

The MATR is always working to ensure that we have your most up-to-date contact information so we can provide you with our newsletter, invitations to our studies and with information about upcoming events for twins. We are currently contacting some of our twins by phone or mail to ensure we have their correct contact information on file. The phone call only takes about five minutes, but if you'd rather not wait until you're called, feel free to go to our website, www.matr.vcu.edu and click on the "Update Your Contact Info" tab. And remember: we never share your contact information with anyone outside the MATR without your permission!



The MATR is delighted to announce that we are reuniting with Kings Dominion to sponsor Multiple's Family Day 2011! This event gives us an opportunity to say "thank you" to our participants and to recognize the uniqueness of twins and higher order multiples. King's Dominion will offer discounted park admission tickets and the chance to join the MATR staff, Park characters and other families for an all you-can-eat picnic. Mark your calendar and save the date, Saturday, June 18, 2011, for a fun-filled family day. Watch our website www.matr.vcu.edu for more details about this exciting event.

Back by popular demand . . . Multiple's Family Day at Kings Dominion

Twin Matters

A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry

Volume XX



Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 869
Richmond, VA



www.matr.vcu.edu
1-800-URA-TWIN (872-8946)

PO Box 980617, Richmond VA 23298

Return Service Requested



Twin Matters

A Family Newsletter from the Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry

Volume XX

A Message From The Director

Dear MATR Participants:

The holiday season is upon us and the MATR is busy preparing for some upcoming endeavors that we think you'll enjoy. One such endeavor is an online MATR health, behavior, and social attitudes survey for our adult twins (and triplets, etc). We hope that you will keep an eye out for an invitation from us and consider giving some of your time to fill it out. The data you provide will be very useful in determining which studies you might be eligible for down the road, so we hope you will consider participating.

We are asking that all MATR twins please provide us with your email address (if you haven't done so already). Many of you have indicated that email is a good way to reach you, so we hope to begin using email to communicate with our twins on a more regular basis. Feel free to use our website link called "Update Your Contact Info" at www.matr.vcu.edu or email us your address (and include your name, phone, etc) at matr@vcu.edu to update us. Also, don't forget to add us to your email contact list!

Finally, as an FYI, there may be other research organizations that contact you about twin studies, which are not affiliated with the MATR or VCU. We want to assure you that we do not provide any researcher with your name unless we ask your permission first. Any time the MATR contacts you with an invitation to participate in one of our studies, we will identify ourselves - that way you won't confuse us with the other research organizations. We're letting you know this not to discourage you from participating with non-MATR affiliated research, but to assure you that we have not provided your information to those researchers. We also strive to make sure that every participant's experience with MATR-related endeavors is as pleasant as possible! We truly appreciate all of our MATR participants and hope that your experiences as part of the MATR community are always positive.

Thank you for being a part our organization and we look forward to speaking with you!

Best Regards,

Judy Silberg
MATR Scientific Director

Human Microbiome

The Vaginal Human Microbiome Project led by Dr. Gregory Buck and colleagues is well underway. Twins from all over the country enrolled during the first year of the study. The preliminary results are already helping us to better understand how the microbes that live in and on our bodies might impact women's health. In fact, the study received additional funding to expand the project for another three years. The team is continuing to recruit pairs of female twins into the study so that they can test whether our genetic makeup contributes to the composition of microbes that live on our bodies. If you are interested in learning more, please contact the MATR at 1-800-URA-TWIN (1-800-872-8946) and many thanks to those of you who have already participated!

Just Let us Know . . .

The MATR would like to remind our members that participation in all of our studies is always voluntary. If you are potentially eligible for a study, we send you what we call a "heads-up" letter giving you some information about the study and letting you know that one of our interviewers may be calling you shortly. If you get a letter and want to know more about the study, you can call us at 1-800-URA-TWIN (1-800-872-8946) or wait for one of our interviewers to call you.

If you know that you are not interested in a particular study, you can leave us a message on our toll free number, send us an email, at matr@vcu.edu, or tell the interviewer who calls you that you are not interested in participating in the study. That way, we know to not call you further regarding that study. We want to give our participants the chance to participate in any study they might qualify for; therefore, we will make every effort to contact you unless you let us know you are not interested.

