

# Church-based diet, physical activity program effective

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(HealthDay)—For rural African-Americans, church-based diet and physical interventions may be effective for improving healthy lifestyle choices, according to a study published June 6 in *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

Lisa Tussing-Humphreys, Ph.D., R.D., from the University of Illinois at Chicago, and colleagues assigned eight self-selected eligible churches in the largely rural Lower [Mississippi Delta](#) to either a six-month, church-based diet and physical activity intervention or to serve as a control. [Diet quality](#) was measured using the Healthy Eating Index-2005. Physical activity, anthropometric, and clinical measures were also taken.

The researchers found that retention rates were 85 percent for control and 84 percent for intervention churches. In control and intervention groups, measures of diet quality, including total fruit, total vegetables, and total quality, improved significantly, while only the [intervention group](#) experienced significant increases in aerobic (22 percent) and strength/flexibility (24 percent) physical activity indicators. For several diet quality

components, intervention participation level and vehicle ownership were significant positive predictors of change.

"This church-based diet and physical activity intervention may be effective in improving diet quality and increasing physical activity of Lower Mississippi Delta African-American adults," the authors write. "Components key to the success of such programs are participant engagement in educational sessions and vehicle access."

**More information:** [Full Text](#)

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