

October 2019

Women's Health

Can social ties affect your health?

If you want to live a longer, healthier life, you might want your provider to write a prescription for strong relationships, hugs, and plenty of social interaction. While eating well and frequent exercise are important components for being healthy, scientists are finding strong links between our relationships with one another and well-being.

Cultivating a variety of healthy relationships, like marriage and friendships, can provide you with a strong social support system that may protect you from the harms of stress. Stress wreaks havoc on the body and can decrease your immune system, harm your mental health, and cause weight gain. But, when you hold hands, laugh with loved ones, or even hug another person, your body releases hormones that decrease stress. According to researchers, people who report having frequent hugs are less likely to develop a cold after viral exposure. **Human touch and interaction can make your body stronger and healthier.**

On the contrary,

lonely people who isolate themselves are more likely to have poorer health and depression. If you lack human contact, you might have an increased risk of heart disease, especially among women. There is also a link between isolated people and a lower functioning immune system and metabolism. People who lack human contact are more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviors as coping mechanisms, such as smoking or drinking.

Improve your life by focusing on having relationships with your co-workers, family, and friends. Socialize, develop meaningful relationships, or simply strive for human interaction. The more positive relationships you have in your life, the more likely you will have a healthier body and a positive outlook.

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Social relationships can be just as important to your health as exercising and eating healthy. Step out of your comfort zone and expand your social circle this month by completing the activities below.

- Join a group, club, or community that meets regularly and centers around something you are interested in.
- Find a cause that means something to you and volunteer. Volunteering can be a great socializing opportunity.
- Call a friend that you haven't talked to in a while and invite them to meet up.
- Schedule an outing with a friend. Be sure to put a firm date down on your calendar so it really happens.
- If you have a dog, visit your local dog park. Not only does your dog get some social activity, but you can chat with other local dog enthusiasts.
- Meet your neighbors. Bake them a healthy snack or dessert.



Put your cell phone away. Sometimes technology can get in the way of socializing with others.

Skip the alcohol. When you drink to be social, you may start to feel that's the only way you can socialize.

Always be yourself when meeting new people.

Source: WebMD.com