



The Health Benefits of Friendships

You don't choose your family, but you do get to choose your friends. Friendships enrich your life, enhance your health, and can have a powerfully positive impact on physical and emotional well-being. Research shows that when people have social support, they often stay healthier and may even live longer. Having a strong network of friends who lead healthy lifestyles can help to motivate and encourage you to do the same and reduce risk of loneliness and depression.

Here are a few tips for building friendships:

- ✔ **Make a list of people you already know who are positive and supportive.** Interact with at least one person on your list every day, whether in person, by phone, or online.
- ✔ **Take a hobby-related class, like cooking, art, or music.** It's an opportunity to meet people with shared interests.
- ✔ **Volunteer for a good cause.** Helping others is a proven way to combat loneliness.
- ✔ **Join a recreational sports league.** You'll meet teammates while you enjoy exercise.

If you're feeling overwhelmed by loneliness or depression, seek help from a mental health professional. It's not just your happiness at stake. It's your health, too.

Sources include the American Heart Association, Mental Health America, and the National Institutes of Health.

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