

Happy marriage, healthier spouses

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(HealthDay)—Is a happy marriage the key to good health? Yes, according to researchers at the University of Missouri.

Overall, married people are in better mental and physical [health](#) than their unmarried—divorced or widowed—peers.

The study, which followed 700 couples over 20 years, found that each partner's health can be affected by both positive and negative interactions at all stages of marriage. The researchers reported that people who have happy marriages are more likely to give their health a higher rating as they age.

The health benefits may be strong enough that working on your marriage can improve your health throughout your years as a couple. Engaging your partner can lift your spirits and wellbeing, while lowering your stress level.

On the flip side, aging adults whose [physical health](#) is on the decline could benefit from improving their marriage, the researchers said. If you have a [chronic health condition](#), your marital relationship can be an important part of your treatment plan. And understanding a partner's [health issues](#) and how to manage them at home can improve the health of both partners. This is especially important as you grow old together.

The takeaway? The health of both partners can get a positive boost by treating each other with greater care. Pay more attention to your spouse and nurture your marriage to keep it a happy one. And realize that when thinking about your health, the state of your [marriage](#) is a factor, perhaps on a par with diet, exercise, and other key lifestyle habits.

More information: The University of California, Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center has suggestions to help you develop deeper [empathy for your spouse](#).

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