Meet Dr. Gregory Burke, Principal Investigator at the Wake Forest Field Center

Dr. Greg Burke, the principal investigator of the Wake Forest University GEM Study Field Center, is a physician with additional training in preventive medicine. He has a long-standing interest in trying to find new methods to make people healthier. Some of his research areas include understanding how risk factors in youth affect heart disease in later life; trying to determine which types of hormone replacement therapy work best; and developing interventions that will reduce the burden of heart disease, stroke, and memory loss. In addition, Dr. Burke is very interested in better understanding the value of complementary and alternative medicine practices. Beyond his activities in the GEM Study, Dr. Burke is currently the principal investigator of the Cardiovascular Health Study, the Multi-Ethnic Study of Atherosclerosis, and the Soy Estrogen Alternative Study. Dr. Burke has been at the Wake Forest University School of Medicine for 11 years and is currently the chairman of the Department of Public Health Sciences. In addition trying to be a good husband and father (two teenage children), Dr. Burke is an avid reader, focusing on both fiction and US history.

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Common Questions about Warfarin, Coumadin, and Aspirin

- **If I start taking warfarin or Coumadin, do I need to stop taking the GEM Study pills?**
  
  Yes. You should also call the clinic (336-716-2201 or -6193) to let us know you’ve stopped taking the GEM Study pills. If you later stop taking warfarin or Coumadin, you may be able to resume taking the GEM Study pills.

- **May I take aspirin while participating in the GEM Study?**
  
  Yes!

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Call Wake Forest University if you would like to find out more about participating in the Ginkgo Evaluation of Memory (GEM) Study. We’d love to hear from you!

Sally Mauney
Recruitment Coordinator
336-716-6840

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Spread the word! We still need to enroll new participants in the GEM Study. Tear out this card and give it to a friend or family member who might be interested in joining. Thanks!
Proxies in the GEM Study: A Little Help Goes a Long Way!

In many research studies, participants name a proxy whose role is to provide information about the participant’s health, in the event that they cannot provide it for themselves. However, in the GEM Study, proxies play a different, much more significant role; in GEM, proxies are critical to ensuring that the study results are accurate.

Why is the role of the proxy so crucial? Well, GEM is a study of memory changes or problems that can occur as we age. These changes can affect our ability to complete daily activities, as well as our perception of these abilities. People who have problems with memory or thinking skills often under-report difficulties they may have with everyday activities. The more problems they have with memory and thinking, the more inaccurate their self-report becomes. In addition, people may not even be aware of their own limitations, especially if these limitations are subtle enough to work around. Thus, the proxy in the GEM Study is a checkpoint—an outside opinion of any changes in a participant’s memory and abilities over time.

Like you, your proxy will need to complete questionnaires about your memory, habits, and daily activities every six months for the rest of the study. To get things started, your proxy probably came with you to your first clinic visit; those who couldn’t make it were interviewed in their homes or by phone. We hoped that having your proxy come with you would give him a clear understanding of what study participation requires. Your proxy is not required to attend future clinic visits, but we would love to have her come in with you when she can. If your proxy cannot come to the clinic, we will contact him for a phone interview a few days before your appointment to obtain the information we need for your visit.

We are grateful for the time and effort you and your proxy give to GEM. Together, you are making an important contribution to the mental and physical health of older people. Thank you!

Have you lost the medications you took to your first clinic visit? If so, look in the “GEM” canvas bag we gave you. Lost that? Try the closet—that’s where other participants have found theirs!

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