When you contact us please be sure to provide your entire name, date of birth and the title of the study referenced in the letter. Again, it is always your choice to take part in our research and we will not pressure you to participate, so please feel free to tell us if you just aren't interested!

Rheumatoid Arthritis Screener Currently Being Conducted

The MATR is currently conducting a phone screener to identify twin pairs in which at least one member of a pair suffers from rheumatoid arthritis. Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a painful health condition that affects approximately 1.3 million people in the United States. Unfortunately, little is known about the causes of RA so researchers from New York University's Hospital for Joint Disease have teamed with the MATR in hopes of learning more about RA, its causes and progression. Results of the phone screener will be used to determine if enough MATR twins are affected to complete a larger twin study on RA. If this is a topic you're curious about be sure to keep an eye on our web site, www.matr.vcu.edu, as well as future Newsletters for updates. We'd also like to thank all of our twins who have already participated in the screener!

In This Issue:

- Multiple's Day 2011
- MATR Twins Take Flight
- Sibling Rivalry

What happens when we get your email address?

We will never share your email address with anyone outside the Registry unless we have your permission to do so. Also, we will only send emails to you periodically; in other words, we won't clog up your inbox! We realize that you may still have more questions, so here are a few we anticipate along with some answers we hope will clarify the process...

How do you usually get an email address?

Here are a few typical examples of how we might obtain your email address...

When we call you on the phone to tell you about a study, we might ask for or verify your email address along with other forms of contact, such as your phone number.

You can provide us your email address directly by a) going to our website, www.matr.vcu.edu, and clicking on the "Update Your Contact Info" tab and following the instructions there; b) emailing us at matr@vcu.edu; c) calling us at 1-800-URA-TWIN and leaving a message with your email address—please try to be clear when saying your name and if possible "spell" the email address out so we don't miss anything.

We may also get this information from your twin when they update their contact information or from another contact, such as a parent or spouse.

What will you do once you receive my email address?

If the address comes from you...

We typically send out a 'thank-you email' within a few weeks. This allows us to immediately express our appreciation for you providing another form of contact and it allows us to verify that we have recorded the email address correctly; otherwise, we'll get an "unknown address" return message. If that happens we'll contact you again by "regular" mail or phone to ask for an updated email address to correct our error.

If the address comes from someone other than you...

We will send you an email asking if we can retain your email address as a method of contacting you.

What other types of emails are you going to send me?

You might receive our MATR Newsletter in your inbox or other updates about MATR-related events. We might also contact you by email to provide information about a MATR study or to send invitations to on-line surveys. If you're participating in a specific study, you may also receive emails about that study. These are a few examples of the types of emails you could receive from the MATR.

National Institute of Child Health & Human Development Study (NICHD)

This is an on-going Development & Aging Study from which we hope to learn more about the regulation mechanisms in our cells that impact human aging. Sample collection for this study has been temporarily on hold, but we anticipate starting up again soon. If you've been part of this study, but still have not completed your sample collection, we will likely be contacting you again in the near future regarding your study status. If you currently have a sample collection kit for this study, but can no longer participate, please call, Anne Morris at 804-828-8112 or our toll free number 1-800-URA-TWIN, so that we may arrange return shipment for your study kit. We look forward to generating more results for this study and appreciate all the participation thus far!

MATR Twins Take Flight into the Future

Jennifer and Jessica Dulin joined the Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) together their freshman year of high school. Since then, not only have they stood out in JROTC, where they not only competed on the drill team, attended JROTC camps, and served as leaders, but they also participated in school sports, on the academic bowl team, served as swim team captains and performed community service.

Each girl received the prestigious Air Force JROTC scholarship. In September 2010 they started on a new adventure, college! Separated for the first time, they are attending different colleges that are over 240 miles apart. Jessica is attending East Carolina University (ECU) and Jennifer is at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte (UNCC). Their father, Jeff, feels "it will be a big change for them but a good one. They will possibly go through some times of sadness but I think it will help them grow closer once they see how much they miss each other." Both girls feel very confident and are ready for the challenge of college and being separated from each other. The twins hope that one day they will be able to serve their country in the Air Force's foreign intelligence division.

"JROTC has given me career focus as well as leadership skills and confidence" said Jennifer. They both agree that "it has made us more sure of ourselves."



