



# MED-SOUTH LIFESTYLE PROGRAM

## What is the Med-South Lifestyle Program?

The Med-South Lifestyle Program (MSLP) is an evidence-based, behavior change intervention that translates a Mediterranean dietary pattern for the Southeastern U.S. population. This dietary pattern is highly concordant with those associated with reduced risk for many chronic diseases and all-cause mortality and is consistent with the latest guidelines from the American Diabetes Association and USDA Dietary Guidelines. The MSLP also includes support for increased physical activity and has optional smoking cessation and medication adherence components.

## What are the health improvements associated with the MSLP?

In a sample of 360 participants recruited by 2 Federally Qualified Health Centers (FHQCs) and 2 local health departments in Hertford and Edgecombe/Nash Counties who received the MSLP, the following statistically significant findings were shown:

### Dietary Intake

Daily fruit and vegetable intake increased by nearly 1 serving.

Sugar-sweetened beverages were lowered by 0.4 servings daily.

Weekly intake of nuts increased by 0.4 units.



### Physical Activity

Moderate-intensity physical activity increased by an average of 43 minutes per week.



### Blood Pressure

There were more participants with controlled blood pressure at the end of the program.

Average decrease in systolic blood pressure was 4 mm Hg.

Average decrease in diastolic blood pressure was 2.2 mm Hg.



## How is the MSLP delivered?

The MSLP is delivered in four monthly, individual counseling sessions (45-60 min each) led by a health counselor. Each lesson includes: a brief dietary assessment, background information, and goal-setting guidance. The sessions incorporate behavioral approaches targeting motivation, self-efficacy, and self-regulation skills and include problem-solving and self-monitoring skills to address challenges to making diet and physical activity behavior changes.

Between sessions, there are brief phone calls (15 min) to review material and go over individual progress. After the 4-month intervention phase, the 6-month booster or maintenance phase includes 2 quarterly phone check-ins (15-30 min each).

Participants receive a manual (available in English or Spanish; written on a 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level) that covers the four session topics:



Participants also receive a cookbook and a “resource manual” with information on community resources to help make behavior changes.

## What are the provider requirements for delivering the MSLP? <sup>1</sup>

The provider needs to identify a qualified staff member (nurse, nutritionist, health educator, community health worker) to deliver the MSLP. This staff member will receive guidance from the Med-South team on delivering the intervention, counseling skills, and adult learning principles. Additionally, there needs to be an implementation team to support program delivery. Provider teams may consist of 2-4 members.

The implementation team and staff delivering the MSLP will participate in a 2-hour self-guided training on the current guidelines for nutrition and physical activity as well as 8 hours of intervention delivery and implementation training (either online or in-person). Continuing Education Units and contact hours for training are available. Up to 4 hours of technical assistance, delivered in any number of contacts, is provided by the Med-South team to support MSLP implementation and delivery.

## Where can I find more information on the MSLP?

Additional information on the MSLP can be found on the UNC Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HPDP) website. UNC HPDP is a Prevention Research Center funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- UNC HPDP: <https://hdpd.unc.edu/>
- Med-South Lifestyle Program: <https://hdpd.unc.edu/med-south-lifestyle-program/>
- CDC renews HPDP’s center grant to study chronic disease prevention: <https://hdpd.unc.edu/2019/05/cdc-awards-hdpd-3-75-million-to-study-chronic-disease-prevention/>

<sup>1</sup> This document provides a general overview of the Med-South Lifestyle intervention as implemented in a research context. For dissemination in practice settings, the intervention will require some adaptation.