who takes part in the study?**

Framingham 8<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents who have read consent documents and signed or emailed a consent.

#### **What will happen in the study?**

As participating parents and students, you will be asked to complete surveys about sun protection this year, and every year of the study through grade 11. Your child will receive a full photographic exam of his/her back and (one) leg in grade 8. In 11<sup>th</sup> grade, he/she will get another screening to look for changes. Screenings include the usual yearly postural exam, height and weight, filling out the survey and the medical photography. Movie tickets and a SONIC study flash drive are given as incentives at that time.

#### **When will the screening take place?**

Screenings will be scheduled during a school day from early November through February.

#### **Who will review the photographs?**

All photographs are carefully reviewed by a number of dermatologists who are experts in looking at moles and skin changes.

#### **What if an unusual mark or mole is found?**

The chances of an unusual mole being found are unlikely. If we do find a mole that is unusual, our study nurse will contact you. One of the study dermatologists can talk with the doctor of your choice if you like.

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### **What is the benefit for my child?**

He or she will receive an extremely thorough examination of the moles on his/her back and one leg in grade 8 and again in grade 11. These examinations are not covered by insurance, and are expensive. This examination is free of charge and you will be notified if anything unusual is found.

### **Are there any risks or discomforts?**

There are no physical risks to your child either by completing the survey or having the photographs of their skin. There is the possibility that your child may be anxious if an unusual mole is found, but this is unlikely.

### **Are there any incentives for my child?**

We will provide 2 free movie tickets each time a student and parent completes a survey. Students will receive a free flash drive at the time of the screening.

### **How do we get into the study?**

You may contact Marilyn Bishop, the study nurse by emailing her at [mbishop@framingham.k12.ma.us](mailto:mbishop@framingham.k12.ma.us), or by calling at 508-620-4956, ext. 2304

If you have any questions, contact Marilyn.