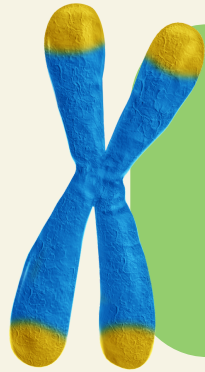




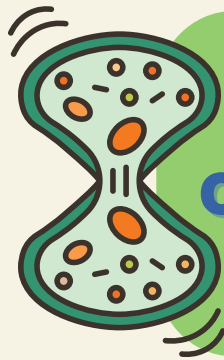
*Biomarker  
Spotlight*

**TELOMERES**

# What are telomeres?



**Protective caps on the ends of DNA strands**



**Make sure DNA gets copied properly when cells divide**



**Over time, telomeres naturally get shorter**



**Used as an indicator of cellular aging**

# How are telomeres measured?



**Telomere length  
can be  
measured  
through saliva  
and blood  
samples**

**Taking  
measurements  
over time can  
tell us how  
quickly  
telomeres are  
shortening**



# Why measure telomere length?



**Telomere length is set at birth, and is linked to prenatal stress**

**Stress can speed up telomere shortening, which is linked to poor health outcomes**



**Can help us better understand the link between environmental stressors, like the COVID-19 pandemic, and health outcomes**

# How do we use telomeres in our research?

**Child maltreatment has  
intergenerational  
effects**



**We measure maternal and  
infant telomere length to better  
understand the mechanism  
linking parental history of child  
maltreatment and prenatal  
stress to infant health and  
development**