Mom, Karen (also a twin), says "Jennifer and Jessica are very motivated, wonderful and individual young ladies. Their biggest challenge has been finding a balance between work, school and having fun. We are very proud of the girls and know they will be successful."



Do we have your email address?

The MATR is preparing to invite participants who have given us their email address to take part in a new on-line survey - so watch your 'Inbox' for a message from us. To ensure your email provider will deliver our correspondence to you properly, and not filter it to spam, please add our email address, matr@vcu.edu, to your email address list. If you are interested in on-line participation with the MATR and are not sure if you have given us your e-mail address please visit our website and complete the "Update Your Contact Info" form.

Sibling Rivalry in Twins

Like ordinary brothers and sisters, detrimental rivalries can develop between twins as well. While many twins benefit from a uniquely strong sibling relationship, this level of closeness can also sometimes foster an undue level of competition. When a rivalry happens between twins it could potentially become more intense than other sibling rivalries. Particularly when twins look alike, they are frequently seen by family members and peers as a single unit consisting of the same strengths and weaknesses instead of as unique individuals. The comparisons of twin siblings made by friends and family members and the expectations on them to share everything from clothes to a parent's time, can create a sense of rivalry between the twins. In these instances, twins might start to overly compare themselves to each other and begin to compete unnecessarily for just about anything. There are steps that parents of twins or higher order multiples can take to decrease the likelihood that such a rivalry will occur. Of course no one knows your children better than you do, so each case of sibling rivalry should be handled in a way that is right for your family, but we have compiled some general suggestions to help prevent a twin rivalry from happening.

Minimize comparisons: Because twins can seem to be alike in many ways and share many of the same interests, comparing them can come naturally. However, it is important to recognize your twins as individuals first and as one half of a twin pair second. Constantly being compared to one another can lead to a sense of competition between the twins, so it's best to keep such comments to a minimum. If you find that your relatives or friends compare the twins excessively or in a negative way, you may need to explain to them why you try to not compare the twins to each other.

Recognize them individually: Though twins may seem similar, they frequently have different strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of each twin should be highlighted individually. If one twin succeeds, make sure and praise that twin separate from their co-twin. Give them one-on-one attention to really honor their success.

The same can be said for approaching a

weakness or limitation. If one twin is struggling with something, take time to speak with them alone, without their co-twin. If you bring up an issue in front of both twins it could embarrass the twin that is struggling. It could also provide an opportunity for one twin to mock the other.

And even if both twins are expressing the same strengths and weaknesses it is important to celebrate their successes as individuals and not as a pair.

One-on-one time: Spending time with each twin one-on-one is a good general rule to follow. Though time and money can be a deterrent from having alone time with each twin, try to set aside the resources for some one-on-one time when possible.

No oldest/youngest: Doing away with referencing the birth order might also help reduce rivalry between multiples. Referring to one twin as the 'older' one can make the other one feel inferior and create tension between them.

Lead by example: As parents or guardians of your twins, you are their primary role model and they look to you for guidance in many aspects of their life, one of which is dealing with conflict. Be the best role model you can be for them. Promote harmony in your household by encouraging a loving environment and resolving conflicts calmly through open communication.

What is the right approach for your family?: Every parent knows that there are no tried and true rules for raising kids, but these are some approaches that other parents have found helpful. Again, you know your family better than anyone so take the time to consider all possibilities about why a rivalry between your twins may be occurring and take the steps you think would help ease the tension.



Identical Twins Research opportunity

An important study to help understand the cause of type 1 diabetes and diabetic kidney disease.

You are eligible if you are:

- at least 10 years of age
 - an identical twin, and
 - you and/or your twin have type 1 diabetes
- OR
- you and your twin both do not have diabetes and your parents and siblings do not have type 1 diabetes.

Participation involves only minor procedures [blood sample and a tiny sample of skin] done at your local clinic or physicians' office, or at the University of Minnesota.

Compensation of \$250 is available for your participation

For more information, call us at 1-800-688-5252, ext. 4468 or 612-624-4688. You can also email us at twins@umn.edu.

We Value You

The Mid-Atlantic Twin Registry (MATR) values its participants. If you have feedback regarding your experiences with MATR staff or research staff for any study, please do not hesitate to send us an email matr@vcu.edu, call 1-800-URA-TWIN (800-872-8946) or call our Participant Coordinator, Carol Williams, at 804-828-8116.

