

Thank you for being part of the Gemini study for the past 17-18 years. You and your twins have helped to make Gemini an internationally renowned study that has led to important discoveries about children's health and development. Gemini is now considered a key resource for understanding how children's eating patterns develop. If you have missed any previous Gemini questionnaires, you can still participate now. Your information is always valuable to the study. We would like to encourage all Gemini families who started the study in 2007-8 to take part now.

Aims of the next phase of Gemini

Adolescence is a time during which eating habits often change a lot. As children mature into adults, they gain independence to make more of their own decisions about what and how much to eat. We don't know much about how or why these changes happen. The aim of the current study is to find out what adolescents eat and why. This will allow us to work out how best to support teenagers to eat healthily.

What will the current study involve for me?

We would like to find out what your twins eat and drink by asking them directly. We have included an information leaflet about this study for you to share with your twins if you are happy for them to take part. We will also ask you to take the parents questionnaire which will take 30-45 minutes to complete and you will receive a £10 voucher for doing so. You can find the link to the questionnaire here: <https://www.geministudy.co.uk/copy-of-taking-part-in-the-next-phase>

What will the current study involve for my twins?

We will invite your twins to participate via their contact details they provided, and we will ask your twins to agree (consent) to take part. We will be asking your twins to tell us about their eating patterns, their thoughts and feelings about food and their physical appearance, and their mental well-being more generally. We will also send them a link to their own unique online food and drink survey, using software called Intake24 (<https://intake24.co.uk/>). We will ask them to complete the online survey on 3 separate days (1 weekend day and 2 weekdays); each time they complete the survey they will be asked to report everything they ate and drank on the previous day. We will send them a link to each of the 3 surveys by text or email, along with reminders. **You can see the food and drink survey on the Gemini website.**

Rewards

To say thank you to your twins for taking part, we will send them (by email) a **£30 worth of online shopping voucher each – for completing both the survey and the diet diaries**. The voucher will be sent to each twin once they have completed the surveys for all 3 days.

What are the possible benefits or disadvantages of taking part?

Several Gemini families have contacted us to tell us how much they have enjoyed being part of a study that is making important strides in improving the health and development of children. Many families have also told us that the questions we have asked previously gave them the opportunity to reflect on their family life, which they valued enormously. We have also had positive feedback from families about the yearly updates on the study that we provide through the annual newsletter.

To find out why some adolescents develop eating disorders, we will also need to ask your twins about their thoughts, feelings and behaviours about food, eating, and their physical appearance – including reporting on eating disorder symptoms. Some parents worry that these sorts of questions may upset their child. However, previous research of this nature has shown no harm to children. Nevertheless, if your child is upset by any questions or feels uncomfortable, they can stop at any time or they can choose to not answer any questions they might find distressing. Your twins will still be eligible to receive the online shopping vouchers, even if they choose not to answer all the questions in the questionnaire. If your child's responses to any of the questions cause you to feel concerned about an eating disorder, the UK charity Beat Eating Disorders provides information and help online: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk. If you are very worried about your child's eating, talk to your GP.

Some teenagers may feel uncomfortable honestly reporting everything they have eaten and drunk recently. However, your child will be reassured that the information they give us will remain confidential and anonymous. Previous research with teenagers about recording eating and drinking has not shown any harm. However, if your child feels upset or uncomfortable, they can stop at any time. If you are concerned your child may have an eating disorder, the charity Beat Eating Disorders provides information and help online: www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk. If you are very worried about your child's eating, talk to your GP.

Do my twins have to take part?

It is up to your twins to decide whether they take part. Your children can withdraw at any time without giving a reason. Your twins can choose to withdraw their dietary data from this part of the Gemini research up to 2 months after completing the questionnaire. After this point it will not be possible to remove this data as it will be anonymised for analysis. If your twins decide to withdraw, you and your family can still be part of the Gemini study.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

As we have done every year since the study began, we will send you an annual newsletter informing you about the progress and results of the study. We will also include summaries of the findings on the Gemini website (www.geministudy.co.uk), Gemini Twitter (@GeminiResearch), Gemini Facebook and Instagram. We will also present results at conferences and publish them in scientific journals.

When will I be contacted again?

We would like to contact you and your twins again over the next five years. You do not have to let us know now whether or not you would like to continue to participate. We will confirm this with you the next time we contact you.

Will our participation in this project be kept confidential?

Yes. All the information that we collect about your twins during the research will be kept strictly confidential. The information provided will be stored in a pseudoanonymised format using your participant ID numbers (separate from your name and contact details), on a secure server at UCL. The food and drink information entered by your twins will go directly to the Intake24 databases, but this will use a new participant ID number that is separate to the ID numbers we store at UCL, therefore it will not be possible to identify you or your twins from the Intake24 database. Once the data is returned to UCL for storage on the secure server, a member of the Gemini team will link the information back to your twins' original participant ID numbers and previously collected data. It will not be possible to identify any individual (parent or child) from the data, or in any ensuing reports or publications. Confidentiality will be respected subject to legal constraints and professional guidelines. For details of our data protection policy visit (<https://www.geministudy.co.uk/data-protection-privacy-policy>).

Who is organising and funding the research?

The research is organised by the Gemini research team at UCL, led by Dr Clare Llewellyn. It is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research UCL/UCLH Biomedical Research Centre. We will make the pseudoanonymised data available for future research, should other researchers request it, in line with the stipulations of most UK government funders.

What if something goes wrong?

If you have concerns about this research, please contact Dr Kristiane Tommerup, kristiane.tommerup.14@ucl.ac.uk. Should you wish to take your matter further you can contact the Chair of the UCL Research Ethics Committee (ethics@ucl.ac.uk).

Contact information

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering whether your twins can take part in the next phase of Gemini research. If you have any queries about the study, please contact Dr Kristiane Tommerup, kristiane.tommerup.14@ucl.ac.uk

Kind regards,

The Gemini Team