

Will social distancing weaken my immune system?

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Will social distancing weaken my immune system? AP Illustration/Peter Hamlin

Will social distancing weaken my immune system?

In short, no.

Some worry a lack of contact with others will weaken their [immune system](#) by reducing its active contact with germs.

But even when we're staying 6 feet from others or spending most of our time at home, our bodies are continuously responding to plenty of bacteria and other germs that inhabit indoor and outdoor environments.

"We're constantly exposed to microbes," said Akiko Iwasaki, an immune system researcher at Yale University. "Our immune system is always being triggered."

The effects of childhood vaccines and other built-up immunity are also long-lasting, Iwasaki said, and won't disappear overnight because we're keeping our distance from others during the pandemic.

Experts say anyone looking to boost their immune health during the pandemic should practice habits such as [stress management](#), [healthy eating](#), [regular exercise](#) and getting enough sleep.

"These are the things that actually affect the immune system," Iwasaki said.

A seasonal flu shot will also help protect you from one more potential illness.

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