

Health and Well-Being

Give a Hug

Can hugging be beneficial to your health?

Besides helping you feel close and connected to people you care about, it turns out that hugs can bring a host of health benefits to your body and mind. Research shows that hugging (and also laughter) is extremely effective at healing sickness, disease, loneliness, depression, anxiety and stress. Research shows a deep hug, where the hearts are pressing together, can benefit you in these incredible ways:

1. The nurturing touch of a hug builds trust and a sense of safety. This helps with open and honest communication.
2. Hugs can instantly boost oxytocin levels, which heal feelings of loneliness, isolation, and anger.
3. Holding a hug for an extended time lifts one's serotonin levels, elevating mood and creating happiness.
4. Hugs strengthen the immune system. The gentle pressure on the sternum and the emotional charge this creates activates the Solar Plexus Chakra. This stimulates the thymus gland, which regulates and balances the body's production of white blood cells, which keep you healthy and disease free.
5. Hugging boosts self-esteem. From the time we're born our family's touch shows us that we're loved and special. The associations of self-worth and tactile sensations from our early years are still imbedded in our nervous system as adults. The cuddles we received from our Mom and Dad while growing up remain imprinted at a cellular level, and hugs remind us at a somatic level of that. Hugs, therefore, connect us to our ability to self love.

6. Hugging relaxes muscles. Hugs release tension in the body. Hugs can take away pain; they soothe aches by increasing circulation into the soft tissues.

7. Hugs balance out the nervous system. The galvanic skin response of someone receiving and giving a hug shows a change in skin conductance. The effect in moisture and electricity in the skin suggests a more balanced state in the nervous system - parasympathetic.

8. Hugs teach us how to give and receive. There is equal value in receiving and being receptive to warmth, as to giving and sharing. Hugs educate us how love flows both ways.

9. Hugs are similar to meditation and laughter. They teach us to let go and be present in the moment. They encourage us to flow with the energy of life. Hugs get you out of your circular thinking patterns and connect you with your heart and your feelings and your breath.

So, go out and give a hug! You'll be giving and receiving a wonderful gift with such a simple gesture!

To learn more on the benefits of hugs, check out these websites:

<http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-wellness/articles/2016-02-03/the-health-benefits-of-hugging>

<http://www.collective-evolution.com/2015/12/03/the-chemistry-of-hugging-11-benefits-of-hugging/>

Blessings in good health,

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