

# Sex isn't just fun, it's healthy

February 27 2009, By Drs. Kay Judge and Maxine Barish-Wreden

---

Want a simple way to increase your longevity? Try sex. It's one of the most fun things we humans can do.

But first of all, safe sex - or more accurately, "safer sex" - is using techniques and products to reduce the risk of infection or pregnancies from intercourse. Products shown to reduce the transmission of infections include condoms or protective barriers such as dental dams and female condoms.

Most of us don't need a medical excuse to have sex, but for those of you who need arm-twisting, here are some important reasons to get playful:

**Sex may reduce pain:** The chemical oxytocin is released from the brain during orgasm, and this in turn seems to release endorphins into the body. Endorphins are the body's natural painkillers.

**Sex may decrease the incidence of prostate cancer:** A study published in the *British Journal of Urology* in 2003 found that men in their 20s could reduce their chances of prostate cancer by ejaculating more than five times a week.

**Sex may prevent illnesses such as colds and flus:** A 1999 study at Wilkes University in Pennsylvania found that people who have sex one or two times a week had higher levels of immunoglobulin A, the immune cell protein that protects against viral illnesses.

**Sex seems to prolong life:** A 1997 study from the British Medical

Journal followed 1,000 men over 10 years and found that men who had a higher frequency of orgasm had half the death rate of those with fewer orgasms.

Sex burns calories: perhaps 200 calories.

Sex gives muscles a workout: Muscles in the pelvic floor (the ones that help bladder control) are strengthened during sex. Muscles in the back, thighs, glutes, abs and arms can get a workout.

That's great, you may say, but you're older now, and your sex drive has tanked a bit. Remember that intention is the most powerful force at work when you want to bring something into your life. Make it your intention to have a passionate sex life.

Take care of your body and live life as a confident sexual being as you age. Here are more tips for enhancing your sex life:

- Keep healthy. Obesity, diabetes and vascular disease can wreak havoc on sex. Avoid smoking, eat a healthy diet and keep a healthy weight.
- Get exercise. Aerobic exercise enhances blood supply to the genitalia, which enhances orgasm.
- Try using sex toys and lubricants. The hands get more arthritic, the penis gets softer, the vagina gets drier and the female orgasm takes longer. Vibrators and lubricants are a great ways to get around these challenges.

Erectile dysfunction is common after the age of 50. Fortunately, lots of treatments are available, so talk to your doctor.

*(c) 2009, The Sacramento Bee (Sacramento, Calif.).  
Visit The Sacramento Bee online at [www.sacbee.com/](http://www.sacbee.com/)  
Distributed by McClatchy-Tribune Information Services.*

Citation: Sex isn't just fun, it's healthy (2009, February 27) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-02-sex-isnt-fun-healthy.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.